











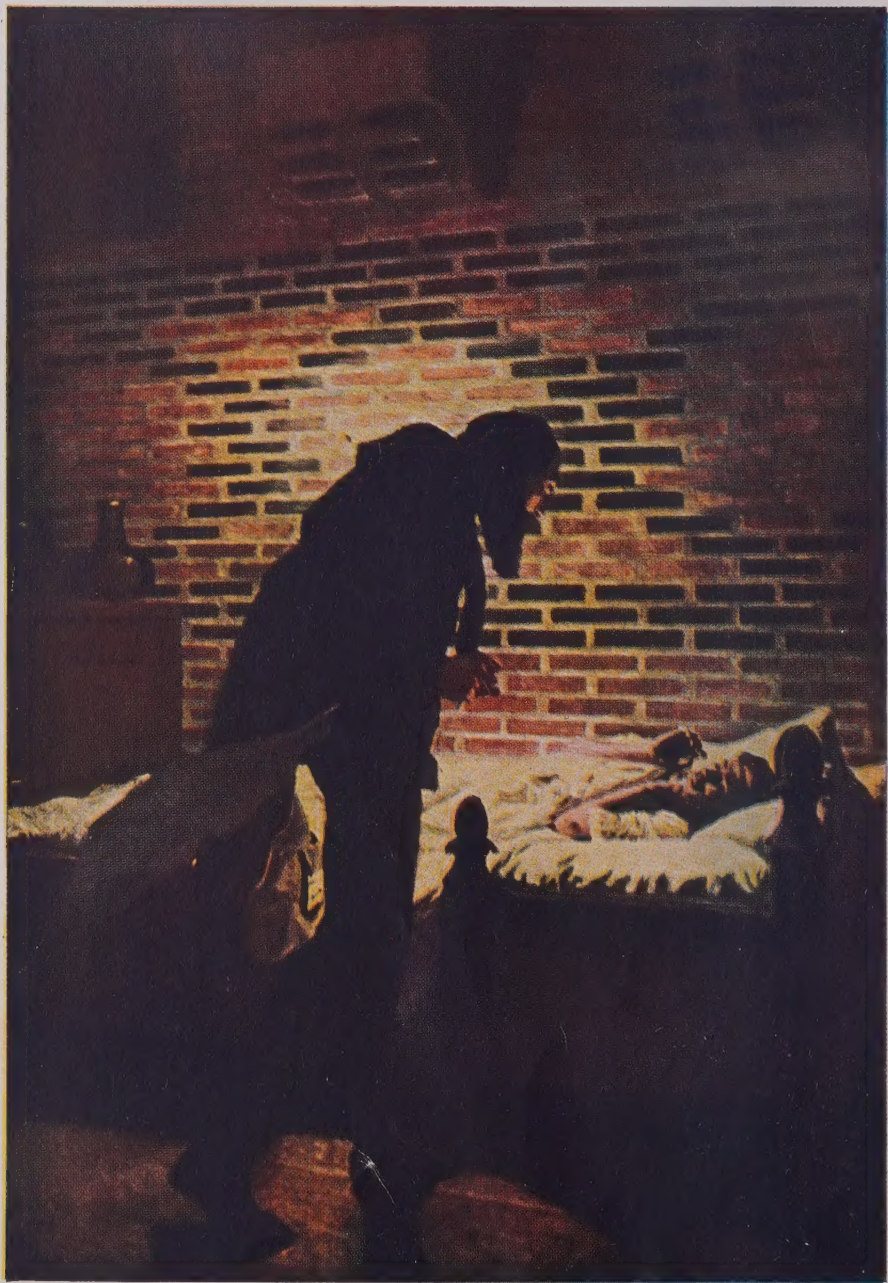


THE HISTORIANS'  
HISTORY  
OF THE WORLD









DEATH OF VASIL IIVANOVITCH

*Painted especially for "The Historians' History of the World" by P. L. de Czernichowski*



# THE HISTORIANS' HISTORY OF THE WORLD

A Comprehensive Narrative  
of the Rise and Development  
of Nations from the Earliest  
Times as recorded by over  
Two Thousand of the Great  
Writers of All Ages. Edited  
with the Assistance of a Dis-  
tinguished Board of Advisers  
and Contributors

BY

HENRY SMITH WILLIAMS, LL.D.



IN TWENTY-SEVEN VOLUMES

VOLUME XVII—SWITZERLAND (Concluded)  
RUSSIA AND POLAND

LONDON: THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA CO., LTD.  
NEW YORK: ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA, INC.

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*The Historians' History of the World*

First Edition 1904

Second Edition 1907

Third Edition 1909

Fourth Edition 1915

Fifth Edition 1926



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VOLUME XVII

SWITZERLAND (CONCLUDED); RUSSIA



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## SWITZERLAND (CONCLUDED)

### CHAPTER V

#### THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

There is an evil worse than war and that is the debasement of peoples. The wounds of war may be healed, but moral degradation leads nations to the tomb. During the peace that followed the battle of Villmergen up to the time of the French revolution Switzerland suffered more calamities than in all the wars against Burgundy and Austria. For during the eighty years of repose during which the swords of the Winckelrieds, the Fontanas, the Hallwyls, and the Erlachs were tarnishing, the rust of egoism and of pride succeeded in eating away the tablets on which was engraven the loyal union of the ancient Swiss; and like a corpse the old confederation was rotting away. In vain degenerate sons decorated pompously the corpse of the achievements of their ancestors, that they might conceal the fact that the spirit which animated it aforetime had left it.—ZSCHOKKE.<sup>b</sup>

#### THE CONSPIRACY OF HENTZI; THE INSURRECTION AT FRIBOURG

THE outward peace enjoyed by the confederacy during the eighteenth century (the last of its existence in its primitive form) was contrasted by incessant inward disturbances. The first of these which claims our attention is the conspiracy of Hentzi at Bern. Here, as in most towns of the confederacy, a more and more formal and regular aristocracy had grown up by degrees in the course of centuries. From time immemorial the powers of government had been held by the avoyer and council. For the protection of the burghers against the encroachments of the council, and of that body against the influence of the multitude, an assembly of two hundred of the most respectable burghers was formed, the members of which were annually elected.

The most important acts, which imposed duties on every burgher, not only for himself but for his posterity, were often brought before the whole body of citizens, and even country people; the more so as at that time a few villages

constituted the whole domain of Bern. The continual aggrandisement of the state rendered obsolete the fundamental laws of its constitution, which became imperceptibly modified in proportion as political emergencies appeared to require alterations. When the power of Bern was doubled by the conquest of the Vaud, the assembly of the burghers ceased to be thought of. The dignities of the state became hereditary in those families which had once obtained a seat in the great council. It is true that the other burghers remained eligible to public functions; but it was rarely indeed, and generally by means of intermarriages, that a new family raised itself to the rank of the rulers *de facto*.

The administration of these ruling families was, in general, not devoid of wisdom and equity; and, in fact, the principal subject of complaint was that participation in state affairs had ceased to be open to all. It was, however, precisely this system of aristocratic exclusion which was felt so insupportably by many of those who were subjected to it, that so early as 1710 attempts were made to break it up. These were renewed with increased vigour, in 1743, by six-and-twenty burghers, who combined to petition the council for the revival of a greater equality of rights in favour of the general body of citizens. These adventurous men incurred the censure of the authorities, and were placed under arrest in their houses or banished.

Amongst the exiles was Samuel Hentzi, a man of no ordinary talent and spirit. He had fixed on Neuchâtel as the place of his banishment, the term of which was shortened by the favour of the authorities. On his return, the embarrassed state in which he found his domestic economy, and the ill success of his efforts to obtain a lucrative office, may have mingled with other motives in inducing him to take the lead in a desperate undertaking of a little band of malcontents, who, without money, arms, or even unity of purpose, dreamed of overturning a government strong in its own resources, and sure of support from the whole Helvetic body, and of instituting equality of rights among all burghers, and appointment to all offices by lot. Yet, with all their root-and-branch work, the conspirators had no idea of remedying the real defects of the state, of satisfying the prevalent and increasing discontents of the Vaud, or of procuring an extension of political rights to the whole people: for, in the plan of a constitution annexed to their mediated manifesto, exclusive regard was paid to the burghers at Bern; and the rest of the people would hardly have been bettered by their accession to the dignities which had hitherto been engrossed by the ruling families. The 13th of July, 1749, was fixed for the execution of the plans of the conspirators; but many of their own number had opened their eyes by this time to the utter impossibility of success, produced by the disunion and imprudence of their colleagues — to the passion and cupidity of some, and the atrocious hopes of murder and plunder entertained by others.

No man felt more sensibly the criminal views of his party than the only man of ability and public spirit among them, Hentzi. He would not betray those with whom he had long pursued the same object; but he made an attempt to save himself by flight from further participation in their plans and foreseen destiny. It was too late: a betrayer had already done his work. Hentzi and other leaders of the party were taken and beheaded during the first exasperation of the government. Sentence of death was also pronounced upon some who had made their escape; others were imprisoned or banished, but soon afterwards pardoned. On embarking with her two sons to quit the Helvetic territory, the wife of Hentzi exclaimed, "I would rather see these children sink in the Rhine-stream than they should not one day learn to



[1781 A.D.]

avenge the murder of their father." However, when the sons came to manhood, they displayed more magnanimity than their mother; and one of them, who rose to distinction in the service of the Netherlands, requited with good offices to the burghers of his native town the unmerited misfortunes which they had brought upon his family.

In Fribourg — where, in olden times, equality of rights for all burghers had been settled as a principle — an aristocracy, no less close than in Bern, had formed itself since the middle of the seventeenth century. A few houses, under the denomination of secret families, had contrived to exclude, not only the country people, but a large proportion likewise of the town burghers, from all participation in public affairs; and, in 1684, admission into the number of these secret families was rendered wholly impossible. From thenceforwards, constantly increasing discontent displayed itself both in town and country. Several very moderate proposals for alleviating the pressure of this oligarchy were rejected with such haughtiness by the government that disaffection swelled into revolt.

In 1781 Peter Nicholas Chenaux of la Tour de Trême, John Peter Raceaud, and an advocate of Gruyères of the name of Castellaz, formed a league for the achievement of a higher degree of freedom. First they endeavoured to work upon the people by fair promises. Then Chenaux, at the head of a select band of fifty or sixty, undertook to terrify the government into a compromise. But the gates being closed on the party, and the walls manned with armed burghers, this undertaking ended in open revolt. The toll of alarm-bells summoned up the country people from every hill and valley in the canton to assist in the coercion of the domineering capital. A body of nearly three thousand men encamped before the walls of Fribourg, and further aid was hourly expected. The terrified burghers instantly called for the armed intervention of Bern, and the latter town detached a part of its guard without delay. Three hundred dragoons marched upon Fribourg, and were to be followed by fourteen hundred foot. The burghers of Fribourg now thought themselves strong enough to meet force with force. The garrison made a sally from the town, and on the first sight of the Bernese flag, not to mention the heavy artillery, the malcontents solicited an armistice. The surrender of their arms and of the ringleaders was demanded as preliminary to all negotiation. The people refused the latter of these conditions, but fled panic-struck on the first attack, without making any resistance.

The whole affair would have ended without bloodshed, had not the leader Chenaux been murdered in his flight by Henry Rosier, himself one of the popular party. The two remaining heads of the insurgents got clear off: Chenaux's corpse was delivered to the public executioner, and his head fixed on a spear above the Romont gate. Sentence of death was passed on Castellaz and Raceaud, the two fugitives. Several others were visited with less degrees of punishment: new reinforcements from Bern, Solothurn, and Lucerne secured the town from any recurrence of tumult, and their ambassadors strove to promote the restoration of tranquillity. It was ordered to be proclaimed, from all the pulpits, that the council was well disposed to protect the old and well attested rights of its loving subjects, as well as to hear, with its never-failing graciousness, every suitable and respectful representation. Three days were allotted to each commune to lay their complaints and wishes before the government, through delegates. But when months elapsed without the popular grievances having obtained a hearing, the loss of Chenaux began to be appreciated. Multitudes assembled round his tomb weeping and praying: pilgrimages, as if to the tomb of a saint, were made thither with

banners, and with crucifixes. Vainly were these demonstrations of feeling stigmatised by the government as crime against the state, by the bishop as impious profanations. They were neither to be checked by posting sentinels, nor fulminating excommunications. They were the last sad consolation of the people -- the last substitute for hopes that were already given up.

#### DISORDERS AT GENEVA (1707-1782 A.D.)

Shortly after the establishment of Genevan independence, it had been decreed by the general assembly, for the better suppression of hostile attempts against their hard-won freedom, that whoever should propose a change in the government of Geneva should be considered to deserve capital punishment. This did not, however, hinder alterations being made, at different times, in various parts of the constitution. So early as the middle of the sixteenth century, the laws were revised and improved. The advantageous situation of the town and the long duration of peace promoted the increase of wealth in Geneva and the rise of many families to opulence. These families aimed at separating themselves from their fellow citizens, even in their places of habitation, by settling in the upper part of the town, near the council-house, while the other burghers inhabited the lower town. The principal families already regarded themselves as a standing patriciate; and even the name of patrician came into use in the acts of council.

The year 1707 witnessed an effort of the inferior burghers to wrest from the principal families a part of their usurped power, and to introduce amendments in the constitution. In this emergency, the council invoked the mediation of Bern and Zurich, received a confederate garrison, and maintained itself by force of arms and by execution of its principal antagonists. A renewal of the disturbances which had been quelled by such violent measures was produced, in 1714, by the imposition of an arbitrary tax by the council for the enlargement and completion of the fortifications of the town. This stretch of power occasioned great discontent among the burghers; bitter attacks and censures on the government appeared in print; and the more strictly these were prohibited, they obtained the more eager perusal and credence.

One of the arch-promoters of the rising storm was Michael Ducrest, a Genevan burgher and noble, an officer in the army, and a member of the great council. This man opposed himself with extraordinary vehemence to the building of the new fortifications, and heaped offensive charges on the partisans of the measure. The government condemned him to recant, and, on his evading compliance by flight, a penal sentence was pronounced against him. New attempts which he made to excite disturbance were followed by a sentence of perpetual imprisonment. This sentence could not be put in execution, as Ducrest had taken refuge under a foreign jurisdiction, where he set at defiance the council of Geneva, and provoked that body to such a degree by his writings and intrigues against them, that sentences more and more severe were heaped upon his head, until at length the most offensive of his writings was torn by the hangman, and his effigy was suspended from the gallows. His person, however, enjoyed impunity till 1744, when he was taken into custody in the territory of Bern. The government of Geneva did not thirst for his blood, and was content with his perpetual imprisonment. Even in this situation he contrived to mix in Hentzi's conspiracy, was confined in the castle of Aarburg, and closed, in extreme old age, as a state

[1734-1738 A.D.]

prisoner, a life which he had spent in incessant labours in the cause of democracy.

Meanwhile Geneva continued to be agitated by party manœuvres and popular discontents. In the year 1734 a body of eight hundred burghers addressed themselves to the heads of the government, desiring the curtailment of the projected fortifications, and the repeal of the tax levied for that object. The council only replied by preparations for defence: firearms were transported to the council hall; barricades erected in the approaches thither as well as in those to the upper town, where the principal class of burghers lived, and the garrison kept in readiness to act on the first signal. All this apparatus was regarded with mistrust by the burghers, who were still farther provoked by reports of the approach of Bernese troops, and by the removal of a part of the town artillery to the upper regions, while two and twenty other pieces were spiked. The multitude made themselves masters of the city guard, pointed field-pieces on the road by which the troops from Bern were expected, and tumultuously demanded the convocation of the burgher assembly, the sovereign authority of Geneva. The council contrived to win over the members of this body so far that they voted unanimously the completion of the fortifications and the continuance of the tax for ten years. The declaration of an amnesty and improvement of the criminal and judicial administration formed the rest of their business. The burghers laid down their arms and returned to their ordinary vocations; so that an embassy which arrived from Zurich and Bern found Geneva in a state of apparent tranquillity.

Permanent ill-will was fostered only against the syndic Trembley, commander of the garrison and conductor of the defensive preparations of the council. Whatever this person had done by the instructions of the council was laid to his individual account, and added to the mass of dark imputations which were heaped on him, as the head of an already obnoxious family. He plumed himself on the favour of the confederate ambassadors, and forfeited thus the last chance of retrieving himself in the public opinion. The remembrance of the armed intervention of Zurich and Bern, in 1707, was too recent to admit of their ambassadors doing any good to Trembley's cause through the medium of pacific intercession. The departure of these embassies removed the only screen of the syndic: he demanded his dismissal, which was refused him, in order to deprive him of his functions more ignominiously. No resistance or artifice of a powerful connection could save him: the tumults were renewed with increased fury; and the question soon ceased to regard the person or party of Trembley, and became that of the triumph of the aristocratic or democratic principle at Geneva. In 1737, the council ventured several arrests, and the consequence was that the whole body of burghers rushed to arms, and the council was defeated, not without bloodshed. A garrison from Bern and Zurich was thrown into the town: the ambassadors of these cantons, in concert with the French ambassadors, undertook the office of mediators, and in 1738 framed a constitution which set limits to the assumptions of the council and the principal families, and was gratefully and all but unanimously accepted as a fundamental law by the burghers.

After four-and-twenty years of repose and prosperity, occasion was given to new political movements at Geneva by a subject of a nature purely speculative. It pleased more than one government about this time to apply the doom of fire, which had been visited by inquisitors on the ill-fated victims of their zealotry, to certain of the more remarkable works of the human intellect — a proceeding highly calculated to draw the eyes of the reading public on



productions which seemed worthy of such signal condemnation. On the first appearance of that work of Rousseau which opened views so novel and so striking on the moral and still more on the physical education of man, the parliament of Paris had the work burned by the hangman, and sentenced Rousseau to imprisonment, which he only escaped by flight. Both of these decisions were immediately repeated by the council of Geneva [1762], which improved on them by launching a like condemnatory sentence against the *Contrat Social* of the same author. It was in vain that Rousseau's connections demanded a copy of the sentence against him: their reiterated demands, though supported by a large body of burghers, were rejected by the council. The popular party, which vindicated the right of the burgher assembly to

bring up representations or remonstrances against the council on any subject under discussion, distinguished themselves by the name of representatives. Their claims were met by asserting a *droit négatif*, or right of rejection, on the strength of which the council pretended that nothing that should not have been previously consented to by themselves could come before the general assembly. The partisans of the council were called negatives.

The tranquillity of Geneva was once more disturbed to such a degree by passionate discourses, party writings, and manœuvres that the ambassadors of Zurich, Bern, and France again interfered, and pronounced themselves in favour of the council. The representatives rejected their decision, the ambassadors left Geneva, French troops advanced on the town, and all trade and intercourse were suspended. But the French ministry speedily became lukewarm in the cause of the negatives. The latter, when they found them-



JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU  
(1712-1778)

selves abandoned by all foreign aid, apprehending what might ensue, patched up a peace with the representatives. By a compact closed in March, 1768, the burghers acquired valuable rights, and even a third party, that of the so-called *natifs* or *habitans* (old inhabitants, excluded by birth from taking part in public affairs), obtained extended franchises, and was flattered with a prospect of participation in all the rights of citizenship.

But on recovery from the first panic, reciprocal hatred soon revived. The negatives were vexed at having made such important sacrifices, and aimed at resuming all their former ascendancy. Moreover they found a favourable hearing in the French court, which had long viewed with an evil eye the trade and wealth of Geneva, desired to raise the neighbouring Versoix to a commercial town, and hoped, by encouraging tumult and disorder at Geneva, either to annihilate its industry and opulence, or ultimately to bring it under the sovereignty of France. French emissaries therefore aided the negatives in spiring the natifs up against the representatives, by promising to confer on them the franchises withheld by the latter. But the representatives flew



[1782 A.D.]

to arms, took possession of the gates, and speedily succeeded in disarming the unpractised and undisciplined mob of natifs. Well aware by what manœuvres the natifs had been led to revolt, they prudently abstained from taking any vindictive measures against them; but, on the contrary, imparted to them, in 1781, that equality of rights which had been promised by the negatives, and endeavoured thus to win them over permanently to the common cause.

The council, on the other hand, impelled by French influence, declared the newly conferred rights illegally extorted, and invoked the mediation of Bern and Zurich. But, betwixt representative stubbornness and negative assumption, the ambassadors of these towns could exert but limited influence. They essayed to put an end to disputes by amicable arrangements, but were baffled by the intrigues of the French court, which was resolved to recognise no democratical system on its frontiers, and soon proceeded to open force in support of its secret policy. The first act of aggression was to garrison Versoix; a measure which gave just offence to Zurich and Bern, who thereupon renounced all adhesion to the mediation of 1738, and left the Genevans to their own discretion. France also declared she would mix no more in the affairs of Geneva; the government was overthrown and a new constitution established.

Zurich and Bern now declared formally and coldly that they could not acknowledge a government erected by revolt. Still more indignation was exhibited by France and Savoy, who entered into a league for the coercion of the town. Bern, too, joined this league in 1782, that the destiny of Geneva, that *point d'appui* of her own dominion, might not be trusted altogether to the caprices of foreign powers. On the appearance of the allied troops before the gates of Geneva, the burghers, unaware of the bad state of their defences, swore to bury themselves in the ruins of their native town rather than yield. But when the cannon of the besiegers was advanced up to their walls, and the alternative of desperate resistance or surrender was offered, the disunited city opened her gates without stroke of sword, after the principal heads of the representative party had taken to flight.

Mortal dread accompanied the victorious troops as they entered Geneva. Many had reason to tremble for their lives, their liberty, and possessions. No punishments, however, were inflicted, excepting only the banishment of the principal popular leaders; but the rights of the burghers were almost entirely annihilated by the arbitrary arrangements of the victors; the government was invested by them with almost unlimited power, and proceeded under their auspices to prohibit all secret societies, military exercises, books and pamphlets on recent events, and to re-inforce the garrison by twelve hundred men under foreign leaders. Thus the town was reduced to utter subjection, and depopulated by exile and emigration. From thenceforwards commerce and enterprise fell into decay; and for seven long years a forced, unnatural calm dwelt in Geneva.

During these years the government was conducted with much mildness, the administration of justice was impartial, that of the public revenues incorrupt, art and industry were encouraged to the utmost. But nothing could win the lost hearts of the people back to the government. The iniquity of the so-called *règlement* of 1782, the destruction of their franchises, and the disarming of their persons, had wounded irrecoverably the feelings of the burghers. The malcontents increased daily in number; and even many former negatives now disowned their party, which had gone greater lengths than they had ever wished or expected. At length, on the death of Vergennes, the

French minister, and arch enemy of Genevan independence, the spirit of freedom awoke with all its ancient strength in Geneva, and the burghers arose to break their slavish fetters. But the recital of the subsequent occurrences must be postponed until we come to notice the train of events fired by the French Revolution.

#### TUMULTS IN NEUCHÂTEL

The little principality of Neuchâtel, the succession of which had descended in the same line since the era of the second Burgundian monarchy, came, in 1707, into the hands of the king of Prussia, as next heir to the ancient house of Chalons. In 1748, Frederick II displayed that love of economy which distinguished all his measures, by farming out certain parts of the public revenue arising from tithes, ground rents, and the crown lands; from the former administration of which many of the inhabitants had enjoyed considerable profits. The loss of these, of course, was felt as a grievance by the losers; but what was viewed with more concern by the mass of the inhabitants was the prospect of still further innovations. Accordingly five communes of the Val de Travers transmitted their remonstrances through a delegate to Berlin; and their example was soon afterwards followed throughout the principality.

The arrival of two commissaries, despatched by the king to Neuchâtel, was viewed with discontent as an encroachment on its immunities. Shortly after their coming, an attempt was made to put in execution the proposed financial system, of which the only result was to provoke a tumultuous popular movement. On the 7th of January, 1767, the burgher assembly of Neuchâtel passed a resolution of exclusion from the rights of citizenship, against all who should farm or guarantee the farming of the revenues. On this the royal commissary, Von Derschau, brought a suit before the council of Bern, against the town of Neuchâtel; and the advocate-general, Gaudot, who had formerly been a popular favourite, much to the surprise of his fellow-citizens, seceded to the royal side, and thenceforwards gave his active assistance to the commissary.

The cause was decided at Bern (with some limitations) in the royal favour. With regard to the resolutions of the Neuchâtel burghers, already referred to, it was decreed that they should be cancelled in the presence of the burgher assembly, and a public apology made to the vice-governor. The costs of the whole process to be paid by the town. Gaudot, who had attacked the civic immunities both by word and writing, naturally became an object of popular indignation. By way of compensation, however, he received a lucrative government office, along with the functions of procurator-general, from which another man had been removed who possessed the popular favour. He returned to Neuchâtel from Bern with the royal plenipotentiaries. These and the vice-governor advised him to take up his residence in the castle; but, in spite of their recommendations, Gaudot thought fit to repair to his own residence. The same evening, clamour and disturbance took place around the house, which the magistrates were forced to protect by military force.

The next morning the mob returned in increased numbers, and was still further exasperated by missiles being thrown down upon them. A carriage, escorted by servants in the royal livery, which had been sent by the king's commissary for Gaudot, was knocked to pieces by the infuriated multitude. Gaudot and his nephew now imprudently fired from the windows, and their shots took effect, fatally for themselves. The exasperated populace forced its way into the house; Gaudot was killed by three shots, and the mob dis-

[1780 A.D.]

persed after the deed, with cries of "Long live the king!" The chief actors in this tragedy escaped, and could be executed only in effigy. The whole affair was ultimately compromised by the benevolent moderation of the great Frederick; and terms of pacification were accepted by the communes, which provided alike against arbitrary government and popular turbulence.

On this occasion, Frederick displayed more generosity than would have been shown by any cantonal government; and his conduct seemed to justify the general reflection, which must often occur to the student of Swiss history that when administrative abuses are introduced into a monarchy, it only requires a well-disposed and enlightened prince to crush the gang of official oppressors and extortioners; because such a prince is powerfully backed in such measures by the public opinion. Whereas, when the majority of the ruling class in misnamed republics is corrupted so far as to speculate on the profits of malversation, it generally takes care to recruit its ranks with new accomplices; or, at all events, only to promote to public offices such men as will at least shut their eyes to public abuses. The magnanimity of Frederick was but ill repaid to his successor by the tumults which ensued in Neuchâtel on the commencement of the French Revolution; and we have lately seen the same misunderstandings, as in the last century, arise between the now canton of Neuchâtel and its Prussian sovereign.

## ARISTOCRACY AND DEMOCRACY

The democratical cantons, where the assembled population exercised the supreme power in their *landsgemeinde*, held the lowest station, in almost every respect, amongst the confederates. Narrowness of mind and ignorant hatred of all innovation withstood every proposal of improvement; while passion and prejudice, aided by the artifices of demagogues, often occasioned acts of crying injustice. Judicial proceedings were in the highest degree arbitrary; confession of crimes was extracted by torture, which, indeed, was often employed when nothing more remained to confess. Capital punishment, even for minor offences, was by no means rare. Public offices, particularly that of bailiff or land-vogt, were commonly conferred not on the worthiest but on the highest bidder; and the proceeds of this ignominious traffic went to the public treasury. Was it to be wondered at if these functionaries in their turn set justice up to auction in their bailiwicks, and endeavoured to recover their advances to the government by every sort of oppression of its subjects?

Mental cultivation was extremely neglected in these cantons, scientific establishments were rare, and those for education were, for the most part, in the hands of the capuchins; whose *esprit de corps* was at least on one occasion beneficial, by preventing the admission of the jesuits into the canton of Schwytz in 1758. Elsewhere, however, similar influences produced worse effects. In Glarus, so late as 1780, an unfortunate servant girl was executed as a witch, on the charge of having lamed the leg of a child by magic, and having caused it to vomit pins. Credulous souls were even found to believe the affirmation that the girl had administered pin-seed through the medium of a magical cake, which had afterwards borne its fruit within the body of the child. The political relations of these cantons, in the period now before us, were of little importance.

The constitutions of the aristocratical cantons had all of them this circumstance in common, that not only the capital towns assumed the rule of the whole canton, but the burghers of those towns themselves were divided into ruling and non-ruling families, of which the former monopolised admis-



sion to all places of honour. But the governments of these cantons deserve to be treated of more at length.

Bern, which, in the first period after its foundation, had no domains of any importance outside its walls, possessed in that immediately preceding the French revolution a territory containing more than 400,000 inhabitants. This considerable tract of land was administered by 250 ruling families, of which, however, only about sixty were in actual possession of the government; and these again were divided into so-called great and small families, and did not easily suffer others to rise to an equality with them. The sovereign power resided in 299 persons, of whom the great council was composed. A little council or senate of five-and-twenty formed the executive. The rural districts and the Pays de Vaud were governed by land-vogts or bailiffs. It was chiefly there that discontent prevailed against the Bernese government. The nobles of the Pays de Vaud were rendered wholly insensible to the real and solid advantages secured to them by that government, by resentment of their exclusion from all public employments. The peasants of that district, for the most part subjects or bondsmen of the nobles, sighed under the weight of feudal oppression and its accustomed offspring, poverty, neglected culture, mental and moral abortion.

### *Davel*

A singular attempt at revolt was made in 1723 by Major Daniel Abraham Davel, a well-intentioned man, of excellent character, but a decided political and religious enthusiast, possessed with the idea that he was called by inspiration to emancipate the Vaud from Bern. He assembled the regiment of militia which he commanded, under the pretext of a review, and with these troops, who were altogether ignorant of his real design, and unprovided with stores or ammunition, he surprised the town of Lausanne at a point of time when all the Bernese land-vogts had gone to Bern for the annual installation. Davel offered his aid for the restoration of independence to the hastily assembled town council. He found, however, no kindred spirit in that body; and the cautious citizens put him off with fair words till a force was under arms sufficient to crush him. Meanwhile his troops had discovered the real object of their commander, and shrank from him in surprise and consternation. He himself was arrested, cruelly tortured for the discovery of accomplices, of whom he had none, and lastly beheaded.

A certain contempt of scholastic acquirements seemed the prevailing tone at Bern; and school education naturally came to deserve the low esteem which it met with. Accordingly those patrician youths who did not serve in the army remained for the most part unemployed until they obtained places under government. The establishment of what was called the "exterior state" afforded but a superficial substitute for more solid attainments, and initiated youth only too early in the petty intrigues and jealousies of faction. This institution, which was also known by the name of the "shadow state," was intended to give the youth of the ruling families opportunities for acquainting themselves with the forms at least of public business, and of acquiring an unembarrassed address, so important for republicans. It parodied the dignities and offices of the state, the election of avoyers, councillors, and senators, had its secretaries and functionaries of all ranks, and distributed by lot 120 vogtships, which for the most part took their names from ruined castles.

Without any sufficient evidence, some would refer to the era of the

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Burgundian war the origin of this institution, which received the sanction of government in 1687, and for which a council-house, far more splendid than that which belonged to the actual government, was built in 1729. The seal of this "exterior state" bore an ape astride on a lobster, and looking at himself in a mirror. These and similar traits of humour seem to owe their descent to an era exceedingly remote from the measured formality of later times.

The government of Lucerne, which with Solothurn and Fribourg formed the remaining pure Swiss aristocracies, consisted of a little council of six-and-thirty members, which, reinforced by sixty-four others, held the sovereign authority. With regard to intellectual cultivation, the most contradictory features were observable at Lucerne. On the one hand, learning, enlightenment, and patriotism were hereditary distinctions of some families; while, on the other hand, the mass was imbued with ignorant fanaticism. On the one hand, the encroachments of the papacy were resisted with inflexible firmness; while, on the other hand, the clergy kept possession of a highly mischievous influence in the state. On the one hand, a series of saints' days and holidays was abolished, as being dedicated to dissoluteness more than devotion; while, on the other hand, we are horror-struck by the burning of a so-called heretic. In 1747, a court, consisting of four clergymen, sentenced Jacob Schmidli, a man of blameless life, to be strangled, and then burned with his books and writings, because he had not only read the Bible for his private edification, but had explained and recommended it to others as the sole true basis of religion. His wife, his six children, and seventy-one other persons were banished, his house was burned to the ground by the hands of the public executioner, and a monument raised on its former site, to perpetuate the ignomy (query: of the victim or of his judges?).

The appearance of two pamphlets in 1769, on the question "whether removal or restriction of the monastic orders might not be found beneficial to the Catholic cantons?" excited terrible uproar at Lucerne, where certain classes were constantly scenting danger to church or state from some quarter. The town and county clergy, and the bigots in the council, were rejoiced to get so good an opportunity to persecute the holders of free principles, and raised a deplorable howl, as if the canton were on the verge of destruction. The whole population was plunged in consternation and astonishment by thundering sermons and rigorous prohibitions of the obnoxious work. Free-thinkers were fulminated against by name from the pulpits, and Schinznach, which had witnessed the formation of the Helvetic society, was denounced as the focus and headquarters of heresy.

This society, which aimed at the diffusion of useful knowledge, public spirit, and union throughout the Helvetic body, without reference to varieties of religion, rank, or political system, was founded by a knot of patriotic and instructed men, in the pious hope of arresting the decline of the confederation. At its commencement it consisted of no more than nine members, but added to its numbers with astonishing rapidity. The society was soon viewed with an evil eye by the cantonal governments, which dreaded all independence of feeling and action in the people. At Bern, political dangers were anticipated from it, as symptoms of refractoriness were exhibited shortly after its formation by the nobles in the Vaud; while at Lucerne it was regarded as a conspiracy for shaking off the Catholic religion, and assisting the supposed ambition of Bern to gain ascendancy over the whole confederation.

The aristo-democratical governments next come under our notice, and



in these, as in most of the purely aristocratical, the metropolis had obtained unlimited power over the whole canton. In these, however, particular families did not engross the sovereign power; the collective body of citizens had maintained themselves by means of the regulations of their guilds in the possession of considerable influence over the public affairs. Accordingly the magistracy favoured the monopolies which enriched the metropolitan traders, and imposed restraints on the industry and invention of the surrounding country. Thence the subjects of these towns were much more harshly governed than those of the aristocratical cantons. Their ancient charters fell into oblivion, and were withdrawn as far as possible from public inspection; they were not only excluded from civil and military, but even from ecclesiastical functions; and the exercise of many branches of industry, and the sale of their productions in the towns, was wholly cut off by corporation privileges. Moreover, since the commencement of the century of which we are treating, no mode of acquiring the rights of burghers remained open; they were only conferred on extremely rare occasions to reward eminent merit; or when the times became troublesome to conciliate influential burghers. Hence that discontent and disaffection which broke out at the close of the century found a principal focus in the heart of the mixed aristocracies.

In the larger cantons the public administration was for the most part incorrupt; and that of justice was liable on the whole to fewer complaints than in many other European countries. The pay of public servants, with few exceptions, was extremely moderate. Men who had devoted their whole lives to public affairs, and who had filled the highest offices in the state, lost more than they gained by the bounty of their country. At Zurich, the expenses of the government were wholly defrayed without the imposition of taxes, properly so called, from the revenues and interests of the national lands and capital, from ground-rents, tithes, the salt monopoly, and the produce of the premium paid by the several guilds of traders in return for their exclusive privileges. The same description is applicable to the government of Bern, excepting that here the course of justice was tedious and expensive. The superior financial resources of the latter canton enabled her to execute more for public ends than Zurich. Bern invested considerable sums in foreign securities, particularly in the English funds; and, besides, amassed a treasure amounting to some millions of dollars, which became, as we shall presently see, and as Mably had predicted, the booty of rapacious and powerful neighbours.

Very different was the condition of the free or common bailiwicks, particularly those of the democratical cantons; here most of the land-vogts sought by every species of extortion to indemnify themselves for the sums for which they had in fact bought their places from the general assemblies of their respective cantons. Many made an open traffic of justice; took presents from both parties; helped delinquents to evade deserved punishment who could pay for exemption, and exacted contributions from the wealthier class whenever and wherever they could. Even farther than in the German domains of Switzerland were abuses of this kind carried in the Italian bailiwicks, and most of all in those of the Grisons. The inevitable tendency of such treatment was to debase the popular character in those districts, and its effects have left unequivocal traces even to this day.

In those towns of which the constitution was grounded on corporate bodies, the privileges of the burghers and their guilds received progressive extensions. Propositions were made which would hardly have been conceivable in monarchical states, and could only, in fact, take place where

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particular classes had to decide upon the destiny of the rest of their fellow-countrymen. In Bâle it was several times proposed, under the pretext of protection to agriculture, that the exercise of certain manufactures should be prohibited altogether in the rural part of the canton.<sup>c</sup>

## FEDERAL RELATIONS OF THE SWISS STATES

The federal bond which united the various cantons and their allies was very loose, and far different from that which fastened together the united provinces of Holland, or even from the federal compact of the United States of North America. There was not in Switzerland any permanent sovereign body, no standing federal magistrate equally acknowledged by all, no central government having its own establishment, its own treasury, its own servants, civil and military. The general diets could not decide upon any important question, unless it had been previously debated and decided on in the councils of each of the cantons, who were applied to by their own deputies for fresh instructions at every new case which was brought before the diet. The cantons were not even each allied to all. The eight older cantons had among them a federal compact for their common defence, and even of these eight the first five only, *viz.* Zurich, Schwyz, Uri, Unterwalden, and Lucerne, were bound to enter into no other alliance without each other's consent; while the other three, Glarus, Zug, and Bern, were at liberty to form alliances with other states or foreign princes, provided such alliances contained nothing prejudicial to the federal bond. The eight cantons were also bound, by the convention of Stanz, to assist one another in supporting the form of government established in each of them.

The five junior cantons, *viz.* Fribourg, Solothurn, Bâle, Schaffhausen, and Appenzell, had no federal bond with the whole of the rest, nor among themselves, but every one of them was allied to some one or more of the others. The three forest cantons alone were allied to every one of the other cantons. By these means, however, the guarantee of common defence was secured to each; for, as any canton attacked had the right of calling some other cantons to its assistance, and as these were entitled to call others, all would be brought in to take a part, in virtue of their particular bonds.

The general diets of the confederation were either ordinary or extraordinary. The ordinary diets met once a year at Frauenfeld in Thurgau, instead of Baden, where, until the treaty of Aarau in 1712, they had been accustomed to meet. The deputy from Zurich presided: he brought forward the matters to be discussed, collected the votes, framed the resolutions, etc. Each canton or associate had one vote and questions were decided by a simple majority. The sittings were held with closed doors, and at the end of the session the deputy of Zurich drew up a statement of the decisions of the diet, of which he sent a copy round to each canton. The principal business of the diet was to hear appeals from the common bailiwicks, and to inspect the accounts and inquire into the conduct of the bailiffs.

Extraordinary diets were assembled at the request of any particular canton, or of any of the foreign ministers in case of urgent business. In such a case the canton of Zurich summoned the other cantons to send their deputies to Frauenfeld, or any other place fixed upon, acquainting them at the same time with the nature of the subjects which were to be discussed, in order that the cantonal governments might give instructions to their deputies accordingly. The foreign minister, at whose request an extraordi-

nary diet was convoked, was bound to pay the expenses of the deputies who were thus called from their homes at an unexpected season.

The partial diets were held by the Protestant cantons at Aarau, and by the Catholic ones at Lucerne. There was no fixed time for their meeting, but they were summoned as the occasion required it.

A regulation, called the "defensionale," was, as we have seen, agreed upon at a general diet held at Baden in 1668, for providing against sudden emergencies, such as an attack from foreign powers, when the proceedings of the diet would have proved too slow for the common safety. In such a case deputies were to be named by all the members of the Helvetic body, and invested with full powers to direct the military force of the nation, which was to be raised by contingents from the militia of each state. This body consisted of 9600 men for the thirteen cantons, 1400 for the associates, and 2400 for the subject bailiwicks — in all 13,400 men; which number, however, might be doubled and trebled if required.

The militia of each canton consisted of all the males from sixteen to sixty years of age, and these received military instruction at certain periods. Only one-third of the whole, however, consisting of the youngest and strongest, were enrolled into regiments, the other two-thirds supplying them with recruits if necessary. The regiments were divided into fusileers and electionaries, the fusileers being all young unmarried men, who were considered as always ready to march at a moment's notice; the electionaries were composed of the married men, of an age and size proper for service, and these were called out after the fusileers. When in active service they received regular pay; but every man was bound to provide his own uniform, arms, and accoutrements.

The Swiss, it is well known, furnished troops to several European powers, according to certain treaties or capitulations, as they were called, agreed upon between those powers and the various cantons. The chief power having Swiss troops in its service was France, who had retained them ever since the treaty made between the Swiss and Louis XI. Under Louis XIV the number of Swiss troops in the French service amounted to 28,000 men; but, in 1790, at the beginning of the French Revolution, there were not more than 15,000, who were divided into twelve regiments. Six Swiss regiments were in the service of Holland, four were serving in Piedmont, four at Naples, and four in Spain: the pope had also a small body guard of Swiss. There has been considerable misconception abroad upon this subject; the cantons have been represented as selling their countrymen as if they were cattle, while the truth is that the men were not sold, but enlisted of their own accord for a certain period of time, receiving the bounty money.<sup>d</sup>

Agriculture was advanced by the cultivation of clover and of other artificial grasses, and by the consequent increase of pasturage and manure. Many districts which had formerly been regarded as unfruitful were thus rendered remarkable for fertility. The processes of manuring, and many other processes in Swiss cultivation, became a model for foreign agriculturists. Arts and manufactures were extended more and more widely. In the canton of Bern, in the Thurgau, and elsewhere, industry was employed on native materials in the linen manufacture; in Zurich, St. Gall, and Appenzell, in working up imported wool in spinning, weaving, and cotton printing. Silk manufactures occupied Zurich and Bâle, and the latter town enriched itself by its riband manufacture. Trade in all its branches thrived at Geneva; where a wholesale watch manufacture was conducted, and from whence watchmaking was soon spread through the district of Neuchâtel, where it suggested many other mechanical processes.



[1780 A.D.]

Intellectual culture and social refinements marched abreast with commercial wealth. Not only the towns were embellished with architectural structures, but in the Emmenthal, and around the lakes of Zurich and Geneva, arose new and splendid edifices which bespoke increasing opulence. In Neuchâtel, which a century before had been inhabited by shepherds, the villages assumed the appearance of towns; and the wealthy marts of England or the Netherlands were recalled to the mind of the traveller by the principal street of Winterthur. Intercourse with other states in trade or in foreign services naturalised new wants and desires, yet many still adhered to the old usages and manners. In whole districts, especially in the democratic cantons, public opinion imperiously set limits to the advance of luxury. In other places sumptuary laws maintained a struggle with the various arts of invention; and a wholesome state of simplicity was preserved in Zurich, St. Gall, and Bâle, in which celibacy became a rarity.<sup>c</sup>

Although in political matters dissensions prevailed, yet in intellectual and scientific life a sense of the unity of the fatherland was beginning to arise, notably in the reformed towns, where intellectual life had made great strides since the success of the war of Toggenburg. Men began to study their own position, learnt to know the individuality of Switzerland, and drew thence the hope of a brighter future. The pioneers of the movement were Scheuchzer of Zurich, and Haller of Bern. J. J. Scheuchzer (1672-1733), physician and naturalist, made himself famous by various journeys into the Swiss Alps, wrote the first natural history of Switzerland, and also completed a large map of Switzerland, by which labours he put new life into patriotism.

Albrecht von Haller (*ob.* 1777), the great poet and naturalist, by unrivalled industry acquired an extensive and learned education; he also possessed a strong poetic vein, and a warm and patriotic heart. Among his poems which appeared in 1732, *Die Alpen (The Alps)* made a great impression by its poetic depth and the novelty of its ideas. Full of indignation at the depravity of the time, and yearning for natural and unspoiled conditions, he there depicts with vigorous touches the life of nature and of men in the Alps, the simple, beautiful customs of the Alpine folk, with a patriotic warmth and enthusiasm before unknown. In another poem, *Der Mann der Welt (The Man of the World)*, he laments the degeneration of his fatherland; in a third, *Die verdorbenen Sitten (Demoralisation)*, in contradistinction to the good old times, he apostrophises the decay of his own day, exclaiming—"O Helvetia, once the land of heroes, how is it possible that the men whom we now behold could have descended from thy former inhabitants?" By his poems and his researches in natural science Haller became so famous in other lands that he received a number of honourable calls; yet he declined them all: he wanted to devote his powers to his beloved country, and from 1753 until his end he served her as a government official with affectionate devotion and self-sacrifice.<sup>e</sup>

Eloquence and daring imagination conferred European celebrity on Lavater. Rousseau promulgated truths in education and in politics which will not be lost for future generations, whatever alloy of paradox or perverse misapplication they might suffer from himself or his followers. The bitterness of religious and political dissension which had long prevailed in so many odious forms began to decline, and the personal worth of men began to be estimated by less absurd criteria than their speculative opinions. Old prejudices vanished, or at all events were mitigated, and even if the recognition of principles more enlightened was with many a matter of fashion

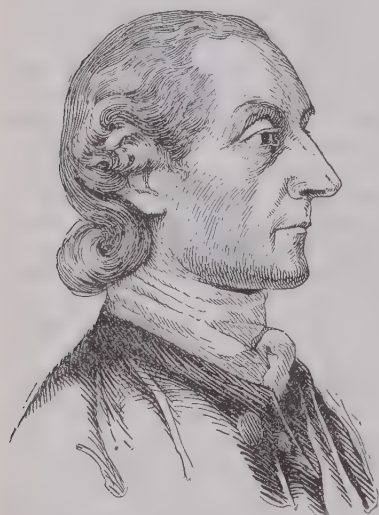
and imitation, still those may be deemed fortunate whose existence falls on a period in which truth and liberal sentiments find favour and adoption.

On the whole, the century was not worse than those which had preceded it. Even if the forms of government favoured many abuses, a more extended spirit of activity prevailed amongst the people than in previous generations; and though it is true that no extraordinarily great actions were performed, it is also true that no great occasion called for their performance. It cannot

be denied that too much jealousy prevailed between the cantons, and that more reliance was often placed on strangers than on fellow confederates. But Germany, which united might have given law to Europe, had been even more distracted by like errors, reduced to a mere battle-field for foreigners, and robbed of its most valuable dependencies.<sup>c</sup>

Seldom during the eighteenth century did the confederates act together. Only once did the confederation appear as a unit toward the outside. That was in 1777, when an alliance was concluded with France which well expressed the subservency of the Swiss at this period to that country. The members of the diet convened at Solothurn went through a humiliating ceremony. They appeared in a body at the ambassador's hotel, followed him to church and thence to the place of the deliberations. By this treaty the Helvetic body was bound to render a levy of six thousand men to France in case her ter-

ritory was invaded, and in return the king of France promised the Swiss help in danger and to maintain the privileges accorded them by his predecessors.<sup>a</sup>



J. C. LAVATER  
(1741-1801)

#### SWITZERLAND FEELS THE SHOCK OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

The Swiss government, as well as that large portion of their subjects who were contented with their condition, and desired no alteration in it, were startled out of a state of perfect tranquillity by the first shock of the French revolution. The shifting of the whole political scenery of Europe surrounded them with entirely new embarrassments. They resembled steersmen tolerably capable of guiding their bark safely through the tempests of their native lakes; but who found themselves now on unknown seas without chart or compass. The situation of the Swiss regiments engaged in the French service afforded the first reason for disquietude; the next was the apprehension of infection from the principles predominant in France. Alarming political movements soon began in the interior; and the solution of the problems which were set before Swiss politicians by the progress of events in the neighbouring countries was the more difficult the more various were the views, wants, and relations of the cantons, and the lands which were subject to them.

It was in the latter districts, as might have been expected, that the new ideas gained the greatest currency, and that the first attempts were made for



[1789-1794 A.D.]

their realisation. Educated and thinking men in the subject towns and territories brooded resentfully on their exclusion from all public posts and dignities. In those cantons where trade and manufactures were most cultivated, it was regarded as an intolerable hardship by the enterprising and wealthy rural proprietor, that he was hindered by oppressive regulations from purchasing the requisite raw materials, or from disposing of the products of his industry in any quarter except to a wholesale dealer of the capital. Similar resentments were excited by corporate privileges. Nevertheless, in the German regions of Switzerland, a longer time elapsed before the new modes of thinking, and the comparisons which they suggested, set the public mind in motion. This took place much sooner in the west, where the French language and neighbourhood made communication easier; above all, in Geneva, where nothing but an auspicious hour was waited for to burst asunder a yoke imposed by foreigners.

A rise in the price of bread, which was imputed to the government, gave occasion to the long prepared explosion. On the 26th of February, 1789, the burghers assailed the garrison with everything which could be turned into a weapon of offence. Fire-engines with boiling water supplied the place of artillery: the garrison was put to the rout, and the power of the government overturned the more easily, as its foreign props had now ceased to support it. The ruling class was compelled to throw itself wholly on the citizens, to restore the ancient liberties of the town, and to recall the banished heads of the representatives. But the hour was come for the ruin of Genevan independence. The country people and habitants of the town now demanded an equality of rights with the burghers, on the model of republican France; and the latter power was induced to second their wishes, by the suggestions of the ex-representative Clavière. The malcontents were kept for a while in check by troops from Bern and Zurich; but, on the withdrawal of these in 1792, the country people, habitants and natifs, flew to arms, made themselves masters of the town, deposed the government, and established, on the model of France, a national convention, with committees of general safety and of public welfare.

A show of moderation and tranquillity lasted some time longer; but distrust and exasperation received continual new aliment, and the disinterested friends of peace could hardly prevent some furious outbreak. Many votes were gained to a proposed new constitution, by the hope of securing order and repose; and in the beginning of 1794 it was adopted by a large majority. In April, syndics and council were again installed in their former functions, and the event was announced to Zurich and Bern with expressions of hope and confidence. Bern, however, could not resolve, on the instant, to give the name of confederates to these newly re-established authorities; and what had been done had no effect in mitigating the violence of those who put themselves forwards as the organs of the multitude, which they first set in motion for their own purposes, and then were forced, in turn, to flatter its passions, in order to continue popular favourites. Meanwhile, the price of necessaries rose, while trade and industry stagnated; and the repeated demands for so-styled free-will offerings to the public were answered by supplies more and more sparing.

In order to crush, at a stroke, all resistance, and to furnish themselves with the necessary stores and ammunition, the party of terrorists made a nocturnal seizure of the arsenal in July, 1794, occupied all the posts in war-like array; and filled the prisons of the town, and even the corn-magazine, with nearly six hundred men, whom they chose to designate as aristocrats;

and amongst whom were a number of the most respectable members of the magistracy, merchants, and men of letters. Of eight of the prisoners first examined, a revolutionary tribunal contented itself with sentencing one to death; but the clamour and threats of the multitude worked on these unsteady judges to retract their verdict, and extend the same condemnation to all the others. The doom of four of these was commuted for banishment by the general assembly; but a band of wretches again collected, stormed the prisons, and the bloody tribunal now sentenced their victims to be shot; and afterwards endeavoured to excuse itself on the plea that this had only been done to prevent worse atrocities. More executions followed, which included several persons who had actively promoted revolution. Numbers were banished, in order to secure the ruling party a majority in the general assembly. The large sums required by a revolutionary government for the payment of public officers, and the armed force of the populace, were defrayed by imposing heavy contributions on the possessors of property; indifferentists being made to pay double, aristocrats a treble amount.

Party spirit, however, cooled by degrees; approximations and concessions took place between all classes of citizens, who felt, in common, the general ruin of public and private happiness; and the disappointment of all the hopes which had formerly found indulgence. In 1796, a return to the old constitution was agreed upon, on condition of equality of rights being conceded to the old and new burghers, and the town and country inhabitants. The exiles returned home, and all rejoiced that they could again breathe freely. For two years more, the little republic dragged on an infirm existence; till it was finally united with France in 1798, and forced to partake, for fifteen years, the destinies of that country.

Of the men who had at different times been banished for political offences from Switzerland, many had taken refuge in the French metropolis, and endeavoured to persuade the republican statesmen that their enemies were equally those of France. [Notable among them was La Harpe of Vaud, who published a treatise on the situation of the Pays de Vaud and demanded its restoration from Bern.] Their representations found the easier audience, as Switzerland was already regarded with greedy eyes by their hearers. "At an early period of the Revolution," observes an English writer,<sup>i</sup> "the views of France were directed towards Switzerland, as well from its importance as a barrier on her eastern frontier, as from its central position between the German Empire and Italy. The reduction, therefore, of Switzerland, was a favourite object of the republican rulers, and was only suspended by the dread of adding its people to the host of enemies who menaced France on all sides; they accordingly temporised under the mask of friendship, and succeeded in preserving the neutrality of the Helvetic confederacy, by fomenting the national antipathy to the house of Austria. Yet even during this specious display of friendship, their agents industriously spread disaffection, and prepared the mine which was ready to explode on the first favourable opportunity: such an opportunity presented itself at the conclusion of the treaty of Campo Formio, which left the Swiss without an ally on the Continent. At this period the French Republic had acquired a colossal strength. The king of Sardinia, deprived of half his territory, was the vassal of France; the pope, and the king of Naples, owed the possession of a precarious sceptre to the forbearance of the directory; Prussia pertinaciously maintained her close connection with the new republic; and Austria, vanquished by the genius of Bonaparte, had concluded a dishonourable peace.

"But the French rulers were not content with planting the tricoloured

[1796 A.D.]

flag on the summit of Mont Blanc, on the left bank of the Rhine, and at the mouth of the Scheldt, and with establishing the limits of their empire by the natural boundaries of the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Mediterranean and the ocean. With a view to secure their territories against the future aggressions of the continental powers, they purposed to form a series of dependent republics along the line of their frontiers, as a kind of outwork, to remove the point of attack. At the extremities of this line they had already established the Ligurian and Batavian republics; the Cisalpine soon followed. A connecting link of this chain was Switzerland, which covered the most vulnerable parts of the French territory; and, from its natural strength and central position, formed the citadel of Europe."

Besides these motives, acknowledged by the French themselves, their rapacity was stimulated by the treasures known to exist at Bern and elsewhere, the amount of which, as usual, was enormously exaggerated. What was required, in short, was not a motive but a pretext for intermeddling with the internal regulations of the Helvetic body. That body had with the utmost caution avoided giving offence; had recognised every successive form of government in France; and had turned out of their territories the unfortunate French *émigrés* who had fled thither for refuge from the rage of their own countrymen.

The triumphs of Napoleon in Italy were concluded by the construction of the Cisalpine Republic. The Swiss subjects of the Valteline, Chiavenna, and Bormio, were tempted to desire participation in the freedom thus established on their borders; and Napoleon offered the Grisons the alternative of conceding equal rights to these districts, or of seeing them included in the new Cisalpine state. Parties ran so high on this proposal, that no friendly understanding was possible; and when the term allowed for reply elapsed without any being given, Napoleon put his threat into effect, and confiscated all property belonging to the Grisons contained in the above-mentioned districts.

Such was the first encroachment on the ancient limits of Switzerland: shortly afterwards the bishopric of Bâle was annexed to France. Great consternation was caused by these proceedings in the confederation; but still more serious evils were at hand. In the canton of Bâle the peasantry murmured loudly against the town: in the Aargau several towns advanced tumultuous claims against Bern, for the recovery of their old and chartered rights; and the Pays de Vaud reclaimed its freedom with more impatience than ever. It was said besides, that a French army was already marching on Switzerland; ostensibly to support the claims of the malcontents, but really to make themselves masters of the land for their own purposes. Bern and Fribourg hastily levied forces for the coercion of their turbulent dependencies; and a diet of the confederacy was summoned at Aarau. Much was said and nothing done at this meeting, as the cantonal governments neither trusted each other nor their subjects. The members of the diet renewed the original league of the cantons, as if urged by the presentiment of its coming dissolution. The oath had hardly been taken, when a messenger from Bâle brought the intelligence that the mansions of the land-vogts were in flames; that a large body of peasantry had entered the town, and that all the subject districts had declared themselves free.

The spectacle of feebleness and fear in the authorities, combined with dogged resistance to the wishes of the people, of course diffused, instead of quelling, the spirit of revolt. As in the thirteenth and succeeding century, the prerogatives of the nobles had been forced to yield to the claims of a class



of burghers and of shepherds, so soon as the example of the Lombard towns, and the growth of public prosperity, had excited independence of feeling; so likewise, in the times of which we are treating, it had ceased to be within the power of a privileged class to contend with success against the claims of the so-called third order, encouraged as it was by the example of France. Some districts, indeed, took no part in the prevalent agitations, and pertinaciously adhered to the accustomed order of things; others, more distinguished for enlightenment and enterprise, demanded an equality of rights in town and country; others, again, required the restoration of ancient franchises: some regarded nothing as attainable but by French interference; while nobler minds retained an insurmountable abhorrence for the agency of strangers in the internal affairs of their country.

It became more and more evident that the policy of the French directory led them to foment intestine discord in Switzerland. For several years past it had been observed, that foreign emissaries set themselves to work upon the public opinion. A person of the name of Mengaud made his appearance at Bâle, under the unusual and equivocal title of commissary, and set his seal on the papers of the French embassy: this individual not only made no secret of his intelligence with the malcontents in Switzerland, but affected to display it ostentatiously. He went to Bern on the 10th of October, 1797, where he demanded, in a note addressed to the government, the dismissal of the English ambassador Wickham, who had certainly exerted himself openly against France, but had done so as the envoy of a power at war with that country. Bern referred the demand of Mengaud to the then directing canton, as a matter which concerned the whole confederacy.

Wickham relieved for the moment the embarrassment of the Helvetic body, while he deprived the French directory of a present pretence for violence, by taking his departure on a tour into Germany; but he left an able diplomatist behind him in the person of his secretary Talbot. Mengaud was received at Zurich and Bern with undisguised aversion, and no diplomatic visits were paid him at either of these places. In the month of November, an embassy from the latter town had been sent to Paris; which, though admitted to an audience of the director Barras, soon received a rude dismissal homewards.

Great were the hopes infused into the disaffected party by the promises of Mengaud, and other subordinate agents of France; and proportional fears were excited amongst the friends of the old system, including the greater number of public functionaries. In order to increase their uneasiness, Mengaud threatened the diet of the confederation in January, 1798, with the entrance of French troops into Switzerland, should Austria be suffered to occupy the Grisons. He travelled to the place of meeting at Aarau, with tricoloured flags flying from his carriage; and, on his arrival there, hung out an immense banner in front of his house. The triumphant revolutionists of Bâle had already formed a tricoloured flag of their own, by the addition of green to their formal cantonal colours, black and white, and their delegate at Paris, Ochs, had hastily sketched what he called an Helvetic constitution, on the model of that of the French Republic. This document was printed in Italian, French, and German, and distributed by Mengaud, not in official quarters only, but throughout the whole population of the cantons.

#### FRENCH TROOPS IN SWITZERLAND

In the mean time, a division of the French army, under Menard, appeared on the western frontier; and the Pays de Vaud, protected by it, declared its

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independence of Bern. The Bernese government saw the necessity of trying the force of arms on its subjects; and the command of the forces having been declined by councillor Erlach of Spiez, who had hitherto been one of the strongest assertors of aristocracy, it was conferred on Colonel Rudolf Weiss, who had, till then, sustained the character of a champion of the opposite system; and had contributed, by a published work,<sup>g</sup> to the favourable temper of the partisans of Robespierre towards the Swiss confederation. An unusual delegation of full powers placed in his hands the whole military government of the Vaud. The new commander held conferences with the leaders of the malcontents; published a treatise<sup>h</sup> intended to conciliate them, but intermixed conciliation with menace. Chillon was recovered by surprise from the insurgents, and the German troops of Bern were moved on the frontiers of the Vaud.

Meanwhile, General Menard was already on the lake of Geneva, with ten thousand men of the conquering army of Italy; and to him the insurgent leaders, alarmed for their own safety, addressed themselves. Menard replied, that he was instructed to give them aid and protection; and threatened Colonel Weiss that he would repel force with force, if the former should persist in drawing troops around a territory already declared independent, and in arming the communes against each other. Without taking any measures of defence—without even attempting to maintain himself on the high grounds—Weiss withdrew to the neighbourhood of Yverdun. It happened, accidentally, that two French hussars were shot on the outposts of the Bernese army, because they had not immediately answered the challenge of the sentinels. This incident was taken up by Menard, and afterwards by the directory, as an infringement of the law of nations, and the commencement of hostilities.

The revolution of Bâle, and the entrance of French troops into the Pays de Vaud, rendered it impossible for reflecting men any longer to doubt that sweeping social changes were inevitable. Yet the Swiss democracies would not be persuaded that anyone could shake their constitutions, or force on them a new species of freedom. The numerous friends of things as they were still hoped to steer themselves through the crisis without any great sacrifices, by mere dint of tenacity and delay. Many, moreover, flattered themselves with the notion that the plans of France were levelled at no wider mark than the Vaud; and were prompted by a petty feeling of jealousy towards Bern [the stronghold of the aristocracy], to see nothing in the affair but a mortification to that envied canton.

It could hardly be conceived at Bern, that the French should have advanced without meeting any resistance up to Yverdun, while the headquarters of Colonel Weiss were withdrawn behind Avenche. He was instantly dismissed from his command, which was transferred to General Erlach of Hindelbank; but the evil effects of exorbitant discretionary powers had been so sensibly felt, that the opposite extreme was now adopted. Meanwhile, the leading statesmen of Bern, had, at length, become convinced that concessions must be made to the people. Fifty-two members were added to the great council from amongst the burghers, citizens of the minor towns, and rural inhabitants. It was resolved to introduce, within a year's time, a new constitution; in which admission to every public function should be open to all, and due proportion should be observed in the emoluments of all public services. These resolutions were laid before the directory, together with a demand for the withdrawal of the French troops. The government also stooped to make a like communication to Mengaud, to acquaint him with



the actual political system of Bern, and inform him of the wish of that canton to preserve peace with France. Mengaud made just such an answer as ought to have been expected from him. He demanded a prompt and complete change of the old political system, declared that further delays could not be suffered by the majesty of the French Republic; and designated the persevering defenders of the existing order as a handful of inveterate tyrants.

Disregarding their own positive engagements, the French, on the 8th of February, took possession of the town of Bienne. Yet the confederates still hoped to conciliate France, and were encouraged in this illusion by General Brune, who now commanded the French troops, reinforced by several thousand men, and fixed his headquarters at Payerne. This subtle leader, who, without having performed a lengthened public career, was, to borrow a diplomatic expression, *rompu dans les affaires*, proposed, with artful blandishments, and with hinted hopes of peaceful adjustment, an armistice of fourteen days; during which the discipline and enthusiasm of the Bernese army had time to abate, indecision and distrust to increase, and recruits to join the French army.

Meanwhile, General Schauenburg had collected a division of troops on the frontiers of Solothurn and Bern, equal in strength to that of Brune. The latter announced, on the 26th of February, that he had received full powers to treat from the executive directory. He proposed his ultimatum to the Swiss delegates, that without farther delay they should introduce a provisional government, take measures for the establishment of a new constitution, with securities for freedom and equality, liberate all prisoners for political offences, and withdraw their own troops, as well as those of the other cantons. On the due fulfilment of these conditions, the French troops should be drawn off likewise; and should not again enter the Swiss territory, unless the government called for their assistance.

On the very day when Brune had given his insolent ultimatum, Erlach entered the great council at Bern, accompanied by eighty of his officers, who were members, like himself, of that body. In a moment of unusual resolution, he was invested with full powers to commence hostilities on the close of the armistice. However, two days afterwards, the delegates returned from Brune's encampment at Payerne. Erlach and his brothers in arms were no longer present in council; the rest of that body were paralysed by the imminent and gigantic danger; and the full powers which had just been given the general were taken away. The same evening, Erlach received instructions *not* to attack the French, which fired his troops with anger and suspicion, and tended to confirm the belief in the treachery of their leaders, already widely prevalent in the army. Brune's ultimatum, in all its principal features, was accepted. The delegates of Zurich, Wyss, and Tschärner sought a conference with him, when he renewed his former offers in cold and peremptory language; but now added a novel stipulation to them, namely, that, even after the confederate troops were disbanded, his should remain till the new constitution should be established. It was affirmed, truly or otherwise, that he granted, without difficulty, an extension of the truce for twenty-four hours; notwithstanding which, the delegates, on their return, saw his troops already in motion for the attack. Orders for the commencement of hostilities had also been forwarded from the council of war at Bern to the army, and two hours afterwards, retracted.

In obedience to the first of these contradictory instructions, the Bernese colonel Gross had given notice to the French outposts that the truce would come to an end at ten in the evening of the 1st of March; but when he with-

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drew his former announcement on the arrival of counter-orders, Schauenburg would admit no further parley. He had already attacked, without warning, the old castle of Dornach, in the neighbourhood of Bâle, which sustained a siege of twenty-four hours. The attack of a Bernese division near Vingels was repulsed with loss, and the French surprised the Bernese posts at Lengnau, which they carried after an obstinate resistance. The town of Solothurn capitulated, on Schauenburg's appearance before it. The passage across the Aar now lay open to the French troops. Fribourg was attacked and taken, though a stand was made by the Bernese garrison.

Erlach was now compelled to withdraw his troops behind the Aar and the Sense; though it was not without extreme reluctance that the men of Bern abandoned Morat. On the 3rd of March, Brune destroyed one of the finest monuments of Swiss courage and union, the Ossuary of Morat; and the French, among whom were many natives of Burgundy, honoured the bones of their ancestors with a grave, after an interval of more than three hundred years. Now at length, Bern, Solothurn, and Fribourg proclaimed a levy *en masse* of the able-bodied men within their territories. The Bernese army was in a dreadful state of confusion; particularly that division which stood directly opposed to Brune, in which the distrust and exasperation of the soldiers were at their highest pitch. Officers were dismissed by their soldiers, and others put in their place. Colonels Stettler and Ryhiner were bayoneted and shot before the very gates of Bern; and Colonels Crusez and Goumoens fell beneath the sabre-strokes of their own dragoons. Nevertheless, the troops were again assembled under command of Grafenried, who was admirably supported by his officers, and repulsed the French in every attempt to charge them at the point of the bayonet. Eighteen cannons were taken from the enemy, and their loss in men besides was very considerable.

*The Capitulation of Berne; the Constitution Unitaire (1798 A.D.)*

The native troops had now fully recovered spirit and confidence; but just as Grafenried prepared to cross the Sense at Neueneck, the decisive intelligence arrived that Bern was in the hands of the enemy! Early on the 5th, an attack had been made by Schauenburg on Solothurn. His force was far numerically superior to the Bernese; his horse artillery terrified the native militia by its novelty, and his cavalry was nearly eight-fold that of Bern in numbers. At Fraubrunnen, the French turned the left flank of the Bernese: in the Grauholz and at Breitenfeld their militia under Erlach offered a brave resistance, armed with scythes and other agricultural implements. Men, women, and even children mixed, and fell in the mortal struggle. On its unsuccessful issue, ensued the capitulation of Bern.

All was lost: the armed bands of the peasantry dispersed in every direction with loud accusations of treason against their officers, many of whom were slain by their own men. Amongst these was the general Erlach, an illustrious name in the annals of Bern. That unfortunate commander, and the avoyer Steiger, when the fortune of the day was decided, retreated towards the Oberland, whither they knew that arms and money had already been despatched by the government, and where they still hoped to offer an effective resistance. But Erlach was murdered in the way by the enraged fugitives, who breathed nothing but revenge for their imaginary betrayal, and it was only by chance that Steiger did not meet a similar fate.

Even public extremity could not restore public spirit. Every little canton treated, armed, and cared for itself exclusively, totally regardless of the rest.

Wherever the authorities had, till then, withheld freedom from their subjects, they no longer delayed to grant it; but bestowed emancipation with so ill a grace, as to indicate how gladly they would have refused it, had they dared.

France now assumed a tone of direct command, and proclaimed the dissolution of the Helvetic body, and the establishment of a *constitution unitaire*, embracing the whole of Switzerland under one uniform system of government. This system announced a perfect equality of rights between the inhabitants of the towns and of the villages, assigned the nomination of judges, magistrates, and legislators, to the people in their primary assemblies, and entrusted to the government the choice of executive functionaries. The founders of this new Helvetic republic next proceeded to the more material objects of their mission. They levied large contributions on the towns, appropriated the treasures amassed at Bern, Zurich, Solothurn, and Fribourg, and carried off many members of council and other persons, as hostages for the further payments exacted from those places.

But the people of Uri, Nidwalden, Schwyz, and Glarus, were resolved not to deliver up their old independence so easily, and organised a heroic, though a useless, resistance under their brave leader Aloys Reding. The most brilliant and the most sanguinary struggle took place at Rothenthurm, in the neighbourhood of the battle-field of Morgarten. These Alpine shepherds combated with a spirit and success which showed them not unworthy of their forefathers. Thrice were the attacks of regular troops, four times their number, repulsed, with serious loss on the side of the enemy. But the vigour of this peasant militia was exhausted by their very successes, and they were, finally, compelled to accept terms from the invaders, and to bow beneath the yoke of the Helvetic Republic. Thus ended the old Swiss confederation, after enduring for a term of nearly five centuries. "It fell," says an enlightened native historian,<sup>1</sup> "not exactly for want of strength in the bands which held it together; for, without any stronger bond of union the old confederates won their freedom, crushed or repelled the force of mighty antagonists, and rendered themselves powerful and formidable. The Swiss succumbed in the last unfortunate struggle, because the feeling of duty, the lofty faith in their country and its fortunes, had become chilled in the bosoms of the many, and because the democratical cantons thought of none but themselves."

While the well-instructed friends of their country regretted the rude violence with which every link in the system of society, from the Alps to the Jura, had been totally torn away from its ancient holdings, they could not fail to perceive the ultimate benefits educible from the general convulsion. The former aggregation of little states had been productive of estrangement and enmity; the cantons had been proved powerless, even for self-defence; separately too poor for public enterprises; collectively incapable of any combined action. But now an opportunity seemed to be given to the Swiss people of becoming one great family, enjoying equal rights. The mass of the people, however, was not penetrated by such ideas, and only deplored the breach made in their old habits and usages. They had, indeed, demanded freedom and independence, but not this melting up into an uniform mass. They would have preferred that every petty district, nay, every single valley, should become a free and independent canton, ruling itself in its own assemblies, according to its own pleasure, and only connected by federal ties with the rest of the Swiss people. The whole subsequent march of events tended only to increase the desire for a subdivided federative system of this kind,

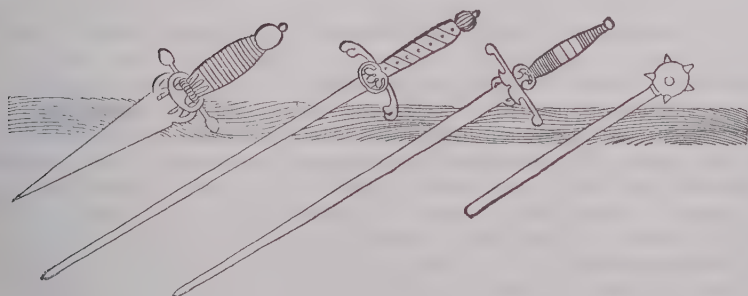
<sup>1</sup> Ludwig Meyer.



[1798 A.D.]

and the aversion for the newly established order. The new general government, called an executive directory, after its prototype at Paris, resided at Aarau without inspiring either respect or confidence, dependent on its sole protectors, the French plenipotentiaries. In the senate and the great council, composed of delegates from all the cantons, the conflicting opinions of parties caused an incessant wordy warfare. Out of doors the same parties abandoned parliamentary weapons, and asserted their discordant creeds with arms in their hands. New and old laws and regulations were perpetually coming in collision. While the state was often without the most indispensable means for its maintenance, and even for the daily pay of its functionaries, the French plenipotentiaries, leaders, and subalterns, rioted in shameless superfluities at the cost of the country, and sent to France the surplus of their plunder.

The discontents of the people were considerably aggravated by the murmurs and manœuvres of the *ci-devant* authorities; of the monks who apprehended the abolition of all monasteries; of the priests who had suffered diminution of the stipends, and of the traders and artisans in the towns who no longer enjoyed the sweets of corporations and monopolies. They trusted to the approaching renewal of war between France and Austria, and prepared to support the emperor for the expulsion of the French. When the whole population was summoned, in July, 1798, to take the oath of allegiance to the newly formed constitution, disturbances and revolts took place in many districts.<sup>c</sup>







## CHAPTER VI

### SWITZERLAND SINCE 1798

#### CHANGES OF CONSTITUTIONS AND ADMINISTRATIONS

WAR with France was at length renewed by the emperor of Austria, and a division of his army entered the Grisons. A signal defeat sustained by the French troops near Stockach, in Swabia, the victorious advance of the Austrian army into Switzerland, and the removal of the seat of the Helvetic government from Lucerne to Bern, seemed to inspire the conflicting parties with renewed animation and fury. Swiss fought against Swiss under the banners of France and Austria; tumults and revolts took place on account of the French conscription or in favour of the Austrian invasion; battles were fought between foreign armies in the valleys, on the Alps, and on the banks of the lakes; and horse and man clambered over heights which had formerly been only known to the chamois hunter. The Grisons and the mountainous lands as far as the St. Gotthard were alternately won and lost by French and Germans. The victorious banners of Austria were carried on the left as far as Zurich and the St. Gotthard, on the right up to the banks of the Rhine, supported by the Russians under Suvarov. Switzerland had never sustained such desolating inroads since the times of the Romans, Alamanni, and Burgundians.

Many of the old superseded members of the government now looked forward to the speedy restoration of their authority, which they here and there attempted to recover with the assistance of the Austrian bayonets: even the new abbot of St. Gall resumed the exercise of his feudal rights, such as they had existed before the recent emancipation which had been granted to the

[1801 A.D.]

people. The effects of this iniquitous resumption did not fail soon to be felt by the proud prelate himself; Zurich and Schaffhausen, too, were soon forced to acknowledge that the people did not wish to be replaced in its state of subjection. The decisive and brilliant victory of Masséna near Zurich, and the destruction of Suvarov's army, which had marched over the Alps from Italy, restored the Helvetic constitution throughout the whole country. Parties now supplanted and succeeded each other in quick succession, so that none could remain long at the helm or consult for the public benefit.

First of all, the legislative councils dissolved the executive directory, and substituted for it an executive committee; then, in its turn, this executive committee dissolved the councils, convoked a new legislature, and styled itself an executive council. Twelve months afterwards a general Helvetic diet was assembled at Bern for the formation of a new and improved constitution: this, like the former deliberative bodies, was arbitrarily deposed from its functions, and a newest-of-all constitution established, in October, 1801. Alois Reding, the victor of Rothenthurm, as the foremost Swiss landammann, was placed at the head of the senate; but as he possessed neither the confidence of the French rulers nor that of those who detested all recurrence to the old state of things, a new act of arbitrary power deposed him from the presidency of the council.

These continual changes of administration were looked upon with absolute indifference by the Swiss people, who only sighed at the total interruption of law and order, the increase of taxes, and the lawless acts of the French soldiery. The Valais more particularly suffered by the military tyranny to which it was subjected. The object of France was to separate it from Switzerland, in order to keep a route open across the Alps into Italy.

In the same degree as popular consideration ceased to attend the ever-changing but equally odious aspects of the new government, individual opinions and wild fancies obtained prevalence. Mystical views were propagated in Appenzell; and the anabaptists reared their heads once more in Bern and Zurich. The quiet of the former town and its neighbourhood was suddenly disturbed by a swarm of fanatics from Amsoldingen. Two years before, a quack doctor and fanatic, by name Antony Unternerer, had fixed his abode in that village. A certain flow of language, combined with prepossessing manners and the profuse employment of benedictory formulas in human diseases, as well as in those of cattle, had gained for this fellow the confidence of the multitude. He held meetings in which particular parts of the New Testament were interpreted in a new and peculiar manner; and his adherents ceased their attendance on the ordinary divine service. Unternerer addressed a summons in writing to the supreme tribunal of Bern, to appear, with all its prisoners and their keepers, in the cathedral church on the morning of Good Friday, when the Saviour of the world would ascend the pulpit and hold his judgment. He also summoned all his disciples to meet at Bern on the same day. Many of them had already remained during several days assembled together; and, anticipating the coming judgment, had transferred their worldly possessions to others. Curiosity drew a multitude together from all quarters. Unternerer himself was announced as Saviour by his adherents; and seditious projects peeped out under the mantle of fanaticism. However, such a wholesome effect was produced by the arrest of the ringleader, the consignment of his most conspicuous followers to the lunatic hospital, and the billeting of dragoons in the houses of others, that the poor enthusiasts soon came to their senses, lamenting the error of their ways and the transfer of their properties.

THE EVACUATION OF SWITZERLAND; THE NOMINATION OF DEPUTIES  
(1802-1803 A.D.)

The Peace of Amiens, betwixt France and the other belligerent powers in consequence of which the French garrisons were drawn home out of Switzerland, afforded opportunity to the party and provincial spirit to show itself with new vigour. On the 12th of July Montrichard, the French resident in Switzerland, communicated in an extra-official note to the Helvetic landammann, Dolder, that he had received commands from the minister of war to hold himself, with the troops under his orders, in readiness for instant return to France. The landammann laid this note before the then executive council, who were considerably embarrassed by its import, and addressed themselves to Montrichard and to the Swiss ambassador at Paris, to petition for a postponement of the measure. But shortly afterwards, Boizot, secretary of the Helvetic embassy, arrived from Paris with Talleyrand's note, which fixed for the approaching 20th of July the complete evacuation of Switzerland. It was now out of the question for the heads of the Helvetic government to oppose themselves to a measure invoked by the wishes of a large majority. Accordingly the executive council did its best to assume an unconstrained and easy attitude; and with all expedition voted its liveliest thanks to the first consul for his purpose of withdrawing his troops from Switzerland, which they hailed as the highest proof of his benevolence and respect for the independence of the Helvetic nation.

The reply of the French minister was couched in terms of disinterested delicacy, which almost seemed ironical. He talked of the French troops as the battalions which the first consul had consented to leave in Switzerland on the conclusion of peace. He based the proposed measure on the confidence entertained by the first consul in the virtues of the Helvetic people, who were now better agreed, as he said, on the principles of political organisation, and in whose attachment the government would find sufficient securities for the maintenance of order and tranquillity. "The Helvetic government could regard this resolution but as a pledge of the consul's confidence in its friendly intentions and policy, and of his disinclination to meddle with the internal affairs of other nations."

It is impossible to assign with any certainty the motives by which this ambiguous language and conduct were dictated. The first consul may have meant to give a popular example of moderation and respect for the faith of treaties; or he may have designed a covert chastisement for the feeble attempts at independence made by the Helvetic government and its refusal of unconditional acquiescence in the projected separation of the Valais; or he may have wished to extort an express prayer for the stay of his troops, or to revive the struggle of parties, and compel the Helvetic government to throw itself into the arms of France, and urge him, as though against his will, to assume the part of arbiter and ruler; or, finally, perhaps, the best solution of his conduct may be found by supposing the combination of all or most of these motives.

Conformably with the system thus enforced upon them, the executive council made known to the Swiss people the departure of the French troops, as a gracious boon the offer of which they had eagerly accepted. In effect, the removal of these troops was performed with such celerity that none were left behind but the sick in the hospitals and a handful of men here and there to guard whatever French property was not of a movable description.

The news of the retreat of the French troops and the ill-concealed uneasi-



[1802-1803 A.D.]

ness of the government flew through the country with wonderful rapidity, and everywhere roused the concealed but numerous enemies of the existing order, who had hitherto lurked inactive, as it were in scattered cantonments. The Valais declared itself independent. Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden took up arms against the Helvetic government. The town of Zurich, likewise, threw off allegiance to it — an example which was speedily followed by Schaffhausen and Bâle. A general levy took place in the Aargau against Bern: the helpless Helvetic government fled for refuge to Lausanne, while a diet was held in Schwyz for the restoration of the old league. The feeble body of troops in the pay of the government were driven from the interior of the country, and followed their employers into the Vaud: everywhere the opposite factions prepared for active hostilities; the towns planned the destruction of the general government; the peasants armed for their freedom against the pretensions of the towns; and the Pays de Vaud arrayed itself in defence of Helvetic unity. Blood had already flowed, and civil war appeared inevitable, when Napoleon turned his eyes again upon Switzerland, and commanded peace in a tone which was not apt to meet with resistance.

"Inhabitants of Switzerland" (such were the terms of a declaration addressed by him through General Rapp to the cantons of the Helvetic Republic): "you have presented, during two years, a melancholy spectacle. Sovereign power has alternately been seized by opposite factions, whose transitory and partial sway has only served to illustrate their own incapacity and weakness. If you are left to yourselves any longer, you will cut one another to pieces for years, without any prospect of coming to a rational understanding. Your intestine discord never could be terminated without the effective interposition of France. I had resolved not to mix in your affairs; but I cannot and will not view with indifference those calamities to which I now perceive you exposed. I retract my former resolution. I offer myself as your mediator, and will exert my mediation with that energy which becomes the powerful nation in whose name I speak. Five days after reception of the present declaration, the senate shall assemble at Bern to nominate three deputies to be sent to Paris, and each canton will also be admitted to send delegates thither. All citizens who have held public employments during the last three years may also appear at Paris to deliberate by what means may best be effected the restoration of concord and the reconciliation of parties. Every rational man must perceive that my purposed mediation is a blessing conferred on Switzerland by that providence which, amidst so many concurring causes of social dissolution, has always preserved your national existence and independence. It would be painful to think that destiny had singled out this epoch, which has called to life so many new republics, as the hour of destruction to one of the oldest commonwealths in Europe."

The Helvetic senate instantly replied to this announcement by declaring that it received, with lively gratitude, this new proof of the friendly dispositions of the first consul, and would conduct itself in all points in conformity with his wishes. In a proclamation addressed to the Helvetic people, after some allusion to the mighty and uplifted arm of the mediator, it recommended union, tranquillity, and calm expectation. The cantonal diets met to elect deputies to Paris. The several communes also were permitted to despatch delegates thither at their own expense. The mandate of Napoleon and the presence of his soldiers induced conflicting parties to suspend their hostilities, and tacitly, at least, to acquiesce in his mediation, as they could come to no agreement with each other.



On the 10th of December, 1803, Swiss delegates were received in the office of foreign affairs at Paris, to hear a note of Bonaparte read, in which he addressed them as president of the French and Cisalpine republics, and laid down the basis of his intended mediation. "A federal constitution," he said, "is a point of prime necessity for you. Nature herself has adapted Switzerland for it. What you want is an equality of rights among the cantons, a renunciation of all family privileges, and the independent federative organisation of each canton. The central constitution may be easily arranged afterwards. The main points for your people are neutrality, promotion of trade, and frugal administration: this is what I have always said to your delegates when they asked my advice; but the very men who seemed to be the best aware of its truth turned out to be the most obstinately wedded to their privileges. They attached themselves, and looked for support, to the enemies of France. The first acts of your insurgents were to appeal to the privileged orders, annihilate equality, and insult the French people. No party shall triumph; no counter-revolution take place. In case of violation of neutrality, your government must decide upon making common cause with France."

On the 12th, Bonaparte received a select number of the Swiss deputation to whom he further addressed himself as follows: "The only constitution fit for Switzerland, considering its small extent and its poverty, is such a one as shall not involve an oppressive load of taxation. Federalism weakens larger states by splitting their forces, while it strengthens small ones by leaving a free range to individual energies." He added, with an openness peculiar to great characters, and unequivocally indicative of good-will, "When I make any demand of an individual, he does not often dare to refuse it; but if I am forced to apply myself to a crowd of cantonal governments, each of them may declare itself incompetent to answer. A diet is called: a few months' time is gained; and the storm blows over."

Almost every word of the first consul during these negotiations has historical value. Most of his expressions wear a character of greatness; all of them afford a clue to the system on which he acted. One or two passages, taken at random here and there, will suffice for a specimen: "It is the democratic cantons which distinguish you, and draw on you the eyes of the world. It is they which do not allow the thought of melting you up with other states to gain any coherence or consistency. The permission to settle wherever they please, in pursuit of their vocation, must be extended to all natives of Switzerland. The small cantons are said to be averse to this principle; but who on earth would ever think of troubling them by settling amongst them? France will re-open a source of profit in favour of these poorer cantons, by taking additional regiments into her pay. France will do this, not because she needs additional troops but because she feels an interest in attaching these democracies."

#### THE ACT OF MEDIATION (1813 A.D.); CABALS FOLLOW NAPOLEON'S FALL

The Act of Mediation, which resulted from these conferences, restored the old federative system; but not without introducing very considerable improvements. The amnesty announced by it precluded all persecutions, and the new agitations necessarily arising from them. All servitude and all privilege were abolished; while equality of rights and freedom of industry were established. The mischievous freedom formerly enjoyed by the several cantons of entering into hostilities or alliances against each other was quite put an end to. In future, they could only use their arms against the common

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enemy; and the objects of the whole league could no longer be frustrated by the humours of its individual members.

The dissolution of the Helvetic general government followed naturally on the completion of the above-mentioned arrangements; and soon afterwards Napoleon recalled his troops from Switzerland. The people, in almost every part of the country, returned quietly to their usual occupations, and tendered their allegiance to the new order of things. In the canton of Zurich alone several communes refused the oaths; complaining of the difficulties newly thrown in the way of the redemption of tithes, ground-rent, and other burdens. They would listen to no friendly representations; but committed acts of violence on unoffending functionaries, set fire to the castle of Wädenschwyl, and finally took to arms. The prolonged disorders of former years had accustomed them to lawless self-defence; but the insurrection was soon suppressed by the aid of the neighbouring cantons, combined with the well-affected part of the Zurichers.

The ringleader John James Willi, shoemaker in the village of Horgen, and others of his more conspicuous comrades, were punished with death. The less distinguished rioters suffered imprisonment, and forty-two offending communes were visited with a war-tax of above 200,000 florins. It was well that the first flame of revolt was speedily extinguished, before it had time to spread itself through the country. Parties remained everywhere unreconciled; and each imagined nothing to be required for their predominance but the fall of the new order of things. The friends of Helvetic unity still murmured at the cantonal partition of the country. The monasteries murmured as they felt their existence threatened; and Panerace, the *ci-devant* abbot of St. Gall, openly stigmatised the inhabitants of that district as contumacious vassals of the empire. Many of the country people murmured, who wished for *Landsgemeinde*, on the model of the original cantons. Many patrician and city families murmured that their privileges were swept away, and the peasantry no longer their subjects. The majority of the people, however, wished for nothing but peace and quiet, and decidedly adhered to the existing order of things, and the rights which they had acquired under that order.

Thus the peace of the country remained for the most part undisturbed; and a series of comparatively prosperous years followed. The energies of the Swiss had been awakened by the years of revolution and of civil war, and displayed themselves in a hitherto unprecedented degree. They no longer stood apart from each other as formerly, like strangers; but had been made better acquainted by the storms of social collision. The concerns of each canton were now interesting to all. Journals and newspapers, which had formerly been suppressed by timid governments, instructed the people in useful knowledge, and drew its attention to public affairs. The Swiss of all cantons formed societies for the furtherance of objects of common utility, for the encouragement of various arts and sciences, and for the maintenance of concord and patriotism. The canal of the Linth formed a lasting monument of this newly reawakened public spirit.

Since the people had ceased to be viewed as in a state of perpetual infancy a new impulse was given to trade and industry, which were now no longer cramped and confined, as formerly, by corporate restrictions and monopolies. The participation in public affairs allowed to all free citizens enforced a mild and equitable conduct on the governments. Schools were increased and improved throughout the country; the military force was newly organised; and, on the whole, a greater number of laudable objects were provided for in the space of ten years than had been thought of in the previous century.

When the throne of Napoleon sank under the power of the allies, the public-spirited part of the Swiss nation fondly imagined that the hour was come in which their country's honour and independence might be established on a firmer footing than ever. To preserve the benefits gained to the land by his act of mediation was the wish of a large majority of the people. If the Swiss had sometimes felt, along with others, the iron arm of that formidable despot (who had, however, spared them more than any neighbouring population), yet his gift of a constitution had become deservedly dear to them. It had dried up innumerable sources of discord. Under it a fellow-feeling, never before experienced, had been diffused in the same degree as individual pride had been humbled. The cessation of a state of subjection, wherever it had before existed, had decupled the number of confederates, and all restraints on free communication betwixt one canton and another had been removed.

The cantons sent their contingents for the protection of the frontiers, voted extraordinary imposts for their maintenance, and a diet was assembled at Zurich with unanimous instructions from its constituents. This body declared with one voice its resolution "to observe a conscientious and impartial neutrality with regard to all the high belligerent powers," expressing, at the same time, its full anticipation that "the same would be acknowledged upon their part." It addressed itself as follows to the confederates: "The great and only end of all our endeavours is to maintain this neutrality by every means in our power; to protect our country's freedom and independence; to preserve its soil inviolate, and to defend its constitution." The senate of Bern expressed itself as follows: "Our object is to guard the pacific borders of our country inviolate from the march of foreign armies; we are unanimously resolved, however, at all events, to maintain tranquillity, order, and security in our canton by all the means which stand in our power."

Such was the general sense of the Swiss people. Not such, however, was the sense of the great families in the once dominant towns of the confederation. Many of these wished to see their country invaded by foreign armies, by aid of which they hoped to restore the old league of the thirteen cantons, with all its hated appendages of sovereignty and servitude, which had vanished from the face of the land in 1798.

The Swiss delegates were received in a friendly manner by the emperor of Austria and the king of Prussia; but no direct recognition of their neutrality was vouchsafed to them. The satellites of these monarchs gave them distinctly to understand that Switzerland was regarded and would be treated as nothing else than as a limb of the French system. A large Austrian force was collected on the frontiers, particularly in the neighbourhood of Bâle; yet many still believed that a determined vindication of neutrality would not be put down by violence. In the meantime, the Swiss delegates were stopped at Fribourg in Brisgau on their return homewards from Frankfort, and their letters were intercepted. A general enervation seemed to have spread itself over the conduct of the affairs of the confederation at this crisis. There is no ground for supposing that the men who led their forces and presided in their governments acted the part of secret conspirators against the order of things which they professed to defend. But when the overwhelming powers of the allies came pouring in upon them; when these were joined by kings who owed their crowns to Napoleon; when even the French ambassador dissuaded reinforcement of the frontier cordon — when, in short, the ancient state of things renewed its sway on every side, while a decided popular will showed itself nowhere, opposition was in a manner overwhelmed by the force of circumstances.



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A proclamation, couched in terms of mildness and of amity, was issued by Prince Schwarzenberg, the Austrian commander-in-chief; and at the same time Count Capo d'Istria declared, on his arrival in Zurich, that the monarchs could not recognise a neutrality which, in the existing situation of Switzerland, must be nothing more than nominal. The armies of the allied powers hoped to find none but friends there. Their majesties pledged themselves solemnly not to lay down their arms until they should have secured the restoration to Switzerland of the territories wrested from her by France — a pledge which we shall presently see was adhered to but indifferently. They disclaimed all wish to meddle with her internal constitution; but at the same time could not allow her to remain under foreign influence. They would recognise her neutrality from that day in which she became free and independent.

The Austrian army marched over the Rhine on the 21st of December, 1813, through the territories of Bâle, Aargau, Solothurn, and Bern, into France. During the first months of the following year the burdens and even the dangers of war were felt very severely in the northern and western parts of Switzerland, particularly in Bâle, which received much annoyance from the obstinate defence of Hünningen, and the hostile disposition of the commander of that place. Geneva, too, while she welcomed in anticipation the new birth of her ancient independence, saw herself suddenly surrounded with the actual horrors of warfare, and threatened with a regular siege. The continual passage of large bodies of troops brought malignant fevers and maladies in their train, and it became more and more difficult to supply them with provisions.

On the entrance of the Austrian troops, Bern set the example of abolishing the Act of Mediation, and reclaimed the restoration of the predominance which she had previously enjoyed in the Helvetic body. The example was followed first by Solothurn and Fribourg, and then by Lucerne. In Zurich, too, the diet declared the Act of Mediation, by virtue of which it was sitting, null and void, and drew up a plan for a new confederation of the nineteen cantons. But this was not enough for some of the men in power at that time, who demanded nothing short of the restoration of the old league of the thirteen cantons, and had already summoned the Pays de Vaud and the Aargau to return under the government of Bern. These cantons, however, resolutely rejected the proposal.

The diet, which was again convoked at Zurich and consisted of delegates newly elected by all the nineteen cantons, was now the only feeble bond which kept the Helvetic body together. Interested voices were raised on every side for annihilating or mutilating the last constructed cantons, which for sixteen years had enjoyed the boon of freedom and independence. Zug demanded a part of its former subject lands from the Aargau; Uri, the Valle Levantina from the canton of Ticino; Glarus, the district of Sargans from the canton of St. Gall; the prince abbot Pancerace, his former domains and sovereignties in the Thurgau; Schwyz and Glarus combined to demand compensation for their privileges over the districts of Uznach, Gaster, Wesen, and Ersatz; Unterwalden, Uri, and Schwyz united in a similar demand for compensation for the sovereign rights which had formerly been possessed by them in Aargau, Thurgau, St. Gall, and on the Ticino.

In these cabals and commotions Zurich, Bâle, and Schaffhausen displayed the least of prejudice or passion; while the Aargau and the Vaud showed themselves worthy of their freedom by the spirited resolution of their people. In the lands and towns of Bâle, Solothurn, and Zurich it was proposed to espouse the cause and rally round the standard of the Aargau. Bern, however, avoided open hostilities, and even offered to recognise the independence



of the Vaud on certain conditions, which were rejected by the latter. Aargau now made menacing demonstrations, and a dangerous ferment showed itself in the Oberland. Here, as in many other places, the jealousy and suspicion of the various parties came into play, in proportion as discussion was broached on the limits to be assigned to the rights of the people and their governments. News was daily received of scattered plots and insurrections, of imprisonments and banishments, in various places. The town of Solothurn called for the protection of a Bernese garrison against the threatened attacks of its own people. Swiss troops were precipitately despatched to the banks of the Ticino to prevent the breaking out of civil war; while other troops were sent into the canton of St. Gall to put an end to a scene of absolute confusion.

While Switzerland was thus given up to a state of such disquietude that blood had already flowed in more than one district, and the gaols of several towns were filled with prisoners, the plenipotentiaries of the great powers were sitting in congress at Vienna, to establish the peace of Europe on a durable foundation. The allies had already allowed the addition to the Helvetic body of Geneva, as well as of the Valais, and the Prussian principality of Neuchâtel. Swiss delegates made their appearance with equal promptitude in the imperial metropolis on the Danube, as they had done eleven years before in the capital of France.

But the politics of Europe moved no faster at Vienna than those of Switzerland did at the diet of Zurich. No settlement of Swiss affairs had been made, when the sudden news of Napoleon's landing from Elba and his triumphal march through France awakened European diplomacy once more from its slumbers. The diet called to arms the half contingent of fifteen thousand men for the defence of the frontiers. Two battalions of the Vaud were detached hastily to Geneva, and the same canton received as friends and comrades the troops of Bern, against which it had taken up arms a month before. The most important elements of discord seemed to have disappeared — the most inveterate enemies to be reconciled.

On the 20th of March, 1815, the definitive arrangements of the allied powers were promulgated. The existing nineteen cantons were recognised, and the increase of their number to two-and-twenty confirmed, by the accession of Geneva, Neuchâtel, and the Valais. The canton of Vaud received back the Dappenthal, which had been taken from it by France. Bienne and the bishopric of Bâle were given to Bern by way of compensation for its former sovereign rights over the Vaud. One moiety of the customs received in the Vale Levantina was assigned to Uri; the prince abbot Panrace and his *ci-devant* functionaries were indemnified with 8000 florins yearly. A decision was also given on the indemnification of those Bernese who had possessed jurisdictions in the Pays de Vaud, and on many other points in dispute. The complaints of the Grisons alone were disregarded — Chiavenna, the Valtellina, and Bormio, which had now become the property of Austria, were neither restored nor was any compensation for them given, notwithstanding the clause to the contrary in Prince Schwarzenberg's proclamation.

The cantons now remodelled their respective constitutions in the midst of agitations of all kinds. Those in which the supreme power is assigned to the *Landsgemeinde* for the most part removed the restrictions on the popular prerogative, which had been introduced by the Act of Mediation, and approximated anew to pure democracy. In the city cantons the capitals recovered, though in various modifications and proportions, a preponderance in the system of representation. Even in these privileged places, however,

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many friends of the public weal remained true to the conviction tried and proved by past experience (and about to receive after no long period additional confirmation from the march of events) — that participation of the lesser towns and rural districts in public functions was a requisite condition for the permanence of tranquillity; and that the members introduced from these remoter parts of the country would form vigorous roots of the slender stem of authority, and fix them wide and deep in a republican soil.

#### SWITZERLAND DEVELOPS ALONG NEW LINES

In 1817, the confederates were led by the invitation of the emperor Alexander into a signal deviation from the policy of their forefathers. They entered into a close alliance with Austria, Russia, and Prussia; and allowed themselves to be mixed up with the system of the great powers, by giving their adhesion to the Holy Alliance, unmindful of the lessons left by the Swiss of old times.

On the conclusion of the War of Liberation from Napoleon, an opinion which the allied powers had encouraged by their promises became prevalent through great part of Germany — that the efforts of the people should be requited by the grant of representative constitutions. The realisation of this object was pursued by open and secret means, which soon aroused attention and mistrust on the part of the governments. Investigations were set on foot, followed up by penal inflictions; and many of the accused parties made their escape into Switzerland. A similar course was taken by some Italians, on the suppression of the Piedmontese revolts and the abortive revolution of Naples. Natives of France, moreover, who had given offence to their government, either by republican principles or by adherence to the cause of Napoleon, in like manner sought a place of refuge in Switzerland. These occurrences did not fail to give umbrage to several cabinets, which was increased by the friendly welcome and assistance afforded to the fugitives from Greece. It never seemed to occur to foreign potentates what a blessing in the vicissitudes of European affairs was the existence of a land to which political victims of all parties might resort as an inviolable sanctuary.

The year 1823, that of the French invasion of Spain under Louis XVIII, seemed an epoch of especially unfriendly dispositions in more than one European court against Switzerland. There were personages who would willingly have used these dispositions to effect some limitation of Helvetic independence; but their influence was either insufficient for that purpose in the cabinets to which they belonged, or Europe seemed as yet not ripe for success in such an experiment. Meanwhile the remonstrances and demands of continental powers afforded matter of anxious consultation to the Helvetic diet; and their usual subjects of discussion were increased by two new topics — foreign police and surveillance of the press.

It was resolved that both these points touched the prerogatives of the separate cantons, and therefore did not admit of decision at any general diet. An invitation was accordingly issued to the governments of all the cantons, exhorting them to adopt vigorous measures, in order that nothing might find its way into newspapers and journals inconsistent with proper respect to friendly governments. With regard to foreign police it was proposed to take measures for preventing the entrance or residence of such strangers as had left their country on account of crimes or efforts at disturbance of the public repose; and for providing that no foreigners should be

admitted except such as could show certificates or passports from their respective governments.

In many of the cantons these demands were met by a ready alacrity not only to urge their execution in their full extent but even to improve on them by subjecting discussion of domestic as well as of foreign affairs to strict surveillance. On the other hand, in more enlightened parts of the confederacy, it was thought that public discussion and the old right of sanctuary should be guarded from every species of encroachment. The diets continued to busy themselves with deliberations on both subjects. Returning tranquillity diminished the uneasiness of the cabinets; and, by consequence their inquisitive and minute attention to Switzerland. Individuals lost the importance which had formerly been ascribed to them, and the sojourn of strangers in Switzerland again became freer. The press occasioned more prolonged discussions at the diets and in several of the councils; but in the midst of these it obtained more and more freedom, and in some districts shook off all its former restrictions.

During these years an interest in church affairs diffused itself amongst laymen, as well as amongst theologians by profession. In the educated classes religious indifferentism became less frequent; while the genuine spirit of tolerance made progress. This tendency, like every other widely extended mental movement, had its questionable as well as its pleasing features. Shocking ebullitions of fanaticism are reported to have taken place in Zurich, Bern, and other cantons. A footing was gained in Fribourg and the Valais by the revived order of Jesuits; and the friends of human improvement could not regard without anxiety their influence in ecclesiastical matters and in education.<sup>b</sup>

#### REACTION AND REFORM; EFFECTS OF THE REVOLUTION OF JULY

The reaction making itself manifest throughout Europe in the third decade of the nineteenth century appeared also in the individual cantons of Switzerland and in its general government. The same disparity between the rights of the nobility and those of the people which existed in northern Germany was to be found here. As we have seen, the cantons for the most part had an aristocratic government in which a few favoured families, the patricians, had so decided a preponderance that there was hardly a shadow of representation of the people. As at an earlier period in other countries there had been a distinction between *Stadt* and *Amt* (city and subject land), so at this time in Switzerland the same distinction was still made between *Stadt* and *Landschaft* (city and rural district). The citizens belonging to the latter were permitted to send but a few members to the "great council" of a canton.

With such privileges in the hands of the patrician families the administration of the state was as bad as possible. Offices were apportioned more according to birth than merit, the finances were not always managed in the interests of the state. The evils of the administration of justice had become proverbial. Federal laws for the regulation of domestic intercourse and commerce were not thought of. The diet which met at one of the three leading places (*Vororte*)—Bern, Zurich, and Lucerne—did not fall behind the German diet in reactionary sentiment, adhered closely to the system of Metternich and sent its men as mercenaries to France and Naples that it might provide appointments as officers for the young patricians.

The younger generation, such as was growing up at the universities and



[1830-1832 A.D.]

elsewhere, would not content itself with such republics. Everywhere the opposition of the liberals was becoming active against the rule of the oligarchies. Since the uprisings in northern Germany, especially, the demand for constitutional reforms became still more general. Societies were formed and the liberal press did not tire in proclaiming the principles of the new era; political equality, abolition of all privileges, equal representation for all the citizens of a canton, freedom of the press, etc. Bern, at that time the chief place (*Vorort*, capital), whose government was the most aristocratic of all, September 22nd, 1830, sent a circular letter to the governments of the cantons urging them to proceed against the press and to hold fast to the old constitutions. This only fanned the flame. In the months of October and November assemblies of the notables and of the people were held in almost all the cantons, the principles of new constitutions were determined upon, and in a few weeks the governments were forced to accept them.

Already before the revolution of July, in May, 1830, the oligarchal-ultramontane government in Ticino was overthrown and a different one erected on a democratic basis. The new constitution was accepted by the people in March, 1831. Events took a similar course in Zurich, where it was chiefly a matter of the relation of the rural districts (*Landschaft*) to the too powerful city; in Aargau, St. Gall, Lucerne, Solothurn, Fribourg—where the hierarchical aristocracy, supported by the Jesuits and congregationalists (*Congreg-*

*gisten*) who had been driven out of France, mustered out soldiers but was overthrown together with everything belonging to it; in Vaud—where, acting with the hot-bloodedness of Frenchmen, the people called out to the great councillors (*Gross-räthe*) of Lausanne, "Down with the tyrants!" and established a radical constitution; in Schaffhausen and in Bern—where the deposed government for a time had the mad plan to maintain itself by help of the discharged Swiss soldiers of Charles X; in Bâle—where bloody encounters twice occurred, and where for the adjustment of the quarrel federal troops had to take station, the great council of the city consented rather to a separation from the rural districts than conform to their demands. Thus there were formed here in 1832 the two half-cantons, Bâle (city) and rural Bâle (with its government at Liestal). Similar desires for separation also showed



PLACE DE LA PALUD, LAUSANNE



themselves in Schwyz and Valais, but they were laid aside after embittered conflicts. On the other hand, the old constitution remained in force in Uri, Unterwalden, Zug, Geneva, Glarus, the Grisons, and Appenzell. In Neuchâtel the liberal party would no longer recognise the king of Prussia as the sovereign, but was suppressed in 1831 by the energy of the Prussian general Von Pfuel; and the movement ended in a victory for the existing government.

#### SIEBENER KONKORDAT; DISPUTES OVER ASYLUM AND RELIGION

The party which in 1831 had secured a more liberal form of government in a majority of the cantons strove also to achieve reforms in the federal constitution. At the diet of 1832 it obtained the appointment of a commission which was to revise the federal statutes and present its conclusions to an extraordinary session of the diet of 1833. The liberal cantons, Bern, Aargau, Thurgau, St. Gall, Solothurn, Zurich, and Lucerne, concluded the agreement of the Seven (*Siebener Konkordat*) for the preservation and attainment of popular sovereignty. On the other hand the conservative party, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Valais, Neuchâtel, and the city of Bâle, united in the league of Sarnen (*Sarner-Bund*). In conjunction with the neutral party these succeeded in 1833 in balking federal revision. As a result their hopes and demands increased. Armed bands from Schwyz and the city of Bâle, July 30th, 1833, entered Outer Schwyz and rural Bâle to compel the submission of these seceding districts. The consequence was that Schwyz and Bâle city were occupied by federal troops and the league of Sarnen was declared annulled. The separation of Bâle into two independent cantons was recognised and the reunion of Schwyz was declared — this, however, with complete equality of rights.

The gathering of many fugitives from Germany, Poland, and Italy, who found an asylum in republican Switzerland but who at times abused hospitality, brought on complications with foreign powers. The most active among these revolutionists was Giuseppe Mazzini of Genoa, who in spite of total lack of any promise of success was continually setting on foot new attempts at insurrection, to keep his Italian fellow countrymen in practice. "Young Italy" which he founded at that time caused an inroad of about four hundred men under General Romarino into Savoy in order from this point to revolutionise Piedmont and the rest of Italy. After the occupation of several villages the undertaking foundered because of the indifference of the people. From this time on Switzerland in the eyes of the outside world appeared as the hearth of radicalism, especially as Mazzini wished to extend his activity to the whole of Europe and for the republicanisation of this continent founded "Young Europe." Now it rained diplomatic notes. The neighbouring powers complained of the abuse of the right of asylum and held out the prospect of the most hostile measures, if Switzerland would not expel the participants of the Italian raid and keep a better watch over the rest. Louis Philippe went farthest in severity toward Switzerland and even threatened her with war if she would not expell Louis Napoleon, who had returned from America, and was living in Arenenberg as a citizen of Thurgau. The latter left Switzerland for England of his own accord.

Even more important were the consequences of the religious conflicts. The calling of Doctor Strauss from Würtemberg to the University at Zurich in 1839 roused the rural population to arms and caused the fall of the liberal government at Zurich; this did not again secure supremacy till 1845. More significant was the question of the convents. In a conference at Baden in

[1845-1847 A.D.]

1834 seven cantons had determined upon the subjection of the church to the authority of the state and the employment of the convents for purposes of general usefulness. Most violent was the quarrel over this matter in the canton Aargau, whose radical government finally, in 1841, closed all the convents, among others the wealthy one of Muri, and took possession of the property for "purpose of instruction and benevolence." Among the bigoted Catholics there was great excitement over this. It led to a victory of the ultramontane party in Lucerne and Valais in 1844. This party called the Jesuits to Lucerne to take charge of the instruction of youth.

In this affair the wealthy farmer Joseph Leu and Sigwart Müller showed themselves especially active. The Jesuits had also established themselves in Fribourg and Schwyz. To expel them from Switzerland was the aim of all the liberal cantons. The expedition of the free lances (*Freischaren*) of 1845 under the leadership of Ochsenbein of Bern met with failure. The government of Lucerne, still more embittered by the murder of Leu, assumed a terrorising attitude, demanded the punishment of the free lances, and restoration of the convents of the Aargau; and when no attention was paid to these demands concluded with Schwyz, Uri, Unterwalden, Zug, Fribourg, and Valais a separate league (*Sonderbund*) for mutual protection against external and internal enemies. This league within a league was not to be endured; and, since the liberal cantons were in the majority, they decided at the diet in Bern, in July, 1847, upon the dissolution of the *Sonderbund*, as being contrary to the Pact of Federation (*Bundesvertrag*) and upon the expulsion of the Jesuits. As the fanatics of Lucerne failed to obey the diet, orders were given for federal action against the cantons of the *Sonderbund*. The federal army was mustered in and the experienced general Dufour of Geneva was placed at its head.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE SONDERBUND WAR (1847 A.D.) <sup>3</sup>

Europe had followed with an attentive eye the events we have just related. Peoples were preoccupied with them, courts saw in them a source of serious anxiety. All, taking the Vienna congress as their point of view, desired a federative, neutral, and peaceable Switzerland. From this point of view the cause of the *Sonderbund* seemed to them to have justice on its side. But everywhere, owing to diversified interests, the language differed. "A fine country and a good people," said King Louis Philippe, "but it is in a bad way. Let us keep from interfering. To hinder others so doing is to render them a great service." Guizot nevertheless proposed to occupy himself in Swiss affairs in a conference to be held at Paris or in London, but he was unsuccessful. Once Austrian troops on the one hand, French on the other, drew near Switzerland, but they were speedily recalled to their cantonments. Metternich would willingly have taken the lead, had he not known that France could not leave Austria to interfere alone. Thenceforth, of the two powers, one contented itself with secretly aiding the *Sonderbund* by relays of arms and money, the other with lavishing encouragements on the seven cantons through its ambassador.

Prussia hesitated, recommending Neuchâtel prudence. Czar Nicholas could not understand an intervention unless the powers had sixty thousand men behind them. Great Britain would not interfere at all. Under the ministry of Lord Palmerston, a young statesman named Peel, son of the illustrious minister of that name, joined the Bear Club at Bern where radicals met. At Rome, the French ambassador, Rossi, an ancient deputy of the

Geneva diet, was charged to solicit Pius IX to recall the Jesuits from Lucerne. It was thought both in London and Paris that the best means of restoring peace to Switzerland was to take from the radicals their principal grievance and their flag. The holy father contented himself with letting the Swiss know that he would remain passive in the strife (*passive se habere decrevit*).

Switzerland, under these circumstances, was persuaded that the moment had come frankly to declare to Europe her intention of being sole interpreter of her Pact of Alliance; to have done with the questions that agitated her, and to constitute herself on the basis of an enlarged and equitable democracy, which would soon see her the first on the road towards which all European peoples were proceeding. She knew the states which lavished advice on her to be torn by a revolutionary spirit and incapable of uniting against her in a common resolution. It was under the influence of this thought that Ochsenbœn opened the confederation diet on the 5th of July, 1847.

Although only the son of a hotel keeper, without instruction in the classics, but gifted with prompt and pleasing intelligence, he presented himself unembarrassed before an assembly wherein the heads of the two parties dividing Switzerland were sitting, and at which the majority of ministers from foreign powers assisted. Frankness characterised his discourse. Foreseeing a European crisis — “Our modern world,” said he, “rests on worm-eaten columns, on institutions that have for support only the powers of habit and interests, a construction that the slightest storm will make a ruin. Well, this storm approaches; the colossus is quite aware of it. He sleeps a dangerous sleep.” Descending from these heights to questions of the moment, the president of the diet proclaimed the right of the majority, whom Switzerland had always recognised. When this majority had been declared, he courteously invited all the cantons to join with it. Callame, a Neuchâtel deputy, exposed in language firm and untouched by passion the gravity of events that had given place to a separate alliance, and demanded that they should leave those who had concluded it the time to convince themselves that it was no longer necessary.

In reality, the vote of the majority meant a declaration of war. The diet adjourned so as to give the parties time either to unite or to finish their preparations for hostilities. It reassembled on the 18th of October. Two delegates, envoys of peace, were sent from each of the Sonderbund cantons, but they met with scant welcome: one-half wanted war.

### *Colonel Dufour is Made Commander of the Army*

On the 29th of October the deputies from the seven cantons left Bern, and on the 4th of November it was decided that the decree ordering the dissolution of their alliance should be executed by arms. The diet put on foot fifty thousand men, and entrusted the command, with the rank of general, to Colonel Dufour, of Geneva. No name in the army was more respected, none had more weight. Dufour did not belong to either side. In sympathy he was conservative, but was none the less a man of progress. He had been in the wars and published writings on military science, fruits of a long and wide experience. No chief knew as he did the canton militia, over whose manœuvres he had for a number of years presided in the camp at Thun, as chief instructor of the engineering corps. To these warlike qualities he united the virtues of a man of peace. He was occupied in the elaboration, on a plan he had conceived, of the fine map of Switzerland which bears his name, when he was called to quit the pursuits of the student for the field of battle. He



[1847 A.D.]

comprehended the danger to his country. He clearly perceived his duty, and he thought only of accomplishing it.

In accepting the first command he made what he considered necessary stipulations, demanding a sufficient number of troops and absolute power. All this he obtained, though not without some resistance. He was given 100,000 men and 260 field pieces. This army he distributed into seven divisions. In the choice of superior officers, he exacted that he alone should judge of their capacity without any regard to political opinion; this was the way both to get excellent officers and to prepare for what he considered to be his duty — the quieting of hatreds after the struggle. In a short time there was no longer question of politics in the army. Addressing once his heads of divisions, "I shall never depart," he said, "from the laws of moderation and humanity. A stranger to political agitation and faithful to my military duties, I shall try to establish order and discipline in the federal troops, to make public and private property respected, to protect the Catholic religion in her ministers, her temples, and her religious establishments — in a word, to do everything to soften the inevitable evils of war. If violence be used, let it not come from us. After fighting, spare the vanquished; however strong one may be, relieve the despair of the enemy. then we can congratulate ourselves after the fight on never having forgotten that it was between confederates."

These instructions being made known, the general resolved to trust nothing to chance, and to make no offensive movement unless sure of the superiority of his forces; this he recognised as the surest way towards a speedy ending with the least bloodshed. Soon the confidence he inspired began to show itself. The city of Bâle, long undecided, sent him excellent artillery. Neuchâtel and Appenzel alone continued to take no part in the war. The promptitude with which the army got under arms, well ordered, well clothed, and well equipped, astonished foreigners. The redivision of troops was necessitated by the situation. The country occupied by the Sonderbund formed three distinct masses — Fribourg, the original cantons, and Valais. Dufour proposed to attack them separately, and to begin with Fribourg.

### *Preparations of the Sonderbund*

The powers held exaggerated ideas of the Sonderbund forces. It could hardly put on foot more than thirty thousand regular troops. The *Landsturm*, it is true, meant a more considerable number of men, but not having received sufficient organisation could not be compared to the excellent reserves of the large cantons, and did not give the help expected of them. Far from one another, the separatist states could only with difficulty lend one another aid. The original cantons tried nevertheless to keep their ways open by means of boldness in offensive actions. Even before the diet began its campaign, the men of Uri seized the St. Gotthard passes (November 3rd); threw themselves across the Levantina, surprised three thousand Ticinese encamped at Airolo, and drove them as far as the Moesa bridge. But arrived at this point, they found themselves face to face with Grisons and Ticino militia, superior to them in number, who stopped their progress. The expedition had no other result than that of holding back two thousand excellent soldiers from the places where decisive blows were to be struck. Another attempt, made from Lucerne, to penetrate into Catholic Aargau and to free Fribourg, by means of a diversion, had no better success.



*The Capitulations of Fribourg and Lucerne End the Sonderbund*

Without taking much account of these movements, Dufour occupied himself only in concentrating his forces so as to surround the Sonderbund states, on all their accessible frontiers. His provisions were assured, his hospital organised. Immediately upon the rupture being announced, Colonel Ochsenbein, who presided over the diet, left office to put himself entirely at the disposition of the general-in-chief. The general placed him at the head of the Bernese reserves, which composed his seventh division and which he assimilated with the active troops. He stationed them first on the Lucerne frontier, and when he arranged to draw near Fribourg, he called Ochsenbein to advance towards that capital, in order to make the enemy think he would attack from the eastern side. However, twenty thousand men and fifty-four artillery pieces, under colonels Rilliet, Burkhard, and Donatz, advanced from the north and west by different routes, and kept their movements secret that they might arrive on the same day at the gate of Fribourg. On the 13th the town was surrounded. An experienced leader, Colonel Mail-lardo, had raised defences all round, and they had prepared to attack these exterior forts when the Fribourg government, recognising the impossibility of resistance, gave up the town, dismissed the troops, and renounced the Sonderbund. The taking of Fribourg would not have cost the federal army a single man if through a mistake a Vaudois troop had not rushed under fire from the Bertigny redoubt, which resulted in seven killed and a large number wounded.

As soon as Fribourg had capitulated the general confided to Colonel Rilliet the care of occupying the military cantonments and watching the entrance of Valais. He himself hastened to Aarau, to prepare for the investment of Lucerne. Two rivers, the Emme and the Reuss, protected this town. The bridges on these rivers had been broken or fortified. The ground on which it was foreseen that the most serious engagements would be delivered was the labyrinth which stretches from the Reuss to the Lake of Zug; bristling with wooded hills, where passage had been stopped by barricades and mines had been laid in the defiles. It was necessary to attack these strong positions, because they served as a link between Schwyz and Lucerne, and success on this point was decisive, whilst elsewhere it was not so. The leader whom the five cantons had put in charge of their militia, Ulrich de Salis-Soglio, understood this, and went to these places. The forces he could dispose of were some twenty thousand regulars and a similar body of the *Landsturm*. Salis had learned warfare in fighting Napoleon. A sincere Protestant, he had nevertheless devoted himself to a cause which had his political sympathies, but of which he despaired.

A resolution being taken to force his entrenchments, Dufour set five divisions of his army on the march from the various points they occupied, giving them Lucerne as object. Ochsenbein's reserves went down the Emme valley, overcoming a lively resistance. The Burkhard and Donatz divisions approached the Emme and the Reuss between the bridges of Wolhusen and Gislikon, at the same time that colonels Ziegler and Gmur at the head of some odd thousands of men attacked Salis in his intrenched camps. Ziegler mastered the Gislikon bridge and the Honau defiles. Gmur, after having received on his march the submission of Zug, scaled the heights of Meyers Kappel. Everything made for success. Victory was hotly disputed, but the Schwyzers were in the end thrown back towards Immensee, whence they fell back on Art and Goldau. Troops from the other cantons turned

[1848-1874 A.D.]

to Lucerne. The separation of Schwyz with its allies was accomplished. On every hand the federal troops marched simultaneously on that capital. The gates were opened to them by a convention, and on the 24th of November Dufour made his entry. On the following days the Waldstätte and the Valais made their submission. Twenty-five days after the decree of execution the task of the army was complete — the Sonderbund no longer existed.<sup>d</sup>

The diet now debated the draft constitution drawn up by Kern of Thurgau and Druey of Vaud, which in the summer of 1848 was accepted by fifteen and a half cantons, the minority consisting of the three forest cantons, Valais, Zug, Ticino, and Appenzell (Tuner Rhodes), and it was proclaimed on September 12th.

From 1848 onwards the cantons continually revised their constitutions, always in a democratic sense, though after the Sonderbund War Schwyz and Zug abolished their Landsgemeinde. The chief point was the introduction of the *referendum*, by which laws made by the cantonal legislature may (facultative referendum) or must (obligatory referendum) be submitted to the people for their approval; and this has obtained such general acceptance that Fribourg alone does not possess the referendum in either of its two forms, Ticino having accepted it in its optional form in 1883. It was therefore only natural that attempts should be made to revise the federal constitution of 1848 in a democratic and centralising sense, for it had been provided that the federal assembly, on its own initiative or on the written request of fifty thousand Swiss electors, could submit the question of revision to a popular vote. In 1866 the restriction of certain rights to Christians only was swept away; but the attempt at final revision in 1872 was defeated by a small majority, owing to the efforts of the anti-centralising party. Finally, however, another draft was better liked, and on April 19th, 1874, the new constitution was accepted by the people. This constitution is that now in force, and is simply an improved edition of that of 1848. The federal tribunal (now of nine members only) was fixed (by federal law) at Lausanne, and its jurisdiction enlarged, especially in constitutional disputes between cantons and the federal authorities, though jurisdiction in administrative matters (*e.g.*, educational, religious, election, commercial) is given to the federal council — a division of functions which is very anomalous, and does not work well.

A system of free elementary education was set up, and many regulations were made on ecclesiastical matters. A man settling in another canton was, after a residence of three months, only, given all cantonal and communal rights, save a share in the common property (an arrangement which as far as possible kept up the old principle that the "commune" is the true unit out of which cantons and the confederation are built), and the membership of the "commune" carries with it cantonal and federal rights. The refe-



A SWISS FINIAL

rendum was introduced in its "facultative" form — i.e., all federal laws must be submitted to popular vote on the demand of thirty thousand Swiss electors or of eight cantons. If the revision of the federal constitution is demanded by one of the two houses of the federal assembly or by fifty thousand Swiss citizens, the question of revision must be submitted to a popular vote, as also the draft of the revised constitution — these provisions, contained already in the constitution of 1848, forming a species of "obligatory referendum." It was supposed that this plan would lead to radical and sweeping changes, but as a matter of fact there have been (1874-1886) about one hundred and seven federal laws and resolutions passed by the assembly, of which nineteen were by the referendum submitted to popular vote, thirteen being rejected, while six only were accepted — the rest becoming law, as no referendum was demanded. There has been a very steady opposition to all schemes aiming at increased centralisation. By the constitutions of 1848 and 1874 Switzerland has ceased to be a mere union of independent states joined by a treaty, and has become a single state with a well-organized central government.

This new constitution inclined rather to the Act of Mediation than to the system which prevailed before 1798. A status of "Swiss citizenship" was set up, closely joined to cantonal citizenship: a man settling in a canton not being his birthplace got cantonal citizenship after two years, but was excluded from all local rights in the "commune" where he might reside. A federal or central government was set up, to which the cantons gave up a certain part of their sovereign rights, retaining the rest. The federal legislature (or assembly) was made up of two houses — the council of states (*Stände Rat*), composed of two deputies from each canton, whether small or great (forty-four in all), and the national council (*National Rat*), made up of deputies (now 145 in number) elected for three years, in the proportion of one for every twenty thousand souls or fraction over ten thousand, the electors being all Swiss citizens. The federal council or executive (*Bundesrat*) consisted of seven members elected by the federal assembly; they are jointly responsible for all business, though for the sake of convenience there are various departments, and their chairman is called the president of the confederation. The federal judiciary (*Bundesgericht*) is made up of eleven members elected by the federal assembly for three years; its jurisdiction is chiefly confined to civil cases, in which the confederation is a party (if a canton, the federal council may refer the case to the federal tribunal), but takes in also great political crimes — all constitutional questions, however, being reserved for the federal assembly. A federal university and a polytechnic school were to be founded; the latter only has as yet been set up (1887) and is fixed at Zurich. All military capitulations were forbidden in the future. Every canton must treat Swiss citizens who belong to one of the Christian confessions like their own citizens, for the right of free settlement is given to all such, though they acquired no rights in the "commune." All Christians were guaranteed the exercise of their religion, but the Jesuits and similar religious orders were not to be received in any canton. German, French, and Italian were recognised as national languages.

The constitution as a whole marked a great step forward; though very many rights were still reserved to the cantons, yet there was a fully organised central government. Almost the first act of the federal assembly was to exercise the power given them of determining the home of the federal authorities, and on November 28th, 1848, Bern was chosen, though Zurich still ranks as the first canton in the confederation. By this early settlement of



[1891 A.D.]

disputes Switzerland was protected from the general revolutionary movement of 1848.

The federal constitution of 1848 set up a permanent federal executive, legislature, and tribunal, each and all quite distinct from and independent of any cantonal government. This system was a modified revival of the state of things that had prevailed from 1798 to 1803, and was an imitation of the political changes that had taken place in the cantonal constitutions after 1830. Both were victories of the centralist or radical party, and it was therefore but natural that this party should be called upon to undertake the federal government under the new constitution, a supremacy that it has kept ever since. To the centralists the council of states (two members from each canton, however large or small) has always been a stumbling-block, and they have mockingly nicknamed it "the fifth wheel of the coach." In the other house of the federal legislature, the national council (one member per twenty thousand, or fraction of over ten thousand of the entire population), the radicals have always since its creation in 1848 had a majority. Hence, in the congress formed by both houses sitting together, the radicals have had it all their own way. This is particularly important as regards the election of the seven members of the federal executive which is made by such a congress. Now the federal executive (federal council) is in no sense a cabinet — *i.e.*, a committee of the party in the majority in the legislature for the time being. In the Swiss federal constitution the cabinet has no place at all. Each member of the federal executive is elected by a separate ballot, and holds office for the fixed term of three years, during which he cannot be turned out of office, while as yet but a single instance has occurred of the rejection of a federal councillor who offered himself for re-election.

Further, none of the members of the federal executive can hold a seat in either house of the federal legislature, though they may appear and speak (but not vote) in either, while the federal council as such has not necessarily any common policy, and never expresses its views on the general situation (though it does as regards particular legislative and administrative measures) in anything resembling the "speech from the throne" in England. Thus it seems clear that the federal executive was intended by the federal constitution of 1848 (and in this respect that of 1874 made no change) to be a standing committee of the legislature as a whole, but not of a single party in the legislature, or a "cabinet," even though it had the majority. Yet this rule of a single political party is just what has taken place. Between 1848 and the end of 1899, thirty-six federal councillors were elected (twenty-three from German-speaking, eleven from French-speaking, and two from Italian-speaking Switzerland, the canton of Vaud heading the list with seven). Now of these thirty-six two only were not radicals, *viz.* M. Ceresole (1870-75) of Vaud, who was a Protestant liberal-conservative, and Herr Zemp (elected in 1891), a Romanist conservative; yet the conservative minority is a large one, while the Romanists form about two-fifths of the population of Switzerland. But, despite this predominance of a single party in the federal council, no true cabinet system has come into existence in Switzerland, as members of the council do not resign even when their personal policy is condemned by a popular vote, so that the resignation of Herr Welti (a member of the federal council from 1866 to 1891), in consequence of the rejection by the people of his railway policy, caused the greatest amazement and consternation in Switzerland.

The chief political parties in the federal legislature are the right, or conservatives (whether Romanists or Protestants), the centre (now often called



"liberals," but rather answering to the whigs of English political language), the left (or radicals), and the extreme left (or the socialists). In the council of states there is always a federalist majority, since in this house the smaller cantons are on an equality with the greater ones, each indifferently having two members. But in the national council (147 elected members) there has always been a radical majority over all other parties, the numbers of the various parties after the triennial elections of 1899 being roughly as follows: radicals, 86; socialists, 9; Centre, 19; and the Right, 33. The socialists long worked under the wing of the radicals, but now in every canton (save Geneva) the two parties have quarrelled, the socialist vote having largely increased. In the country the anti-radical opposition is made up of the conservatives, who are strongest in the Romanist, and especially the forest cantons, and of the "federalists" of French-speaking Switzerland. There is no doubt that the people are really anti-radical, though occasionally led away by the experiments made recently in the domain of state socialism: they elect, indeed, a radical majority, but very frequently reject the bills laid before them by their elected representatives.

From 1885 onwards Switzerland had some troubles with foreign powers owing to her defence of the right of asylum for fugitive German socialists, despite the threats of Prince Bismarck, who maintained a secret police in Switzerland, one member of which, Wohlgemuth, was expelled in 1889, to the prince's huge but useless indignation. From about 1890, as the above troubles within and without gradually subsided, the agitation in the country against the centralising policy of the radicals became more and more strongly marked. By the united exertions of all the opposition parties, and against the steady resistance of the radicals, an amendment was introduced in 1891 into the federal constitution, by which fifty thousand Swiss citizens can by the "initiative" compel the federal legislature and executive to take into consideration some point in the federal constitution which, in the opinion of the petitioners, requires reform, and to prepare a bill dealing with it which must be submitted to a popular vote. Great hopes and fears were entertained at the time as to the working of this new institution, but both have been falsified, for the initiative has as yet only succeeded in inserting (in 1893) in the federal constitution a provision by which the Jewish method of killing animals is forbidden. On the other hand, it has failed (in 1894) to secure the adoption of a socialist scheme by which the state was bound to provide work for every able-bodied man in the country, and (also in 1894) to carry a proposal to give to the cantons a bonus of two francs per head of the population out of the rapidly growing returns of the customs duties.

The great rise in the productiveness of these duties has tempted the Swiss people of late years to embark on a course of state socialism, which may be also described as a series of measures tending to give more and more power to the central federal government at the expense of the cantons. So, in 1890, the principle of compulsory universal insurance against sickness and accidents was accepted by a popular vote, in 1891 likewise that of a state or federal bank, and in 1898 that of the unification of the cantonal laws, civil and criminal, into a set of federal codes. In each case the federal government and legislature were charged with the preparation of laws carrying out in detail these general principles. But in 1897 their proposals as to a federal bank were rejected by the people, while at the beginning of 1900 the suspicion felt as to the insurance proposals elaborated by the federal authorities was so keen that a popular demand for a popular vote was signed by 115,000 Swiss citizens, the legal minimum being only 30,000: they were rejected (20th

[1891-1900 A.D.]

of May, 1900) on a popular vote by a two to one majority. The preparation of the federal codes has progressed quietly, drafts being framed by experts and then submitted for criticism to special commissions and public opinion. But this method, though the true one to secure the evolving of order out of chaos, takes time.

By a popular vote in 1887 the federal authorities were given a monopoly of alcohol, but a proposal to deal similarly with tobacco has been very ill received (though such a monopoly would undoubtedly produce a large amount), and would pretty certainly be refused by the people if a popular vote were ever taken upon it. In 1895 the people declined to sanction a state monopoly of matches, even though the unhealthy nature of the work was strongly urged, and have also resolutely refused on several occasions to accept any projects for the centralising of the various branches of military administration, etc. Among other reforms which have recently been much discussed in Switzerland are the introduction of the obligatory referendum (which hitherto has applied only to amendments to the federal constitution) and the initiative (now limited to piecemeal revision of the federal constitution) to all federal laws, etc., and the making large federal money grants to the primary schools (managed by the several cantons). The former scheme is an attempt to restrain important centralising measures from being presented as laws (and as such exempt from the compulsory referendum), and not as amendments to the federal constitution, while the proposed school grant is part of the radical policy of buying support for unpopular measures by lavish federal subventions, which it is hoped will outweigh the dislike of the cantons to divest themselves of any remaining fragments of their sovereignty."

In recent years arbitration treaties have been concluded with Great Britain, France, Austria, Italy, and other countries. In May, 1906, the celebrated Simplon tunnel was formally opened by the president and by the king of Italy. In 1907 proposals were made to build an electric railway up the Matterhorn. Later, in the same year, the canton of Geneva voted to discontinue the connection between church and state."



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*François Joseph Nicholas*, baron of Alt, the son of an ancient patrician family of Fribourg, Switzerland, was born in 1689, and died in 1771. His history, which was admirably planned, would have greater value for the general student if much of the extraneous matter and all the violent Catholic partisanship were eliminated.

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*Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné*, one of the most notable characters of the sixteenth century, was born at St. Maury, near Pons, February 8th, 1550, of an old and noble family which had embraced the religion of the Calvinists. The young d'Aubigné neglected none of the educational opportunities afforded him by his father, and at the age of six was already able to read Latin, Greek and Hebrew. At thirteen he escaped from the restraints of his tutor to take part in the siege of Orléans. After his father's death he won reputation as a warrior under the prince of Condé, and later entered the service of the king of Navarre. In the wars of Henry IV for the recovery of his kingdom, d'Aubigné further distinguished himself; but he was finally obliged by the enmity of the queen-mother to retire from the court. During his exile he composed the history of his time, a work remarkable for its fearless frankness. The first two volumes were printed without opposition; but the third was condemned on account of its merciless criticisms. D'Aubigné, however, caused it to be printed, thereby incurring the burning of all three volumes; the confiscation of all his goods, and the savage persecution of his later years, until his death at Geneva, April 29, 1630.

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*François Bonivard*, to whom we owe the vivid pictures of the agitations which marked the beginning of the sixteenth century, was born of Savoyard parents, in 1493, at Seyssel. At seventeen he became prior of St. Victor, a community of Benedictines near Geneva. Revolutionist at heart, he entered into the struggle against the duke of Savoy, who in 1519 imprisoned him and confiscated his priory. He died in 1570, aged seventy-seven years, after a troubled youth and a melancholy old age as pensioner in the city where he had once been a man of mark. He left behind him the invaluable chronicle of his time, written half in Latin, half in the quaint French of his day, in a style at once rude and naïve, familiar and vigorous, and brimming with picturesque imagery and lively metaphor.

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*Henry Bullinger* was born at Bremgarten in 1504 and died at Zurich in 1575. After preliminary course at Emmerich, his father having refused him the means necessary to continue his education, he made money by singing in the streets and in 1520 he recommenced his studies at Cologne, with the idea of joining the community of the Chartreux. But his resolution and his religion as well were changed by his association with Zwingli, whose doctrine he embraced and whose successor he became. In addition to his history of the Reformation and numerous theological writings he edited the complete works of Zwingli.

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*Frédéric de Chambrier*, the real founder of the Academy of Neuchâtel, was a man of wide culture and varied resources. In his *Histoire* he follows faithfully, century by century, the progress of the little but proud and independent people of Neuchâtel, handling his character-analyses with skill and persisting in a style at once simple and dignified.

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*Alexander Daguet*, Swiss historian and professor was born at Fribourg, March 12, 1816, of a family of poor nobles. Since 1866 he has held the chair of history and pedagogy at the Academy of Neuchâtel. He has edited successively numerous educational journals and figured among the authors of the publications of the Société de la Suisse romande. In his own country and abroad he has gained innumerable distinctions. He is the founder of several literary and historical societies, and the honoured member of many more.

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*Chas. Dändliker*, Swiss historian, was born at Staffa, May 6, 1849. He studied at Zurich and Munich and in 1871 was called to the chair of history at the Pedagogical Institute, Küssnacht, where he is still instructor. In 1887 he was named professor extraordinary in Swiss history at the University of Zurich. His history of Switzerland has been translated into English.

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*Numa Droz*, minister of foreign affairs for the Swiss Confederation, was born January 1844, of a humble family of watchmakers. In 1864 he turned his attention to politics and became editor of a radical instrument, *Le National Suisse*. During the elections of 1869 he obtained a high place in the grand council, thanks to his facile elocution and his ardent liberalism. He was in 1882 one of the negotiators of the Franco-Swiss treaty. His writings are distinguished for clearness of presentation, beauty of style, and substantialness of matter.

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*Jean Fleury*, professor of French literature at St. Petersburg, member of numerous societies of savants in France, England, and Russia, was born at Vasteville, Feb. 14, 1816. He has published a considerable quantity of political, literary, pedagogical, and other papers, besides numerous books on a variety of subjects.

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*François Guillimann* (or more properly Vuillemain), a distinguished savant, was born at Romont, a canton of Fribourg. He taught at Solothurn, afterwards became professor of history at Fribourg and historiographer to the emperor Rudolf II. His death is variously placed at 1612 and 1623. Besides numerous poems he has left us valuable historical works.

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*Charles Louis von Haller*, grandson of the great Albert von Haller, was born at Bern in 1768 and died at Solothurn May 17, 1854. In 1806 he was elected member of the two councils and was ejected from both in 1821 when it became known that he had embraced Catholicism. He sojourned for a time in France, but returned in 1830 to Solothurn, where he died at an advanced age.

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*Charles Hegel*, an eminent German historian, son of the celebrated philosopher, was born at Nuremberg June 7, 1813; since 1856 he has been professor of history at the University of Erlangen.

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*Jacque Heierli*, Swiss litterateur, was born October 11, 1853, at Herisan (Appenzell); he devoted himself to pedagogy and has made the whole of the north of Europe the field of his researches.

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*Hermann of Reichenau*, surnamed the Paralytic on account of a contraction of the limbs, was the son of a count of Wehringen, born in 1013. In spite of his physical affliction he was possessed of unusual intelligence, and he became at an early age the most learned man of his day. He embraced the monastic life. He became abbot of Reichenau, where he died in 1054. He continued his chronicle up to the day of his death, after which it was continued by Berthold de Constance.

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**Charles Hilty**, Swiss juriconsult, born at Werdenberg, February 28, 1833; called in 1873 to the chair of common (public) and federal law in the University of Bern.

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**Henry Albert Jahn**, Swiss historian and archæologist, professor at Bern, formerly secretary of the department of the interior, was born at Bern, October 9, 1811.

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A religious abbess of the convent of St. Claire, whence she was driven in 1535, together with the other members of the community, to seek refuge at Annecy, where she later became abbess. She has pictured for us in all its crudity the conflict of popular passions in the most primitive style, and in language, which is in itself an index to the comedy, the tragedy, and the overwhelmingly gross superstition of her day and generation.

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**Jacques Twinger Königshoven**, better known under the name of Twinger, a celebrated chronicler of the 14th century, was born at Strassburg in 1346, of rich and influential parents. At the age of thirty-six he changed his condition of citizen for the ecclesiastical state and died in 1420, aged seventy-four years.

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**Paul Henri Mallet**, an eminent historian, was born at Geneva in 1730, of a family remarkable for the number of great men it has produced. He held the position of professor of history in several universities, and was a member of the academies of Upsala, Lyons, Cassel, and the Celtic Academy. He died of a paralytic stroke in the city of his birth, February 8, 1807.

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**E. M. de Romainmotier** was born at Bern in 1734, and became known to the world chiefly through the military history. This, though a somewhat mediocre production as a literary work, contains important facts not to be found elsewhere.

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**Louis Meyer von Knonau** was born at Zurich September 12, 1769. He studied history, law, and philology at Halle, where he became an ardent disciple of Professor Wolf. He filled various diplomatic offices with firmness and intelligence, retired to private life in 1839, and died September 6, 1841. His history of the confederation is one of the most accurate and complete at the disposition of the student. His son, Gerold, born March 2, 1804, followed in his father's footsteps and devoted himself to public life. The government confided to his care the archives of Zurich and charged him with the publication of the documents of the federal diet. He died November 1, 1858.

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**Theodor Mommsen**, an eminent historian, was born Nov. 30, 1817, at Garding, Schleswig, of a Danish family. He was displaced in 1852 from the chair of law at Leipsic for partisanship in political events, but was immediately called to that of the University of Zurich. During the Franco-Prussian War he was among the bitterest enemies of France.

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**Charles Monnard** was born in 1790, and died at Bonn in 1865. His chief labour was the continuation of the history of Switzerland by J. von Müller. His classic style is apt to strike us of to-day as too stilted, but it is easily overlooked in the appreciation due to his solid merit, his simple modesty, his generous and liberal spirit.

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**William Oechsl**, born October 6, 1851, at Riesbach, was destined by his family to the ministry; but he deserted theology for history, and after exhaustive study at Heidelberg, Berlin, and Paris, he was called in 1887 to the professorship of Swiss history in the Zurich Polytechnical Institute.

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*The Memoirs of Pierre de Pierrefleur*, grand banneret of Orbe, present an accurate picture of the progress of the Reformation. Modestly and without recrimination, though himself an ardent Catholic, he endeavours accurately to reproduce day by day the scenes which pass before his eyes — truth without passion, simplicity without grossness his chief object. Moderation is the keynote of this recital from the lips of the pious and honourable knight of Orbe. Unfortunately, the original chronicle having been lost, we are obliged to content ourselves with extracts.

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**Eugene Rambert**, born in 1830, first turned his studies in the direction of theology, but at twenty-four he was appointed to the chair of French literature at Lausanne, which he occupied until the Confederation called him to the Polytechnical School. His sojourn at Zurich lasted twenty-one years, when, in 1881, he returned to his own canton. He was not



long, however, to breathe his native air, his laborious career being suddenly cut short in 1886. His works are numerous and varied, but all are remarkable for great power, authority, and calm.

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*Abraham Ruchat*, the father of Swiss (French) history, was born in 1678 of a peasant family. Educated in Germany and Holland, he returned to Switzerland to become professor of history at the University of Lausanne. The *Histoire de la Réformation en Suisse* was but a part of a projected general history of Switzerland which was never completed. Ruchat says of his labours: "I have been tempted nine times to give up the enterprise and live in peace; but the desire to serve my country has ever reinvested me with courage. I seek not glory, but truth and the public good. I have always endeavoured to write as though some day I were to be called to account for the products of my pen."

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*Louis Vulliamin* was the founder of the *Société d'histoire de la Suisse romande*, together with Felix Chavannes the poet and F. de Gingins the historian. Imaginative, ardent, patriotic, variously gifted, Vulliamin devoted all his talent to his country's use, and merits the eternal gratitude of Switzerland.

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*J. G. von Wyss*, Swiss historian, born at Zurich March 31st, 1816, is the son of the burgo-master David von Wyss. He was appointed president of the *Société d'histoire suisse* in 1854, and is universally recognised as among the most learned of the historians of the century.

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# A CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY OF SWITZERLAND .

## BEFORE THE ROMAN CONQUEST

- Before 3000 B.C. (Stone Age.) The lake-dwellers, the earliest people of which traces remain in what is now Switzerland, live in primitive huts built on piles in the shallow waters of various lakes. They do not know the use of metal; use stone axe-heads, fixed in stag's horn and wood hafts, flint arrow-heads, etc.
- 3000-1000 B.C. (Bronze Age.) The lakemen learn to manipulate metal; advance in skill and mental culture; make artistically shaped bronze spear-heads, swords, etc.
- 1000-100 B.C. (Iron Age.) The lakemen substitute iron for bronze and achieve greater beauty and perfection of workmanship. Their weapons and implements become gradually identical with those of historic times. In their later days they come into contact with Gauls and Romans.
- 107 B.C. The Helvetians, one of the chief of the tribes then inhabiting Switzerland, led by the clan of the Tigurini and under command of their chief Diviko, joined the Cimbri and Teutones in a raid into southern Gaul. The allies defeat the Romans, under the consul Lucius Cassius, at Agen, and overrun Gaul.
- 102 B.C. The barbarians are defeated by the Romans under the consul Marius near Aquæ Sextiæ and one clan of the Helvetians, that of the Toygeni, is annihilated.
- 101 B.C. Another division of the invading barbarians is cut to pieces by the forces of Marius and his colleague Catullus, near Vercelli. The Helvetian clan of the Tigurini alone escapes.
- 60 B.C. The Helvetians prepare for a second migration into Gaul. A powerful chief, Orgetorix, promises to secure free passage through the lands of the Allobroges and Ædui. He is accused of treason and dies, by suicide or murder.
- 58 B.C. The Helvetians, accompanied by the Boii and neighboring tribes, begin the march. Julius Cæsar checks the Helvetians at the Rhone, and destroys the Tigurini at return home.
- the Arar (Saône). At Bibracte Cæsar defeats the Helvetians. Their remnants

## UNDER ROMAN DOMINION

- 57 B.C. Cæsar's lieutenant, Sergius Galba, subdues the Helvetian Veragri and Seduni. Helvetia is made a Roman province.
- 52 B.C. The Helvetians take part in the revolt of Vercingetorix.
- 43 B.C. Romans settle at Noviodunum (Nyon) and in various other parts of Helvetia.
- 27 B.C. Helvetia is made part of Belgica, one of the provinces of Gaul, and comes more directly under Roman control.
- 15 B.C. Rætia (the Grisons) is subjugated by armies under Drusus and Tiberius Nero and made a Roman province.
- A.D. 69 Aulus Cecina lays waste Helvetia and massacres large numbers of the inhabitants. Claudius Corius, a Helvetian deputy, by his eloquence saves the people from complete destruction. Aventicum (Avenches) becomes a Roman city of importance. Roman civilisation makes much progress in Helvetia, especially in the western portion. Under the Romans military roads and fortresses are built.

## FROM THE GERMAN INVASIONS THROUGH THE CARLOVINGIANS

- 260 Hordes of Alamanni devastate Switzerland. They partially destroy Aventicum.
- 300 Christianity makes some converts in Switzerland.
- 305 Alamanni again overrun Switzerland.
- 406 The Alamanni conquer eastern Switzerland.
- 409 The Burgundians march toward the Rhine and approach Switzerland.
- 443 The Burgundians settle in western Switzerland, receiving "Sabaudia" (Savoy) from the Romans.



- 496 The Franks subjugate the Alamanni, acquiring eastern Switzerland.  
 493 The Goths conquer Rætia.  
 500 King Gondebaud rules in Burgundy. His laws become part of Swiss institutions.  
 524 The Franks, under Clodomir, capture Geneva.  
 534 The Franks subjugate the Burgundians, bringing western Switzerland into their power.  
 536 Rætia is given up to the Franks by the Goths.  
 570 The Langobardi invade southern Switzerland.  
 574 The Frankish king Gontran checks the incursions of the Langobardi.  
 610 The Culdee monks, led by Columbanus and Gallus, spread Christianity in Switzerland.  
 687 The Carlovingsians begin their rule over the Franks. They foster religious establishments in Switzerland.  
 768 Charlemagne ascends the Frankish throne. He gives an impetus to religion, education, and industry in Switzerland; founds schools and churches and increases their wealth.  
 774 The Franks gain possession of the Italian valleys of Switzerland till then held by the Langobardi.  
 843 By the Treaty of Verdun western or Burgundian Switzerland falls to Lothair, eastern or German Switzerland (Alamannia) with Rætia to Ludwig the German. Feudalism is becoming well established in Switzerland. The church owns large estates and the bishops are powerful. Arts and sciences progress in the monasteries of St. Gall, Reichenau, and Pfäfers.  
 853 Ludwig the German founds the Fraumünster at Zurich.

## TIME OF BURGUNDIAN AND ALAMANNIAN RULERS

- 888 Rudolf I is crowned king of Upper Burgundy and begins to rule over western Switzerland.  
 917 Count Burkhard of Rætia is made duke of Alamannia (Swabia). He rules over eastern Switzerland.  
 919 Burkhard I, duke of Alamannia, defeats Rudolf II of Upper Burgundy at Winterthur.  
 920 Alamannia is formally incorporated with Germany. Eastern Switzerland thus becomes a part of Germany.  
 922 Rudolf II of Upper Burgundy marries Burkhard's daughter Bertha who brings to Burgundy the upper Aargau.  
 930 Rudolf II acquires Arelat (Cisjurane Burgundy) as the result of a raid into Italy with Hugo of Provence. Thus the kingdom of Burgundy is reunited and Switzerland, as an important part of this kingdom, attains prominence.  
 937 Rudolf II of Burgundy dies. Good Queen Bertha, his widow, rules beneficently as regent for her son Conrad.  
 940 Conrad is placed under the guardianship of Otto I of Germany. Beginning of German influence in western Switzerland.  
 950 Conrad defeats the Hungarians that invade Switzerland.  
 962 Queen Bertha founds a religious house at Payerne. (Traditional.)  
 990 Ekkehard II of St. Gall, the most famous man of learning of his time, dies.  
 992 The serfs rise against the nobles of Aargau and Thurgau.  
 993 Rudolf III of Burgundy. Switzerland is turned over more and more to the clergy and the great nobles.  
 1016 Rudolf III abdicates in favor of Henry II of Germany. Henry is opposed by the nobles of Burgundy in several battles in Switzerland.  
 1022 The distinguished scholar Notker III of St. Gall dies.

## FROM THE UNION OF SWITZERLAND UNDER THE GERMAN EMPERORS TO THE FOUNDING OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION

- 1032 Conrad II of Germany defeats the Burgundians at Morat and Neuchâtel.  
 1033 He is crowned king of Burgundy and thus adds western Switzerland to Germany.  
 1038 Burgundy, Alamannia, and Rætia fall to Henry III. All Switzerland is hereby reunited as part of Germany. St. Gall is a leader in learning. The abbeys of Zurich, Rheinau, and Einsiedeln and the bishoprics of Coire, Constance, and Bâle attain great eminence.  
 1045 Henry III of Germany by assuming the crown of Lombardy secures possession of all the territories of Switzerland not already within his dominions (Italian Switzerland). He is frequently at Bâle and Solothurn. He holds imperial diets at Zurich and lavishes gifts on her religious foundations.

- 1057 Rudolf of Rheinfelden begins his rule as duke of Alamannia and governor of Burgundy, thus controlling all Switzerland.
- 1077 Rudolf is elected king by the opponents of Henry IV. Switzerland is drawn into the struggle between Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII.
- 1080 Rudolf is slain and his army defeated at Mersburg. The Guelf-Zähringen faction wars against Frederick of Hohenstaufen for the possession of Alamannia. Many monasteries, castles, and towns are destroyed in Switzerland.
- 1090 Berthold II of Zähringen inherits the possessions of the Rheinfeldens in Switzerland.
- 1097 Berthold II surrenders his claims to the dukedom of Alamannia. He receives as recompense the imperial bailiwick of Zurich, and is made duke of that portion of Alamannia lying in what is now Switzerland.
- 1114 The people of Schwyz resist the encroachments of the monks of Einsiedeln. Henry V decides in favour of Einsiedeln.
- 1127 Conrad of Zähringen is created rector of Burgundy by the emperor Lothair. Most of the territories comprising modern Switzerland are now under the rule of the house of Zähringen. This family governs benevolently throughout the century.
- 1140 Arnold of Brescia finds asylum at Zürich.
- 1144 In the quarrel of Einsiedeln and Schwyz, Conrad III decides in favour of Einsiedeln.
- 1146 Bernard of Clairvaux preaches the crusade at Zurich. Many Swiss join the crusade.
- 1152 The Waldstätte are placed under an interdict by the bishop of Constance.
- 1173 By inheritance of the possessions of the house of Lenzburg in Aargau and in the forest states the house of Hapsburg gains in wealth and power.
- 1177 Berthold IV of Zähringen founds the free city of Fribourg.
- 1186 Berthold V. succeeds. He develops the policy of walling in strong cities to offset the power of the nobles. He fortifies Burgdorf, Moudon, Yverdon, Laupen, and Schöffhausen.
- 1190 Berthold V defeats the rebellious nobles at Avenches and in the Grindelwald.
- 1191 Berthold V founds the city of Bern.
- 1209 Franciscan monks begin to enter Switzerland.
- 1211 Berthold V is defeated by Count Thomas of Savoy, who seizes Moudon.
- 1215 Dominicans begin to enter Switzerland.
- 1218 Berthold V dies childless. With him the house of Zähringen and the rectorate of Burgundy ends. Switzerland reverts to Germany. Bern, Solothurn, Zurich, and other towns become immediately dependent on the emperor, and gain in freedom. Many nobles become subject to the empire alone and increase in power. The houses of Savoy, Kyburg (inheritors of the lands of the Zähringens), and Habsburg become most prominent. Religious orders flourish.
- 1231 The people of Uri obtain their first charter from King Henry, which nominally places them directly under the empire.
- 1240 The community of Schwyz is given a charter from the empire by Frederick II. Savoy extends her dominion to include Vaud and other portions of Southern Switzerland.
- 1245-1250 The people of Switzerland take sides in the struggle between Guelfs and Ghibelines. Risings occur in the Waldstätte against the house of Habsburg which has gained authority in middle and eastern Switzerland. The expulsion of oppressive bailiffs (referred to this period by modern investigators from its former position in 1307-08).
- 1250 Lucerne enters into alliance with Schwyz and Obwalden.
- 1254 The *antiqua confederatio*, the earliest league of the Waldstätte, is formed (uncertain date).
- 1255 Pierre of Savoy is acknowledged suzerain of Bern; later of Morat and Bâle.
- 1264 Pierre of Savoy is acknowledged suzerain of Geneva. The greatness of the house of Habsburg is founded through the inheritance of the possessions of the Kyburgs.
- 1266 Zurich with the aid of Rudolf of Habsburg defeats Ulrich of Regensburg. Rudolf gains in influence with several Swiss towns.
- 1267 Pierre of Savoy defeats an army sent against him by Rudolf of Habsburg at Löwenburg. Peace between Habsburg and Savoy.
- 1273 Rudolf of Habsburg besieges Bâle. He is chosen emperor of Germany. Bâle submits, Rudolf inherits the possessions of his cousins in the Waldstätte.
- 1275 Rudolf of Habsburg is consecrated emperor by Pope Gregory at Lausanne.
- 1277 Rudolf acquires Fribourg. He now holds in Switzerland territories equivalent to the modern cantons of Aar, Zug, Thurgau, Bern, and Lucerne, the towns of Sursee, Sempach, and Winterthur, the convent of Säckingen, and the wardenship of the Waldstätte.
- 1288 Rudolf twice unsuccessfully besieges Bern.
- 1289 The Bernese suffer loss in an Austrian ambuscade at the Schosshalde and Bern is compelled to make peace.
- 1291 The men of Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden (the three Waldstätte) form the Everlasting League (*Ewige Bund*), for the defence of their common rights and interests.

The Waldstätte form a temporary alliance with Zurich. In the struggle for the imperial throne between Adolf of Nassau and Albert, duke of Austria, the confederates with Zurich and Bâle side against Albert. War ensues. The territories of the bishop of Constance and the abbot of St. Gall are laid waste.

- 1292 The Austrians defeat the men of Zurich before Winterthur. Zurich is forced to make peace with Albert and her alliance with the forest states is annulled.
- 1294 The first Landsgemeinde of which record remains is held in Schwyz.
- 1297 Adolf of Nassau as king of Germany confirms the charter of 1240 to Schwyz and the same charter to Uri.
- 1298 The Bernese defeat the Austrian nobles at Dornbühl. Albert, duke of Austria, ascends the German throne and strengthens the power of Austria in Switzerland.

### THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

- 1307 Werner Stauffacher of Schwyz, Walter Fürst of Uri, and Arnold of the Melchthal in Unterwalden, with thirty companions take an oath on the Rütli to free the country from oppressors. William Tell shoots the Austrian bailiff Gessler. (These events are now regarded as legendary.)
- 1308 The expulsion of the bailiffs. (This event some historians now regard as merely traditional and refer it to the period 1245-50.) King Albert is murdered. Bern concludes a league with Solothurn.
- 1309 Henry VIII confirms the charters of Schwyz and Uri, and grants liberties to Unterwalden, placing all three under direct imperial jurisdiction. The confederates renew their alliance with Zurich.
- 1314 The men of Schwyz capture the abbey of Einsiedeln because of a quarrel over pasture land. Frederick of Austria places the Waldstätte under the ban of the empire. The Waldstätte conclude alliances with Glarus, Ursern, Art, and Interlaken. Louis of Bavaria, rival of Frederick for the German throne, declares the ban removed. The confederates take his side in the struggle for the throne.
- 1315 Duke Leopold of Austria, brother of Frederick, moves against the Waldstätte. The Swiss vanquish the Austrians at Morgarten. Leopold is slain. The three forest districts renew the Everlasting League of 1291.
- 1316 Louis of Bavaria recognises the new league, declares the political rights of the house of Austria forfeit in the forest districts, and confirms their several charters.
- 1318 Truce with Austria. The Habsburgs surrender all jurisdiction over the Waldstätte, but their rights merely as landowners are recognized. Risings against Austria in western Switzerland. Leopold besieges the free town of Solothurn, but soon withdraws. (Traditional rescue of the Austrians at the bridge by the men of Solothurn.)
- 1323 Bern and other Burgundian towns enter into an alliance with the forest districts for protection against Austria and the aristocracy.
- 1328 Lucerne revolts from Austria.
- 1332 Lucerne (fourth of the "old" places) joins the league.
- 1336 Civic revolution in Zurich places Rudolf Brun at the head of the city government and gives power to the craft-guilds.
- 1339 The Bernese with men from the forest districts defeat the nobles at Laupen.
- 1350 Massacre of Austrian conspirators at Zurich. The men of Zurich destroy the castle of Rapperschwyl, Zurich thereby incurs the enmity of Austria.
- 1351 Zurich (fifth of the "old" places) for protection against Austria enters the league. First regulations as to the aid that the confederates owe to each other, first federal rights and establishment of the circle of confederate defence. Duke Albert of Austria unsuccessfully besieges Zurich.
- 1352 Zug and Glarus (sixth and seventh of the "old" places) enter the league. The duke of Austria renews war on Zurich. By the terms of the peace of Brandenburg, Zug and Glarus are again brought into subjection to Austria.

### THE CONFEDERATION OF THE EIGHT OLD PLACES

- 1353 Bern (completing the eight "old places") enters the league, adding greatly to its strength.
- 1354 Zurich is besieged by the forces of Austria and the empire.
- 1355 Peace is declared at Regensburg (Ratisbon).
- 1361 Charles IV recognises the confederation of eight states as a lawful union for the preservation of the public peace (*Landfriedensverbindung*).
- 1364 Zug is freed from Austrian rule by the men of Schwyz.
- 1367 The Gotteshausbund (league of God's house) is formed in the Engadine.



- 1368 The Peace of Thorberg adjusts matters between Austria and the confederates. Zug rejoins the league as a permanent member.
- 1370 The Parson's Ordinance (*Pfaffenbrief*) abolishes special exemption of the clergy and provides for the preservation of peace among the confederates.
- 1375 Enguerrand de Coucy to assert claims to lands in Aargau invades Switzerland with a horde of irregulars in the Guglerkrieg, or English War. De Coucy is routed in the Entlebuch and at Freibrunnen.
- 1382 Rudolf of Kyburg, of the Habsburg line, is defeated by Bern and Solothurn, in the Kyburg War.
- 1384 Bern and Solothurn take Thun, Burgdorf, and other places from Rudolf of Kyburg. The Kyburgs are forced to accept citizenship in Bern.
- 1385 The Swiss cities join the league of the south German towns. The men of Lucerne demolish Rotenburg, the residence of the Austrian bailiff.
- 1386 The forest districts come to the aid of Lucerne against Austria. The Swiss defeat the Austrians in spite of great odds in the battle of Sempach (Arnold Winkelried).
- 1388 The men of Glarus aided by a few from Schwyz defeat the Austrians at Näfels. Glarus is delivered from Austria.
- 1389 The confederates are secured in their conquests by a seven years' truce with Austria. Glarus permanently rejoins the league.
- 1393 Schöno's attempt to deliver Zurich to Austria fails. By the Sempach Ordinance (*Sempacher Brief*) the confederates are drawn closer together by provision for an army and for the preservation of order.
- 1394 The truce with Austria is prolonged for twenty years. The Swiss Confederacy is recognised and political dependence on Habsburg is practically at an end. The country hereafter is commonly known as *Die Schweiz* (Switzerland).
- 1395 Formation of the Upper (Grey) League in the western Grisons.

#### THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

- 1402 Revolt of the people of Appenzell and St. Gall against the abbot of St. Gall.
- 1403 The Appenzellers defeat the abbot's forces at Vögelinseck.
- 1405 The abbot's troops, assisted by an Austrian army, are defeated in the battle of the Rheinthal or Stoss.
- 1408 The Appenzellers are beaten at Bregenz.
- 1411 Appenzell is placed under the protection of the Swiss League (save Bern).
- 1412 The truce of the league with Austria is prolonged for fifty years. During the first half of the century the league increases its territory, not giving political rights, however, to the acquired lands.
- 1414 The council of Constance is convened. Switzerland is visited by great numbers of ecclesiastics and great nobles.
- 1415 Duke Frederick of Austria helps John XXIII escape from Constance. The emperor Sigismund places Frederick under the ban. By Sigismund's order the confederates conquer the Austrian Aargau. Bern receives the lion's share. The first common bailiwicks (*Freie Ämter*) are established. Uprising of the Valais against the baron von Raron, a despotic ruler.
- 1416 Lucerne, Uri, and Unterwalden form an alliance with Upper Valais.
- 1417 Uri and Upper Valais take the Val d'Ossola from Savoy.
- 1422 The attempts of Uri and the confederates to acquire territory to the south of the Alps receive a check in their defeat by the Milanese at Arbedo.
- 1424 The Grey League is formally renewed.
- 1436 The league of the Ten Jurisdictions is formed in the eastern Grisons. Conflicting claims over the territories left by Frederick, count of Toggenburg, cause dissension between Zurich and Schwyz. The other confederates take sides with Schwyz.
- 1440 The men of Zurich invade Schwyz but are compelled to retreat. Felix Hämmerlin, humanist, furthers the new learning at Zurich.
- 1442 Zurich allies itself with Austria and resists federal jurisdiction. Civil war (the Old Zurich War) breaks out.
- 1443 The Zurich troops are defeated at Sankt Jacob on the Sihl. Stüssi, the burgomaster of Zurich is slain.
- 1444 Zurich is besieged by the confederates. Charles VII of France sends to her aid wild bands of the Armagnacs under command of the dauphin Louis. They slaughter the confederates, who make a heroic defence at Sankt Jacob on the Birs before Bale.
- 1450 Peace is concluded. Zurich is forced to renounce her alliance with Austria.
- 1452 The Swiss League concludes treaty of friendship with France. A new class of allies, the associate districts (*Zugvändige Orte*), begins to gather round the league.
- 1458 The league forms an alliance with Rapperschwyl. Sigismund, duke of Austria, irritated by its loss declares war.

- 1460 The confederates overrun the Austrian Thurgau. This results in the second accession of common bailiwicks. The art of printing is established at Bâle. Founding of the University of Bâle. Material and artistic culture flourishes.
- 1461 Sigismund gives up Thurgau which comes under the protection of the confederates.
- 1463 The confederates renew the French treaty with Louis XI.
- 1467 Zurich purchases Winterthur from Sigismund. The league makes a treaty of friendship with Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy.
- 1468 The Swiss lay siege to Waldshut. Sigismund buys them off.
- 1469 Sigismund obtains the protection and financial aid of Charles the Bold of Burgundy. He gives as security Alsace, the Waldshut, and the Black Forest. The alliance of Charles with Sigismund violates the treaty of 1467 and incenses the Swiss. Charles the Bold commits the mortgaged lands to Peter von Hagenbach, as *vogt*. His severity is complained of by the Swiss.
- 1470 Louis XI of France makes a treaty with the Swiss to secure their neutrality.
- 1471 The three leagues of the Grisons confirm an earlier alliance.
- 1473 Sigismund becomes the ally of Louis, who aims to reconcile Sigismund and the Swiss and turn them against Charles the Bold.
- 1474 The confederates attempt in vain to get redress from Charles the Bold for the wrongs done by Hagenbach to their friends in Alsace. As the result of the efforts of Louis XI, the Everlasting Compact (*Ewige Richtung*) is signed at Constance. By it Sigismund renounces all Austrian claims on the lands of the confederates and they agree to support him. The freedom of the Swiss Confederation from the Habsburgs is now formally established. The Swiss and Sigismund join a league of the Alsatian and Rhine cities. Hagenbach is put to death with the connivance of Bern. The confederates at the instance of Sigismund declare war against Charles. Bern takes the lead in westward aggression. Héricourt is taken by the confederates.
- 1475 Further successes of the Swiss. Bern captures sixty towns in Vaud, fighting against Savoy, which has joined Charles the Bold. Bern and Upper Valais form an alliance and the latter prevents the passage of the Milanese troops of Savoy. The emperor and Louis desert the confederates.
- 1476 Charles the Bold captures Granson and has the garrison executed by two of their own comrades. The Swiss gain a glorious victory in the battle of Granson and retake the town. Rich spoils and revenge. Charles besieges Morat. In the battle of Morat the Swiss decisively defeat the Burgundians. By intervention of Louis XI an arrangement is made with Savoy by which for the first time French speaking districts become connected with the confederation. Savoy loses Fribourg, Granson, Morat, Orbe, Echallens, and Aigle. Bern profits most.
- 1477 The Swiss and the troops of René, duke of Lorraine, defeat Charles the Bold at the battle of Nancy. The foundation of Swiss nationality is firmly laid by these victories, and the fame of Swiss arms is world-wide; but internal jealousies arise. Riots in various states. The band of the Mad Life. Zurich, Bern, Lucerne, Fribourg, and Solothurn form a separate league and a perpetual treaty (*Burgrecht*).
- 1478 The men of Zurich, Lucerne, Uri, and Schwyz defeat the Milanese at the battle of Giornico. Switzerland expands toward the south.
- 1480 Fribourg and Solothurn seek admission to the league. This demand is opposed by the rural members and supported by the towns belonging to the separate league of the *Burgrecht*.
- 1481 The Compact of Stanz (*Stanser Verkommis*) prevents disruption. Nicholas von der Flüe aids to an understanding. Fribourg and Solothurn (the ninth and tenth members) are admitted to the confederation. The separate league of the towns is dissolved. Dangerous societies are forbidden. The compact concentrates the government of the confederation.
- 1489 Hans Waldmann, burgomaster of Zurich, attempts to subordinate the peasants. He is overthrown and executed.
- 1490 Insurrection against the federal government in St. Gall is put down.
- 1496 The Swiss refuse to obey the imperial chamber, objecting to taxation without representation. They refuse to join the Swabian League.
- 1497 The confederates conclude a perpetual league with the Grey League of the Grisons.
- 1498 The confederates conclude a perpetual league with the League of God's House (*Gotteshausbund*) of the Grisons.
- 1499 The Swiss go to the support of their allies in the Grisons against the emperor Maximilian and the Swabian League. Successes of the Swiss at Triesen, at Bruderholz near Bâle, at Calven, at Schwaderloo, and at Frastenz. The Swiss Confederation by the peace of Bâle secures freedom from German imperial regulations and rises to the rank of an allied state of the empire, having practical independence. The Swiss establish their rights in the Thurgau. The league of Ten Jurisdictions in the Grisons confirms an alliance with the Swiss League.

- 1500 Swiss mercenaries engaged by Louis Sforza surrender Novara to the French rather than fight the Swiss in the French army of Louis XII. By the help of the Swiss Milan becomes a property of France. The practice of Swiss serving in foreign armies has now become frequent.

### THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

- 1501 Bale and Schaffhausen (the eleventh and twelfth members) are admitted to the confederation.
- 1510 Schinner, bishop of Sitten, induces Swiss troops to aid in the expulsion of the French from Italy.
- 1512 The Swiss conquer Milan and drive the French out of Italy; declare Maximilian duke of Milan. In return the confederates receive Ticino and the Grisons leagues get the Valtellina, Cleves, and Bormio.

### THE CONFEDERATION OF THIRTEEN STATES

- 1513 Appenzell is admitted to the confederation, thus completing the confederation of Thirteen States. The Swiss defeat the French at Novara.
- 1515 Francis I defeats the Swiss at Marignano, breaking the Swiss power in northern Italy.
- 1516 The Swiss League concludes a treaty of Perpetual Peace with France. Hans Holbein at Bale wins great reputation as a painter. His work marks the further advance of humanism in Switzerland.
- 1519 Ulrich (Huldreich) Zwingli preaches the Reformation at Zurich.
- 1521 Twelve states of the confederation (Zurich being restrained by Zwingli) conclude an alliance with France.
- 1522 The diet at Lucerne forbids the clergy to preach unauthorised doctrines.
- 1523 Zwingli's teaching is sanctioned by the council at two "disputations" at Zurich. Zurich pushes forward the work of the Reformation, but is not supported by the other confederates. The first ecclesiastics are publicly married.
- 1524 Under Zwingli's leadership Zurich dissolves the monasteries. The forest states prevail on the diet at Lucerne to pronounce for the old faith. Religious riots occur in the Thurgau. The monastery of Ittingen is burned down. The Reformation progresses in eastern Switzerland.
- 1525 The mass is discontinued at Zurich. The temporal rights of the Grossmünster are turned over to the state. The Carolinum, a school for humanists, founded by Zwingli and Zurich, is made a nursery of culture. Lausanne concludes an alliance with Fribourg and Bern. The disorders caused by the anabaptists are checked. The Swiss mercenaries are defeated with the French at Pavia.
- 1526 The disputation at Baden, Eck, and Faber, representing the Catholics, decides in favour of the old faith. Several executions follow. Geneva forms alliances with Bern and Fribourg.
- 1527 Evangelical co-burgership of Zürich and Constance (*Evangelisches Burgrecht*). Execution of Max Wehrli, the Catholic bailiff in the Thurgau. Troubles in Toggenburg and St. Gall widen the breach between Catholics and Evangelicals.
- 1528 Bern joins Zurich and Constance in favour of religious freedom and is followed by Bale, Schaffhausen, St. Gall and Mülhausen. The confederation is in danger of breaking up.
- 1529 Lucerne, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, and Zug form the Christian Alliance (*Christliche Vereinigung*), and ally themselves with Austria. First war of Kappel. The Austrian alliance is annulled and religious parity for each member of the confederation is declared by the first Peace of Kappel.
- 1530 Genoa with confederate aid secures freedom from Savoy.
- 1531 Second war of Kappel. The Catholic members of the confederation advance on Zurich. Near Kappel the men of Zurich are defeated and Zwingli is slain. Second Peace of Kappel. The Reformation in Switzerland is considerably checked. Catholic reaction. The league is now completely split into Catholics and evangelicals.
- 1532 William Farel begins to preach the Reformation in Geneva.
- 1533 The Reformation is successfully planted in Geneva by Farel.
- 1536 Bern conquers Vaud and Lausanne and takes them from Savoy. Calvin comes to Geneva. The first Helvetic confession is published.
- 1538 By influence of the papal party Calvin is exiled from Geneva.
- 1541 Calvin returns to Geneva and there establishes a theocratic government, the *consistorium*. He enters upon a harsh rule, imprisoning and executing his opponents.
- 1548 Constance is captured by the Austrians in the war of Smalkalden and is cut off from the Swiss Confederation.



- 1549 Calvin's theological disputes with the Zurich reformers are partly settled by the Compromise of Zurich (*Consensus Tigurinus*).
- 1553 Michael Servetus is burned at the stake at Geneva at the instance of Calvin.
- 1555 Calvin expels from Geneva many who uphold municipal liberty and replaces them by foreigners. The city gains the name of the "Protestant Rome." Evangelicals driven out of Locarno take refuge in Zurich.
- 1559 Calvin founds the University of Geneva.
- 1564 Calvin dies. Théodore de Bèze succeeds him as head of the church. Emmanuel Philibert, duke of Savoy, supported by the Catholic members of the league, demands back the districts seized by Bern in 1536. The Treaty of Lausanne restores several of them. The counter-Reformation (Catholic reaction) makes itself strongly felt in Switzerland. It is furthered by Carlo Borromeo, archbishop of Milan, and at Lucerne by Ludwig Pfyffer, the "Swiss king."
- 1565 The Catholic states of Switzerland ally themselves with Pope Pius IV.
- 1566 The second Helvetic Confession is published as a basis for union between the Calvinists and the Zurich reformers.
- 1574 The Catholic reaction advances by the establishment of the Jesuits at Lucerne.
- 1580 A papal nuncio comes to Lucerne. Borromeo founds at Milan the "Collegium Helveticum" for the education of Swiss priests.
- 1581 The Capuchins become active in Switzerland for the Catholic reaction.
- 1582 The Protestants object to the introduction of the Gregorian calendar.
- 1586 The Golden or Borromeo League for support of Catholicism is formed by the seven Catholic members of the confederation (Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Lucerne, Zug, Freiburg, Solothurn).
- 1588 The reformed states form a separate league with Strasburg.
- 1597 Appenzell is divided into two parts, "Inner Rhodes," Catholic, and "Outer Rhodes," Protestant.

## THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

- 1602 The Duke of Savoy attempts to get hold of Geneva (the "Escalade").
- 1620 Massacre of Protestants in the Valtellina. The valley is won for the Catholics. The Swiss Confederation remains nominally neutral in the Thirty Years' War, but various members become involved from time to time.
- 1622 The Austrians conquer the Prätigau.
- 1624 French troops take the Valtellina.
- 1629 The Valtellina is taken by the imperial troops.
- 1632 The Baden Compromise adjusts the religious status of the "common bailiwicks."
- 1635 The French once more capture the Valtellina.
- 1637 George Jenatsch with help of the Spaniards drives the French out of the Valtellina.
- 1639 The independence of the Grisons is established.
- 1648 By the Treaty of Westphalia the Swiss Confederation is formally separated from Germany and recognized as independent. Religious divisions continue to cripple the energy of the confederation. Poverty, a result of the Thirty Years' War, causes discontent.
- 1653 The Peasants' War breaks out in Bern, Solothurn, Lucerne, and Bâle because of the oppression of the governing class. The peasants form a league of Suniswald. They are defeated at Wohlenschwyl.
- 1654 The Protestant Swiss intercede for the Waldenses. They win the friendship of Oliver Cromwell, who pays great honor to their envoys.
- 1655 Protestant fugitives from Schwyz find refuge in Zurich.
- 1656 The first Villmergen War results. Christopher Pfyffer of Lucerne with a body of Catholics defeats the Protestants at Villmergen. A treaty is concluded which provides for the individual sovereignty of each member of the confederation in religious matters.
- 1663 The confederation makes a treaty with Louis XIV of France, by which Protestant Swiss mercenaries are taken into the king's pay.
- 1668 As the result of encroachments by Louis in the Franche-Comté the confederates provide for joint action against outside enemies by putting into execution the agreement known as the Defensionale. French Protestant refugees find shelter in Switzerland.

## THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

- 1707 Pierre Fatio at the head of a committee of the council at Geneva demands a more liberal government.
- 1712 The abbot of St. Gall by his oppressions rouses the people of Toggenburg to insur-

- rection. The second Villmergen War (or war of Toggenburg) between Catholics and Protestants from these troubles. The Catholics are defeated at Villmergen. The Treaty of Aarau assures the "common bailiwicks" religious liberty and gives advantages to the Protestants.
- 1715 The Catholic members of the confederation by the Truckli Bund agree to put France in the position of guarantor of the confederation. A period of decline. The confederation has little unity. Unsatisfactory relations of the classes.
- 1723 The conspiracy of Davel to free Vaud from the oppression of Bern is crushed.
- 1729 The "*Harten*" (hard ones) opponents of the government, and the "*Linden*" (soft ones) at Zug struggle for supremacy.
- 1732 The "*Harten*" gain a victory over the "*Linden*" in the Outer Rhodes of Appenzell.
- 1737 The democrats win a victory for liberal government in Geneva.
- 1744 Demands for a more liberal government are made in Bern.
- 1749 Hentzi's conspiracy attempts in vain to overthrow the oligarchy at Bern.
- 1748 Discontents of the common people cause disorder in Neuchâtel.
- 1755 Popular uprisings in the Leventina are crushed by the government of Uri.
- 1762 The Helvetic Society is founded and fosters aspirations for liberty. Rousseau, then a citizen of Geneva, publishes the *Contrat Social*. These books are publicly burned by order of the city government. The popular party wins in the Outer Rhodes of Appenzell.
- 1764 The "*Harten*" are victorious in Zug.
- 1768 Armed intervention of France, Zurich, and Bern in Geneva to suppress popular revolts of the "natives." Disorders occur in the patriciate of Lucerne.
- 1770 The "natives" rise in revolt in Geneva.
- 1777 All of the thirteen states of the confederation join in making a new alliance with France. Political disturbances occur in Zurich.
- 1780 The meetings of the Helvetic Society are forbidden.
- 1781 Anarchy in Geneva. Pastor Waser is executed at Zurich for opposition to the city government. France, Bern, and Sardinia intervene. Emigration from Geneva. Insurrection at Fribourg under Chenaux.
- 1784 Joseph Suter, a popular leader in the Inner Rhodes of Appenzell, is executed.
- 1789 The French Revolution begins to find sympathizers in Switzerland.
- 1790 Exiles from Vaud and Fribourg organise the Helvetic Club at Paris to spread the new ideas in Switzerland. The club stirs up risings in the western part of the confederation. Lower Valais rises against the oppressive rule of the upper districts.
- 1792 Porrentruy defies the prince-bishop of Bâle; with the help of the French drives out the imperial troops; forms the Rauracian Republic. This afterward becomes the French department of Mont Terrible. Geneva is saved from France by a force from Zurich and Bern. Massacre of the Swiss guards at the Tuileries by the Paris mob. The diet of Aarau orders the recall of the Swiss regiments.
- 1793 A reign of terror begins in Geneva because of uprising of the "natives."
- 1794 The revolutionary party assumes control in Geneva. Arrests and murders. Demands for greater freedom are made at Stäfa in the territory of Zurich.
- 1795 A reaction sets in in Geneva. The insurrection at Stäfa is suppressed.
- 1797 Bonaparte incorporates the Italian bailiwicks of the Valtellina with the Cisalpine Republic. La Harpe calls on the Directory to protect the liberties of Vaud against the oppression of Bern.

#### • THE HELVETIC REPUBLIC

- 1798 French troops in response occupy Mülhausen, Bienne, and part of the lands of the prince-bishop of Bâle. Insurgents open the prison of Chillon. Another French army enters Vaud and the Lemanic Republic is proclaimed there. The French occupy Fribourg and Solothurn; defeat the Bernese after fierce fighting at Neueneck; take Bern, the stronghold of the aristocratic party, and pillage the treasury. The Revolution triumphs over the Confederation. By order of the Directory, the Helvetic Republic, one and indivisible, is proclaimed. Peter Ochs of Bâle supplies a constitution. Ten of the thirteen members of the old confederation accept the new government. Twenty-three "cantons," or administrative districts, are created. The forest districts rebel. Their resistance, headed by Alois Reding, of Schwyz, is put down after desperate conflicts at Schindellegi, Morgarten, and at Rothenthurm. An insurrection of the mountaineers of Upper Valais against the French is bloodily repressed. The French put down an insurrection in Nidwald with great bloodshed. (The days of terror of Nidwald end.)
- 1799 Zurich, the forest cantons, and Rhetia become the scene of the struggle of the Austrian and Russians against the French in the wars of the Coalition.

## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

1802 Strife between the centralists and the federalists. Bonaparte withdraws the French troops. The Helvetian government is driven from Bern. Bonaparte convenes Swiss statesmen at Paris in the *consulta*, and acts as mediator. The Frickthal, the last Austrian possession in Switzerland, is given to the Helvetic Republic by Bonaparte.

## THE CONFEDERATION OF NINETEEN CANTONS

- 1803 Napoleon's Act of Mediation is made the constitution of "Switzerland." This name for the first time is used as the official name of the country. The thirteen members of the old confederation are set up again and six new cantons are added. There are to be no more privileged classes or subject lands. Switzerland enjoys ten years of peace and prosperity.
- 1804 Insurrection breaks out at Horgen in the canton Zurich.
- 1806 Neuchâtel is given to Marshal Berthier.
- 1810 Valais, which has been a separate republic, is made into the French department of the Simplon. The Swiss Society of the Public Good is founded. Pestalozzi and Fellenberg work out an educational system.
- 1813 Austrian and Russian troops, supported by the reactionary party, enter Switzerland; the diet abolishes the constitution of 1803.
- 1814 "The long diet" at Zurich attempts to adjust party differences. Bern heads a party anxious to restore the old order. Zurich and the majority stand out for the nineteen cantons of Napoleon. The allies enter Switzerland.

## THE LEAGUE OF TWENTY-TWO STATES

- 1815 The Swiss diet accepts the decisions of the congress of Vienna and a new constitution, the Federal Pact, is adopted. The league of States (*Staatenbund*) is made to include twenty-two members. The sovereign rights of each canton are recognised. The federal diet exercises supreme sovereignty only in purely national concerns. The great powers at the congress of Vienna guarantee the neutrality of Switzerland. Switzerland is freed from subserviency to France. New aristocracies make themselves felt.
- 1817 Switzerland becomes a party to the Holy Alliance.
- 1819 The Helvetic Society again takes up political reforms.
- 1823 Freedom of the press is restricted under influence of the great powers. Intellectual reaction and ultra-montanism become noticeable and cause dissensions.
- 1830 The July revolution in Paris finds an echo in Switzerland. Twelve cantons reform their constitutions in a democratic sense. Popular demonstrations at the assembly of Uster.
- 1831 The aristocracy of Bern submits to liberal reforms.
- 1832 The cantons Zurich, Bern, Lucerne, Solothurn, St. Gall, Aargau, and Thurgau agree to united action looking toward reform (*Siebener Concordat*). They are opposed by the reactionary cantons, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Valais, and Neuchâtel which form the league of Sarnen (Sarner Bund).
- 1833 Bale is divided into a rural (Baselland) and an urban (Baselstadt) half-canton because of the desire of the rural population for proportional representation the Diet.
- 1834 Political refugees to Switzerland increase to such an extent that measures are taken by the diet to prevent abuse of the privilege of asylum.
- 1835 Religious tumults in Aargau.
- 1836 Difficulties with France over tariff regulations. Religious tumults in the Bernese Jura.
- 1838 The Society of the Grütli is founded at Geneva.
- 1839 Reaction in Zurich against radicals and freethinkers. (Strauss' *Life of Jesus*).
- 1840 Clericals revolt against the radicals in Aargau.
- 1841 They are put down. Eight monasteries in Aargau are suppressed. The quarrel provokes disputes in the diet.
- 1843 The diet effects a compromise in the religious quarrel in Aargau by which four instead of eight of the monasteries are suppressed. The seven Catholic cantons, Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, Lucerne, Zug, Fribourg, and Valais hereupon form a separate league, the Sonderbund.
- 1844 The Sonderbund declares for the reopening of all the monasteries in Aargau. The



clericals in Lucerne, the Vorort, give high posts to Jesuits. Parties of free-lances attempt to capture the city.

- 1845 The attack on Lucerne is renewed but is unsuccessful. The radicals gain control in Zurich.
- 1846 The radicals become the majority in Bern and Geneva.
- 1847 The radicals get a majority in St. Gall. The diet in which the radicals are now in the majority declares the Sonderbund contrary to the Federal Pact. The diet resolves to revise the pact and asks the cantons to expel the Jesuits. The attempt to enforce the decree leads to the Sonderbund War. This is quickly ended by the defeat of the rebellious Catholic cantons at Gislikon, largely because of the good generalship of Dufour.

#### SWITZERLAND AS A FEDERAL STATE

- 1848 A new constitution is accepted by the majority of the cantons. Switzerland becomes a federal state (*Bundesstaat*). A central government is organised consisting of a council of states (*Ständerath*), a national council (*National Rath*) and a federal council or executive (*Bundesrath*). German, French, and Italian are recognised as national languages. Bern is chosen the national capital.
- 1855 The federal polytechnic school is opened at Zurich. Improvements in the educational system are introduced.
- 1856 A royalist conspiracy in Neuchâtel is put down and causes a dispute between Switzerland and the king of Prussia, the overlord of Neuchâtel.
- 1857 Neuchâtel is definitely ceded to Switzerland.
- 1859 Switzerland posts troops on the Italian frontier to preserve neutrality in the Italian War and puts an end to foreign enlistments.
- 1860 The Swiss government protests against the cession of Nice and Savoy to France.
- 1861 French troops occupy the Vallée de Dappes.
- 1862 The question of the frontiers in the Vallée de Dappes is arranged with France by mutual cession of territory.
- 1864 The convention of Geneva introduces humanitarian reforms in warfare. Election riots at Geneva lead to bloodshed.
- 1865 International social science congress meets at Bern.
- 1866 Restrictions on religious liberty of Jesuits, etc., are removed. An attempt is made to revise the constitution in a democratic sense but fails.
- 1867 An international congress of workmen is held at Lausanne.
- 1869 The construction of the St. Gotthard tunnel is decided upon.
- 1871 Switzerland shelters French refugees of the Franco-German War though insisting on the maintenance of neutrality. The growth in power of the "old Catholics" causes disturbances in western Switzerland (the struggle against Ultramontanism). The Alabama Arbitration Commission meets in Geneva.
- 1872 An attempt at revision of the constitution is defeated by a small majority.
- 1873 Abbé Mermillod, appointed by the pope "apostolic vicar" of Geneva, is banished from Switzerland. The see of Bishop Lachat of Bâle is suppressed by several cantons because he upholds the doctrine of papal infallibility.

#### SWITZERLAND UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF 1874

- 1874 A new constitution, a revision of that of 1848, is accepted by the people. The referendum hereby becomes a part of the machinery of the federal government as it had already been part of that of most of the cantons. The new constitution increases centralisation in the government. The international postal congress meets at Bern and lays the foundation for the international postal union.
- 1876 Religious and political differences cause an armed encounter in Ticino.
- 1877 A law regulating the working hours in factories is passed, marking an advance in labour legislation.
- 1878 James Fazy, noted statesman, dies.
- 1879 Legislation puts an end to dissensions over the financiering of the St. Gotthard railway.
- 1882 The St. Gotthard railway is opened.
- 1883 Mermillod is appointed bishop of Lausanne.
- 1884 Bishop Lachat is made apostolic vicar of Ticino. An international conference is held at Bern to secure the protection of copyright.
- 1887 Alcohol is made a state monopoly.
- 1888 The creation of a see at Lugano excites the opposition of the radicals. An important law for the protection of patents is passed.

- 1889 Bismarck's spy Wohlgenuth is expelled. Germany protests. Difficulties arising out of the Swiss custom of granting political asylum are settled.
- 1890 Religious riot at Ticino. The principal compulsory insurance against sickness and accident is accepted by popular vote.
- 1891 The federal constitution is amended so that fifty thousand citizens by the "initiative" can compel the federal authorities to prepare and submit to the people any reform in the constitution demanded by the petitioners. The establishment of a state or federal bank is approved by the people. The purchase of the Central Railway by the confederation is rejected by popular vote.
- 1893 The killing of animals in Jewish fashion is prohibited by exercise of the initiative.
- 1894 An attempt by the initiative to secure the adoption for the government of a socialist scheme to provide employment fails.
- 1896 A National exhibition is held at Geneva. Labour riots directed against the employment of Italians cause many of these to leave Zurich. The eighteenth international congress on copyright meets at Bern and takes steps for copyright reform in Germany and Great Britain.
- 1897 The national council adopts a bill authorising the confederation to purchase the five principal railroads when the terms of the concessions expire. The proposals of the government as to a federal bank are rejected by the people. An international congress for the protection of labour is held at Zurich. It votes in favour of the prohibition of Sunday labour except under special conditions, for the restriction of unhealthful trades and night-work, for the betterment of the conditions of employment for women and for a working day of eight hours by legal enactment.
- 1898 The government authorises the construction of the Simplon tunnel. The people vote for the unification of the cantonal laws civil and criminal into a set of federal codes. The principle of the purchase by the confederation of the principal railroads is approved by popular vote. The empress Elizabeth of Austria is assassinated by an Italian anarchist in Geneva. Expulsion of anarchists follows.
- 1899 The scheme for the establishment of the "double initiative" is launched. The law for the compulsory insurance of working men against sickness and accident is passed by the legislature.
- 1900 This proposal, however, is rejected by the people by a large majority. The proposals for proportional representation in the national council and for the election of the federal council by the people (the "double initiative") are rejected by popular vote.

## THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

- 1901 On representation of the Turkish government the federal council suppresses publications of the party of Young Turkey criticising the sultan for the Armenian massacres. Public opinion condemning the action of the council as a violation of the right of asylum finds expression in many places. Anti-Russian demonstrations are made at Geneva and Bern by socialists. The socialist movement gains in strength.
- 1902 Difficulties with Italy over the publication in an anarchist organ at Geneva of an article reflecting on the murdered king Humbert causes the temporary withdrawal of the diplomatic representatives of the two countries. A general strike in Geneva leads to disturbances which are put down by troops. The federal council issues a decree suppressing such religious congregations or orders as have not been authorised by law. The radical democratic majority in the national council is considerably strengthened.
- 1903 A new protective tariff is adopted by popular vote. The Zionist congress at Bâle votes to investigate Great Britain's offer of land in East Africa for Jewish colonisation.
- 1904 Arbitration treaty concluded with Great Britain, and new commercial treaties arranged with Germany and Italy. Construction of the Simplon tunnel hindered by discovery of hot springs.
- 1905 The north and south headings of the Simplon tunnel meet on February 24th. Arbitration treaties ratified with France, Austria, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, and Norway.
- 1906 Official inauguration of the Simplon tunnel by the president and the king of Italy, May 19th.
- 1907 The government petitioned to conduct a plébiscite prohibiting the sale of absinthe (Feb.). Proposals to build electric railway up the Matterhorn; and general railway activity. Strikes at Vevey, involving the calling out of the militia; agreement arrived at in April. People of Geneva vote for a separation of church and state.





## PART XXI

# THE HISTORY OF RUSSIA

BASED CHIEFLY UPON THE FOLLOWING AUTHORITIES

R. BELL, R. N. BESTUZHEV-RUMIN, V. A. BILBASOV, A. BRÜCKNER, A. DE  
HAXTHAUSEN, E. HERMANN, N. M. KARAMZIN, W. K. KELLY, N. I.  
KOSTOMAROV, M. KOVALEVSKI, A. LEROY-BEAULIEU, P. MÉRIMÉE, NESTOR,  
A. RAMBAUD, T. SCHIEMANN, J. H. SCHNITZLER, A. A. SCHUMAKR, N. K.  
SHILDER, G. M. SOLOVIEV, P. STRAHL, N. TURGENIEV, D. M. WALLACE

TOGETHER WITH A STUDY OF

THE INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIA

BY

A. S. RAPPOPORT

WITH ADDITIONAL CITATIONS FROM

ALEXANDER II, A. ALISON, R. N. BAIN, T. VON BERNHARDI, A. J. BEVERIDGE,  
CATHERINE II, A. P. DE CUSTINE, T. DELORD, J. ECKHARDT, A. DE  
FERRAND, I. GOLIKOV, P. DE LA GORCE, R. GOSSIP, A. N. KURO-  
PATKIN, LEO, M. LÉVESQUE, C. A. DE LOUVILLE, H. MARTIN, MAURICIUS,  
A. MIKHAILOVSKI-DANILEVSKI, H. NORMAN, PROCOPIUS, C. C. DE RULHI-  
ÈRE, F. SCHLOSSER, P. DE SÉGUR, P. SICHEBALSKI, F. H. SKRINE,  
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# INTRODUCTION

## THE INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF RUSSIA

WRITTEN SPECIALLY FOR THE PRESENT WORK

By DR. A. S. RAPPOPORT

Author of "Russian History," "The Curse of the Romanovs," etc., etc.

"RUSSIA evolves very slowly, like an empire that is not of yesterday and that has ample time before it," is one of Nietzsche's remarks before his reason had hopelessly gone adrift in the vast ocean of insanity. This remark of the German poet-philosopher is true enough. What Nietzsche, however, did not know or did not say is that one can hardly speak of any evolution, as far as general civilisation, intellectual culture, and development are concerned, of Russia as a whole. Only a small minority, the so-called *intelligentsia*, has evolved intellectually, not Russia itself. Here lies the fundamental difference between Russia and the rest of Europe.

There is a vast gulf, ever broadening, between the Russian intelligentsia and the *monjiks*. Thought and culture, nay even civilisation, seem to be limited to a select few. The bulk of the people has not only failed to advance from a state in which it was surprised by Jenghiz Khan, but it has actually retrograded to a more savage condition. Revolutions have passed over their heads without in the least affecting them. "The Russian masses," says Leroy-Beaulieu (*The Empire of the Czars*), "have not felt the breath of either the Renaissance, or the Reformation, or the Revolution. All that has been done in Europe or America for the last four centuries, since the time of Columbus and Luther, Washington and Mirabeau, is, as far as Russia is concerned, non-existent."

The people never think, or at least have not yet left that crude state of barbarism which precedes the dawn of civilisation; the first rays of thought have scarcely tinted with orient hues the dark horizon of ignorance and superstition of the Russian population; the great events have failed to stir its mental inertia. I am, however, far from maintaining that the fault lies with the nature and national character of the people. The rich nature, the subtle spirit of the Slav, his power of adaptation and imitation make him not only accessible to western civilisation and culture but also capable of producing something which bears the impress of the peculiarity of the Slavonic genius. The intelligentsia is now giving ample proof corroborating this statement. The Russian intelligentsia has passed the phases of growing and changing and doubting and has reached a condition of maturity, asserting its manhood and right. Before examining the intellectual development of the Russian intelligentsia and the point it has reached, as compared with western Europe, we must try to find out the causes that first produced that gulf between the few and the many, and the circumstances that were instrumental in widening it.

It is a mistake to imagine that the very first foundations of Russian intellectual development were laid by Peter the Great and that Russia, although behind western Europe in culture and civilisation, is still in her youthful vigour and freshness and will soon overtake the old world. There was a time, at the beginning of the eleventh century, when the Slavonic countries under the rule of the Norman conquerors were on the same level of civilisation as western Europe. The foundations were laid before the Norman invasion and very frequent were the relations between this people in the east and those in the north of Europe. Long before the ninth century, Kiev was known to the inhabitants of Scandinavia. Many a jarl sought refuge there and many a merchant ship found its way to the shores of Russia. On the road along which the commercial connection between the East Sea and Byzantium developed were situated the towns of Smolensk, Tchernigov, Pereiaslavl (cf. V. der Bruggen, *Wie Russland Europäisch Wurde*, p. 22). When the Norman princes, the varangians, as they were called by the Slavonic nations, conquered these towns and subdued one tribe after the other, the existing civilisation developed rapidly under the protection of the new rulers. Forth from Byzantium and Greece, from Italy, Poland, and Germany, with which countries the descendants of Rurik kept up a connection, western influence came to the north. Learned monks came from Byzantium, architects, artisans, and merchants from Greece, Italy and Germany, and were instrumental in spreading the languages, customs and ideas of the west. Not only did the *kniaz*i (princes) of Kiev build churches and edifices after the model of Greek and Italian art, but they established schools to which Vladimir compelled his nobles and boyars to send their children. The commercial relations with the west and the south were very vivid and frequent, and on the market places of Kiev and Novgorod a motley crowd of Normans and Slavs, Hungarians, Greeks, Venetians, Germans, Arabs, and Jews were to be seen.

The intellectual culture of the time had not yet, one must admit, penetrated the masses of the Slavonic tribes. Yet the Normans, as the propagators of culture, speedily and easily merged into one with the conquered tribes, much easier perhaps than the Normans who came with William the Conqueror amalgamated with Britons and Saxons in England. Had the Tatar invasion not taken place, it is highly probable that the intellectual development of Russia would have followed the same lines as that of western Europe. The commercial and intellectual relations with the rest of Europe, so eagerly sought after and cultivated by the Norman princes, would have continued and brought the Slav countries in increasingly closer contact with the west and under the influence of all the currents that were destined to traverse Europe later on. The Renaissance and the revival of learning which shed their light upon the dark mediæval age (and only a few rays of which found their way to Russia by way of Poland at a much later period) would have made themselves felt in Russia. This was, however, not to happen. The Mongolian invasion had actually cut off Russia from Europe, and brought it under the Tatar influence. The Norman civilisation, which was in a nascent state, was crushed; the threads connecting Russia with Europe were cut off. The wave of Mongolian invasion had inundated the flat land situated between Europe and Asia, carried away and destroyed every vestige of western influence. Kiev, Moscow, Tver, Riazan, Tchernigov, and Smolensk were conquered by the hordes of the Great Khan, who from his seat somewhere in the heart of China or in the centre of Asia sent down his generals and tax collectors.



Hundreds of thousands of Mongols came to Russia, mixed with the Slavs, and influenced habits, customs, civilisation, social life, administration and even language. The influence was a very far-reaching and deep one; Mongolism has penetrated Russian life to a much higher degree than a Russian would care to admit or western Europeans have realised. Greater and greater became the gulf between the Russian and the Romance and Teutonic worlds. But that gulf might have been bridged over and Russia might have been saved, when the dawn of better and happier days broke in, by another power: the influence of the church. Here again, however, owing to circumstances, this in many respects civilising agent was powerless.

In spite of all the reproaches hurled at the church, it must be admitted that it had all the education in its hands. In Russia, however, the case was different. From the very beginning, ever since Christianity was introduced, ever since Vladimir had accepted baptism in Kiev, the Russian people as Christians were divided into two distinct groups. Whilst the enthusiastic adherents of the new religion endeavoured to introduce the piety of Byzantium, the mass of the people, although nominally Christian, remained heathen in reality and has remained so up to the present. This was due to two reasons. Vladimir had accepted the Greek form of worship with its asceticism. Asceticism and monasticism, a retirement from the world, became the Christian ideal. This ideal was too high, too unattainable and too foreign for reality and for daily life, whilst on the other hand the perfect Christians considered the life of the world as sinful and dangerous. Thus the clergy sought retirement in cloisters and monasteries and the mass, whilst accepting the ceremonies of Byzantium, had learned nothing of its ethical teachings. The gulf thus arising between clergy and people was also due to another reason. The first members of the clergy were Greeks, monks coming from Byzantium, who spoke a language incomprehensible to the Slavs. The Russian bishops, who gradually took the place of the learned eastern monks, and who could communicate with the people, were still too ignorant themselves. And then suddenly the Tatar invasion came. Connection with Byzantium was cut off. The influx of the Greek clergy and Byzantine learning had ceased too early, before the Russians had had time to acquire some amount of knowledge to replace it. Thus whilst the intellectual development of the mass took place very slowly, the intellectual level of the clergy sank rapidly. The consequence was that when the Russian clergy met the people they were both on the same intellectual level; the priests had nothing to teach and had no prestige. This also explains, psychologically, the origin of so many religious sects in Russia. Having no respect and no admiration for the ignorant priest, addicted to drink, the peasant goes his own way when he suddenly feels a craving for religious ideals.

Thus the Mongolian invasion had cut off Russia from Europe and whilst the latter was passing through the phases of transition, approaching slowly but gradually the times of light and learning, Russia stood still. The Europe of the Renaissance was not a *creatio ex nihilo*. It was the result of a slow process of development. The barbarians who had built their realms on the ruins of the ancient worlds, Hellas and Rome, had taken over the classical heritage left to them after the disappearance of the Roman Empire. Rude and barbarous, however, these new conquerors had no understanding for the value of the heritage and destroyed many of its richest treasures. Worlds of intellectual culture were lost. But slowly the age of understanding dawned and the former barbarians brought forth many of the treasures which they had relegated to the lumber-room, added many of their own, and blended

them into one whole. The result was the Græco-Roman, Romance, and Teutonic civilisation. Crusades, Arabian civilisation passing by way of Spain, scholasticism, Reformation, Renaissance, revival of learning, the discovery of new worlds, the spread of commerce, scientific inventions and discoveries, stimulating the desire for learning and creating impulses in every new direction — all these new and stirring events were so many phases through which European society and European life passed before they reached the state of modern development. Many were the streams and cross-currents that traversed Europe separately before they united and continued the more rapid advance of a new life and civilisation. All this was lacking in Russia. Russia missed during its Mongolian period, the time of general transition. None of the forces which, although invisibly, were steadily furrowing the European soil and preparing it for the influx of fresh air and new light, were at work in Russia. The phase of transition had not yet commenced. That period of constant change, of mingled decadence and spiritual growth, that ceaseless blending of the old and the new, unnoticed at the time but clearly distinguished from the distance of later ages, was lacking in Russia. There was no pope, no powerful church, and consequently no Reformation and no spirit of individualism — no feudalism, no knights, no Crusades and no acquaintance with foreign lands, no spread of commerce, and no widening of the mental horizon of the people. There were no learned monks copying Greek and Latin manuscripts, paving the way for scholasticism and modern thought. There was even no language in which the treasures of the ancient world could be communicated to the Slavs. Few people could write, few even count properly.

There were no schools and the attempts to establish some such institutions during the seventeenth century failed. A school was founded at Moscow under Alexis, but here only a foreign language or two were taught. Its aim was to train translators for the government. There was no art, nor technical science. There were no medical men. The two or three foreign practitioners were considered as sorcerers.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century therefore Russia had absolutely no culture of her own. All that the Normans had established had been wiped out. The Byzantine influence had no effect. And when after a struggle extending over three centuries the czardom of Moscow had thrown off the shackles of the Great Khan, liberated itself from thralldom and laid the foundations of the great empire of Russia, it had only established, on the ruins of the old Mongolian, a new state which was Mongolian and Tatar in its essence and spirit, in its customs and institutions, and had little or nothing in common with the rest of Europe.

Moscow was the inheritor of Mongolism, the Czar was spiritually, and even physically, a descendant of Mongol princes. Ivan IV married a Mongolian princess, his son married a sister of the Mongol Godunov. They had actually taken over the inheritance of the khans of Kiptchak. It was in this barren soil that Peter sowed the seed of European culture. What happened?

Peter was undoubtedly great and deserves his title. He was one of the great makers of history. But though great in his plans, great in what he wished to accomplish, he was not great in what he really attained. He only saw the superficiality of European civilisation. He introduced it like some foreign product, like some fashionable article, like some exotic plant, without first asking whether the national soil was propitious for its cultivation. He, at the utmost, created a hot-house atmosphere where his plants could vegetate, and they remained what they originally were: exotic. He failed to see

that civilisation is the product of a long process of evolution, the natural product of the social and national conditions, drawing its life and sap from the inner forces of the people. Instead of making use of these inner forces of his people, he endeavoured to introduce civilisation by his power of will. He only had an eye for the effects but not for the causes that were working as the hidden springs.

In France, in England, in Germany, in all western Europe, civilisation, the moral and intellectual evolution, was a natural phenomenon, the effect of previous causes. In Russia, civilisation was the outcome of a sudden revolution, the slavish, reluctant and half-hearted compliance with the commands of an individual will. The former was natural, the latter artificial. An evolution is a slow change, an unconscious and imperceptible process, finding a state prepared for innovation, a soil, furrowed and fertile, ready to receive the seed and to bring forth fruit. A revolution, on the other hand, is a radical, sudden change which seldom succeeds and, in most cases, calls forth reactions. In Western Europe there was, as we have seen above, a time of transition from the barbarous to the civilised state. The morning of the Renaissance had dawned upon mediæval Europe and tinted with orient colours the sombre sky. The first rays appeared on the horizon of the Italian poets, dissipating the darkness here and there. The sun gradually rose higher and higher, penetrated the houses of the people and woke them (who had been lulled to sleep by the mysterious whisperings of superstition) from their prolonged slumbers. They awoke, opened their windows and allowed the light of the morning to penetrate into their dark abodes. Not so in Russia. There the people were suddenly awakened, dragged out from the utter darkness, without any transition, into the broad midday of an artificial light. They opened their eyes, but the light was too strong, too glaring; so they shut them again. Peter wanted to jump over three centuries and catch up with Europe. He established a fleet without Russian sailors, an administration with foreign administrators, an academy of science in a land without elementary schools. He began a race with Europe but his people could not follow him. He borrowed everything from Europe and instead of giving his people a chance to develop naturally and freely, he crushed the spirit of independence and introduced a knout civilisation. Everything had to be done by order. He forced his people to swallow Europeanism. The bulk of his subjects, however, could not digest it. The consequence was that they could not follow the few, and remained far behind them. The gulf therefore between the few, who form the present intelligentsia, and the great mass—a gulf which was but narrow towards the end of the sixteenth century when by way of Poland and Livonia a glimpse of the western sun penetrated into Russia—suddenly widened considerably. Thus the origin of the striking phenomenon which Russia offers in her intellectually high developed intelligentsia and her uneducated, ignorant masses is to be sought in Russia's past, in the absence of a period of transition, and in Peter's misunderstanding the process of European civilisation, in his admiration for the effects, but utter ignorance of the causes that brought about these effects.

There is, however, yet another factor—a factor which, whilst accounting for the existence of an intelligentsia, or a coterie of intellectuals, and of an utterly ignorant mass, will also throw some light upon the intellectual development of this very intelligentsia and explain the reasons which compelled it to choose certain channels by which it sends forth the currents of its thoughts. This factor is the despotic government of the czars. If Russia's unhappy past and Peter's good intentions but great blunders produced the present



state of intellectual development in that country, the government of the Reformer's successors has done its very best to preserve this condition.

The continuous policy of the Russian government to civilise by means of the knout has on the one hand brought about the result that not Russia but only a few Russians evolved intellectually and, on the other, it has given a certain direction to the thought and intellectual productions of these few. Even during the reign of Peter I or Catherine II, when the spirit of civilisation began to move its wings, independent thought has had to sustain a fierce struggle against authority. In the most civilised countries of western Europe ever and anon a cross-current of reaction traverses the stream of intellectual evolution: narrow-minded zealots, hypocritical bigots, false patriots, literary Gibeonites, gossiping old women arrayed in the mantles of philosophers, do their best to put fetters on the independent thought of man, to nip the free and natural intellectual development in the very bud by forcing it under the iron grip of tradition and authority. In western Europe, however, reactionary tendencies of the lovers of darkness are only exceptions, and will lead thought for a while into a side channel, but cannot stop the triumphant march onwards. Not so in Russia.

In the empire of the czar thought is almost a crime and every means is employed to keep it within the boundaries prescribed by the governing power. To overstep these boundaries, to develop itself freely, and I might say naturally, is to declare war against authority, to revolt. The history of evolution of thought in Russia is therefore almost identical with the revolutionary movement. If whilst working on the construction of the temple with the right hand, the left has to wield the sword against a sudden attack of the enemy, the edifice can rise only very slowly. Renan says (in his *Future of Science*) that the great creations of thought appear in troublous times and that neither material ease nor even liberty contributes much to the originality and the energy of intellectual development. On the contrary the work of mind would only be seriously threatened if humanity came to be too much at its ease. Thank God! exclaims the Breton philosopher, that day is still far distant. The customary state of Athens, he continues, was one of terror; the security of the individual was threatened at every moment, to-day an exile, to-morrow he was sold as a slave. And yet in such a state Phidias produced the Propylæa statues, Plato his dialogues and Aristophanes his satires. Dante would never have composed his cantos in an atmosphere of studious ease. The sacking of Rome did not disturb the brush of Michael Angelo. In a word, the most beautiful things are born amid tears and it is in the midst of struggle, in the atmosphere of sorrow and suffering that humanity develops itself, that the human mind displays the most energy and activity in all directions. But Renan was an individualist and aristocratic in his teachings; he seems to have in view only the individual, nay, the genius. Suffering and oppression, physical, intellectual and moral, are schools where the strong gather more strength and come forth triumphant, but where the weaker are destroyed. What is true for the *élite*, for the very limited number of the chosen few, does not hold good for humanity at large, which is not strong enough to think when it is hungry, to fight against opposing forces and to hurl down the barriers erected against the advance of thought. Few indeed are those who can carry on the struggle to a successful issue. The Russian government, with its Mongolian traditions of autocracy, threw the great nation, which remained behind Peter's forward march, back into complete indifference and apathy, into a state of submissive contentment, where, like a child, it kissed the rod that punished it, sometimes cried like a child, and



is lulled to sleep by the whisperings of mystic superstition and the vapours of *vodka*.

Had not the populace a terrifying example in the martyrs of Russian thought? A terrible destiny awaited him who dared to step beyond the line traced by the hand of the government, who ventures to look over the wall erected by imperial ukase. "The history of Russian thinkers," says Alexander Herzen (*Russland's Sociale Zustände*, page 136), "is a long list of martyrs and a register of convicts." Those whom the hand of the imperial government has spared died in the prime of youth, before they had time to develop, like blossoms hurrying to quit life before they could bear fruit. A Pushkin and a Lermontov fell in the prime of youth, one thirty-eight and the other twenty-seven years old, victims of the unnatural state of society. Russia's Beaumarchais, Griboiedov, found a premature end in Persia in his thirty-fifth year; Kolzov, the Russian Burns, Bielinski, the Russian Lessing, died in misery, the latter at the age of thirty-eight. Czernevski was torn from his literary activity and sent to Siberia. Dobrolubov sang his swan-song in his twenty-fifth year. Chaadaev, the friend of Schelling, was declared mad by order of the government. If such measures have kept the people in a state of ignorance and still lowered the already low level of civilisation, the autocratic rule has further, as it was unable to crush it, caused the intelligentia to turn its thoughts into a certain direction.

If we follow the development of the Russian intelligentia we notice at once that all the currents of its intellectual life are, at the present time at least, converging into one centre, swelling the stream, that is already running high, to a vast and mighty ocean, which is sending its waters, through many channels, all over Europe. This centre is literature. Since the foundation of the Academy of Science by Peter the Great Russian achievements in the domains of science, technical education, art, sculpture, music, painting, history and philosophy have been very small.

In science and art the Russians have produced nothing of importance, nothing original. Mendeleev, Lobatshevski, Pirogov, Botkin, Soloviev are a few scientific names of some eminence but they are few as compared with Europe and America. Many others, who are known to the western world as Russians, are in reality Germans or Armenians. The great historian, Karamzin, was of Tatar extraction. In the domain of art Vereshchagin was a Russian, but Ainasowski was an Armenian, Brulov a Prussian and Antokolski a Jew (cf. Brüggem, *Das heutige Russland*, p. 182).

Russia has had no Spinoza and no Kant, no Newton and no Spencer. Since the foundation of the University of Moscow in 1755, some semblance of Russian philosophy has appeared but a Soloviev and a Grote, a Troitski and a Preobrajenski have only introduced the philosophy of Germany, France, and England into Russia, but not worked out their own philosophical systems. Thus, whilst Russian scientists, technicians, artists and even musicians have to go abroad to complete their education, Russian philosophers borrow from Hegel or Descartes, from Locke or Comte. This is, however, not the case with Russian literature. Russia has quickened her development in the realm of literature. Her decades were centuries. Rapidly she has lived through phases of growth and evolution, of achievement and reflection which have filled long periods in other people's lives. The peaks of Russian creative power in this domain, the productions of Pushkin and Turgenev, of Lermontov, Dostoievski and Tolstoi proudly face the heights of literary western Europe.

Whilst, however, the Russian genius of the intelligentia centred its force

in literature, this literature bears the unmistakable trait, that distinguishes it from European literature, of having a tendency to teach and of taking a moral aspect. Russian literature on the whole has not entered the sphere of artistic interest; it has always been a pulpit whence the word of instruction came forth. With very few exceptions, like Merejkovski and Andreev, the Russian author is not practising art for art's sake (*l'art pour l'art*), but is pursuing a goal, is accomplishing a task.

The Russian literature is a long cry of revolt, a continuous sigh or an admonition. Taine says, somewhere, when speaking of Stendhal and Balzac: "They love art more than men—they are not writing out of sympathy for the poor, but out of love for the beautiful." This is just what the Russian modern author is not doing. The intellectual and instructive moments predominate over the emotional and artistic.

This state of Russia's intellectual development is explained by what has been stated above. It is due to the sudden introduction of western manners and civilisation, followed by a powerful foreign influence on the one hand, and the social and political state of the country on the other. When Peter had suddenly launched Russia—which was floating like some big hulk between Asia and Europe—towards the west, the few who helped him in this endeavour came under the complete influence of western thought and manners. St. Petersburg soon became a Versailles in miniature. Voltaire, Diderot, and the encyclopædists governed and shaped Russian thought and Russian society. But not only France—Germany too, and England, Byron and his individualism, had gained great sway in Russia. The independence of Russian thought and its intellectual development only dates from about 1840. When it awoke at that time, when it became conscious of itself, it felt that it had a great work, a great mission, to fulfil. Surrounded on one side by a people that were ignorant, ready to sink lower and lower; opposed, on the other, by a government that did its best to check individualism and independence in every possible way—the Russian intelligentsia felt its great responsibility.

Surrounded by a population whose mental development was on a very low level, the atmosphere was and still is not propitious for the cultivation of art or science, whilst the Russian author had no time simply to admire the beautiful in nature, but was compelled to look round and try what good he could do. Thus Russian genius concentrated itself in literature as the best vehicle to expose the state of Russian society. The Russian writer became an apostle. He was not anxious to be artistic, to shape his style and to be fascinating, but to give as true a picture of Russian life as he possibly could, to show the evil and to suggest the remedy.

Such, in broad lines, was, and still is, the state which the few, whom we termed the Russian intelligentsia, have reached in their intellectual development. In a moment of strength the Russian genius has attained itself, with self-asserting individuality. Its task is great, its obstacles are manifold, but it fights valiantly and moves on steadily. This only applies to the few. When the day of political freedom will dawn for Russia, then and then only the great evolution and the intellectual development of Russia itself, of the Russian people as a whole, will begin. On the day when civil and religious despotism, that everywhere crushes individuality, ceases, then the genius of the Russian people will spread its pinions, and the masses will awake from their inertia to new life, like the gradual unfolding of spring into summer.



## CHAPTER I

### LAND AND PEOPLE AND EARLY HISTORY

[To 1054 A.D.]

#### EXTENT, CONFIGURATION, AND CLIMATE

To arrive at a just appreciation of Russia's genius we must have a knowledge of the soil that nourishes her, the peoples that inhabit her, and the history through which she has passed. Let us begin with nature, soil, and climate.

The first fact that strikes us in regard to the Russian empire is its vastness! Its colonial dimensions are so out of proportion to the smallness of the greatest among European states, that, to bring them within the sphere of human imagination, Alexander von Humboldt, one of the greatest scientists of his century, makes the statement that the portion of the globe under Russia's dominion is greater than the entire surface of the earth at its full.

The territories of that vast empire acknowledge no limits: its vast plains stretch toward the heart of the old continent, as far as the huge peaks of central Asia; they are stopped between the Black and the Caspian seas by the great wall of the Caucasus, whose foot is planted below the sea-level, and the height of whose summits exceeds by eight hundred feet that of Mont Blanc.

In lakes Ladoga and Onega, in the northwest, Russia possesses the greatest lakes in Europe; in Lake Balkal, in Siberia, the greatest in Asia; in the Caspian and Aral seas, the greatest in the world. Her rivers equal her plains in proportion: the Obi, the Yenisei, the Amur, in Asia; the Dnieper, the Don, the Volga, in Europe. The central artery of Russia is the Volga—a river that, in its winding course of nearly twenty-four hundred miles, is not altogether European. Nine tenths of the Russian territory are as yet nearly empty of inhabitants, and nevertheless the population, according to the census of 1897, taken over all the empire except Finland, numbered 129,000,000; and the annual increase is very nearly two million.

<sup>1</sup> According to recent calculations the Russian Empire covers an area of 8,660,000 square miles—about one sixth of the land surface of the globe.



Europe is distinguished from other regions of the globe by two characteristics which make her the home of civilisation: her land is cut into by the seas — “cut into bits,” as Montesquieu says; she is, according to Humboldt, “an articulated peninsula”; her other distinctive advantage is a temperate climate which, in great measure the result of her configuration, is duplicated nowhere under the same latitude. Russia alone, adhering solidly to Asia by her longest dimension, bordered on the north and northwest by icy seas which permit to the borders few of the advantages of a littoral, is one of the most compact and eminently continental countries of the globe.

She is deprived of the even, temperate climate due to Europe’s articulated structure, and has a continental climate — nearly equally extreme in the rigour of its winters and the torrid heat of its summers. Hence the mean temperature varies.

The isothermal lines extend in summer toward the pole; in winter they sink southward: so that the greater part of Russia is included in January in the rigid, in July in the torrid zone. Her very vastness condemns her to extremes. The bordering seas are too distant or too small to serve her as reservoirs of warmth or basins of coolness. Nowhere else in the Occident are to be found winters so long and severe, summers so burning. Russia is a stranger to the great influences that moderate the climate of the rest of Europe — the gulf stream and the winds of the Sahara. The long Scandinavian peninsula, stretching between Russia and the Atlantic, deflects from her coasts the great warm current flowing from the New World to the Old. In place of the gulf stream and the African deserts it is the polar snows of Europe, and Siberia, the frozen north of Asia, that hold the predominating influence over Russia. The Ural range, by its insignificant elevation and its perpendicularity to the equator, is but an inconsiderable barrier to these influences. In vain does Russia extend south into the latitude of Pau and Nice; nowhere this side the Caucasus will she find a rampart against the winds of the north. The conformation of the soil, low and flat, leaves her open to all the atmospheric currents — from the parching breath of the central Asian deserts to the winds of the polar region.

This lack of mountains and inland seas deprives Russia of the necessary humidity brought to the rest of Europe by the Atlantic and laid up for it in the store-houses of the Alps. The ocean breezes reach her only when empty of refreshing vapours; those of Asia are wrung dry long before they touch her confines. The further the continent stretches, the greater its poverty of rain. At Kazan the rainfall is but half that of Paris. Hence the lack, over an enormous southern region, of the two principal elements of fertility — warmth and moisture; hence in part those wide, woodless, arid, un-European steppes in the southeast of the empire.

#### THE SIMILARITY OF EUROPEAN AND ASIATIC RUSSIA

One whole formed of two analogous halves, Russia is in nowise a child of Europe; but that is not to say that she is Asiatic — that we can shelve her among the dormant and stationary peoples of the far East. Far from it: Russia is no more Asiatic than she is European. But in all physical essentials of structure, climate, and moisture, she is opposed to historical, occidental Europe; in all these she is in direct relation with the bordering countries of Asia. Europe proper naturally begins at the narrowing of the continent between the Baltic and the Black seas.

In the southeast there is no natural barrier between Russia and Asia;



therefore the geographers have in turn taken the Don, the Volga, the Ural, or again the depression of the Obi, as boundaries. Desert steppes stretch from the centre of the old continent into Russia by the door left open between the Ural chain and the Caspian. From the lower course of the Don to the Aral Sea, all these low steppes on both banks of the Volga and the Ural rivers form the bed of an old, dried-up sea, whose borders we can still trace, and whose remnants constitute the great salt lakes known as the Caspian and the Aral seas. By a hydrographical accident which has had an enormous influence upon the character and destinies of the people, it is into one of these closed Asiatic seas that the Volga, the great artery of Russia, empties, after turning its back upon Europe almost from its very source.

To the north of the Caspian steppes, from latitude  $52^{\circ}$  to the uninhabitable polar regions, the longest meridional chain of mountains of the old continent forms a wall between Russia and Asia. The Russians in olden days called it the "belt of stone," or "belt of the world"; but, despite the name, the Ural indicates the end of Asia on the one side, only to mark its recommencement, almost unaltered, on the European slope. Descending gradually by terraces on the European side, the Ural is less a chain than a plateau crowned with a line of slight elevations. It presents principally low ridges covered with forests, like those of the Vosges and the Jura. So greatly depressed is the centre that along the principal passes between Russia and Siberia (from Perm to Iekaterinburg, for example) the eye looks in vain for the summits; in constructing a railroad through the pass the engineers had no long tunnels to build, no great difficulties to surmount. At this high altitude, where the plains are snow-bound during six or seven months, no peak attains the limit of eternal snows, no valley enbosoms a glacier.

In reality the Ural separates neither the climates, nor the fauna and flora. Extending almost perpendicularly from north to south, the polar winds blow almost equally unhindered along both sides; on both, the vegetation is the same. It is not till the heart of Siberia is reached — the upper Yenisei and Lake Baikal — that one finds a different soil, a new flora and fauna. The upheaval of the Ural failed to wipe out the resemblance and the unity of the two regions it divides. Instead of a wall between the Russias, it is merely a store-house of mineral wealth. In the rocks, of eruptive or metamorphic origin, are veins of metals not found in the regular strata of the great plains. It no more separates one from the other than does the river of the same name; and when one day Siberia shall boast a denser population, the Ural will be regarded as the axis, the backbone of the two great halves of the empire.

#### THE DUALISM OF NORTH AND SOUTH

Unity in immensity is Russia's chief characteristic. From the huge wall of the Caucasus to the Baltic this empire, in itself greater than all the rest of Europe, in its numerous provinces presents perhaps less variety of climate than west European countries whose area is ten or twelve times less. This is on account of the flat uniformity. And yet, underlying this homogeneity of climate and configuration, nature has marked with special characteristics and a distinct individuality a number of regions which, divided into two groups, embrace all European Russia. Equally flat, with a climate nearly equally extreme, these two great zones, notwithstanding their similarity, present a remarkable contrast in soil, vegetation, moisture, and most other physical and economic conditions. One is the forest region, the other the woodless zone of the steppes; they divide the empire into almost equal halves.

From the opposition, from the natural dualism of the steppe and the forest, has sprung the historical antagonism and the now-ended strife between the two halves of Russia — the struggle between the sedentary north and the nomad south; between the Russian and the Tatar; between the Muscovite state laid in the forest region, and the free Cossacks, children of the steppes. The forest region, though ceaselessly diminished by cutting, still remains the more extensive. Occupying the entire north and centre, it grows wider from east to west, from Kazan to Kiev.

Beyond the polar circle no tree can withstand the intensity and permanence of the frost. On both sides of the Ural, in the neighbourhood of Siberia, stretch vast boggy plains (*toundras*), perpetually frost-bound, and clothed with moss. In these latitudes no cultivation is possible, no pasturage but lichens is to be obtained, no animal but the reindeer can exist. Hunting and fishing are the sole occupations of the few inhabitants who make their dwelling in these lands of ice.

The soil of the wooded plains, at least in the northwest, from the White Sea to the Niemen and the Dnieper, is low, swampy, and peaty, intersected by arid sandy hills. The Valdai Hills, the highest plateau, scarcely attain the height of one thousand feet. This region is rich in springs and is the source of all the great rivers. The flatness of the land prevents the rivers from assuming a distinctly marked course, and as no ridge intervenes, their waters at the thaw run together and form enormous swamps; or, travelling slowly down undefined slopes, form at the bottom vast lakes like the Ladoga, a veritable inland sea, or strings of wretched little pools, like the eleven hundred lakes in the government of Archangel.

The population, though scattered over wide expanses and averaging less than fifteen to the square mile, fails to wring from the unfriendly soil a sufficient nourishment. Wheat will not thrive; barley, rye, and flax alone flourish. A multitude of small industries eke out the livelihood for which agriculture is insufficient.

The augmentation of the scattered population is scarcely perceptible having, so to speak, reached the point of saturation. Russia can hope for an increase of wealth and population in this desolate northland only upon the introduction into it of industrial pursuits, as in the case of Moscow and the Ural regions.

Russian civilisation finds a great, though by no means insurmountable obstacle in the extremes of temperature. It must be remembered that Europe enjoys a temperate climate unparalleled in her fairest colonies, while other continents, for analogous reasons, labour under much the same disadvantages as Russia. The climate of the northern portion of the United States greatly resembles that of south Russia, while New York, Pennsylvania, and the New England states pass through the same extremes of temperature as the steppes of the Black Sea.

#### THE SOIL OF THE BLACK LANDS AND THE STEPPES

The Black Lands, one of the largest and most fertile agricultural tracts in the world, occupy the upper part of the woodless zone at its juncture with the forest and lake district. Obtaining moisture and shelter from the latter, the Black Lands enjoy much more favourable climatic conditions than the steppes of the extreme south. They derive their name (*tchernoziom*) from a stratum of black humus, of an average depth of from one and a half to five feet, consisting partly of loam, partly of oily clay mixed with organic substances. It

dries rapidly and is thereupon reduced to a fine dust; but it absorbs moisture with equal promptitude, and after a rain takes on the appearance of a coal-black paste. The formation of this wonderfully fertile layer is attributed to the slow decomposition of the steppe grasses, accumulated during many centuries.

The *tchernoziom* circles like a belt across European Russia, from Podolia and Kiev on the southwest beyond Kazan in the northeast; after the interruption of the Ural ridge it reappears in Siberia in the southern part of Tobolsk. The trees disappear altogether as we advance southwards, till not even a bush is to be seen. Nothing is visible to the eye but hundreds of miles of fertile black soil, a limitless field stretching beyond the horizon. As a consequence of its fertility this portion of Russia is most populous; the population increases steadily, as railways are constructed and as agriculture gains upon the surrounding steppes.

Between the Black Lands and the southern seas lie the steppes proper wherein the dead level of the country, the absence of all arboreal vegetation, and the summer droughts attain their maximum. These great plains, covering over half a million miles of Europe, include many different qualities of soil, destined to as many different ends.

The sandy, stony, saline steppes will forever be unfit for cultivation. The fertile steppes which occupy the greater part of the space between the Black Lands and the Black Sea and the sea of Azov consist of a layer of black vegetable mould ready for cultivation and teeming with fertility. The grass, growing five or six feet high, in rainy seasons even higher, accounts in some measure for the absence of woods: its rapid luxuriant growth would smother young trees.

The virgin steppe with its rank vegetation — the steppe of history and poetry — diminishes day by day, and will soon disappear before the agricultural invasion. The legendary Ukraine has almost lost its wild beauty; Gogol's steppe, like Cooper's prairie, will soon be but a memory — lost in the black belt. The long delay in opening up these grassy plains is due as well to the lack of water and wood as to the lack of workers. The lack of water is difficult to remedy, hence the plains are bound to experience alternately good and bad years; hence, also, the frequent famines in lands which otherwise might be regarded as the storehouse of the empire.

Perhaps an even greater drawback is the lack of trees; thereby the population is deprived both of fuel and of materials for building. Stalks of the tall steppe-grasses and the dung of the flocks, which otherwise would go to the soil, supply it with a fuel that would not suffice for a dense population. The introduction of railroads and the opening of coal mines will, however, remedy little by little these evils, by supplying fuel and restoring the manure to the soil. The proximity to the estuaries of the great rivers and to the Black Sea renders the position of these steppes especially favourable to trade with Europe.

The Ural-Caspian depression is as truly a desert as the Sahara. It contains but few oases. These saline steppes sink in part below the sea level, like the Caspian itself, whose ancient basin they formed, and which now, narrowed and sunk, lies about eighty-five feet below the Black Sea's surface. This region is of all European Russia the barest, the driest, and the most exposed to extreme seasons. It is decidedly Asiatic in soil, climate, flora, fauna, and inhabitants. This barren steppeland, covering three hundred thousand square miles, has less than a million and a half inhabitants. It is good for nothing but pasturage; and is therefore overrun with nomad Asiatic tribes.



We cannot consider as Russian in character the Caucasus and the southern coast of the Crimea; these present an entirely different aspect, and are as varied as the real Russia is monotonous. In the valleys of the Caucasus appear again forests — absent from the centre of the empire southwards — dense and vigorous, not thin and scattered and monotonous as in the north. Here fruit-trees thrive, and all varieties of plant life for which Russia seeks in vain over her wide plains, from the shores of the ice-bound north to the Black Sea — the vine, which on the banks of the Don finds but a precarious existence; the mulberry-tree; the olive. Few are the fruits that cannot prosper in the hanging gardens of the Crimea suspended above the sea, or in Trans-

caucasia where, not content with having introduced successfully the cultivation of cotton and the sugar cane, the Russian merchants are anxious to establish tea plantations.



COSTUME WORN BY COSSACK OF THE  
UKRAINE

#### DIVERSITY OF RACES

The number of diverse races is accounted for by the configuration of Russia. Lacking defined boundaries to east and west, Russia has been open always to invasion — she has been the great highway of emigration from Asia into Europe. The strata of human alluvions have nowhere been more numerous, more mingled, more broken or inharmonious than on this flat bed, where each wave, pushed by the one behind it, encountered no obstacle other than the wave which had preceded. Even since historical times it is difficult to enumerate the peoples who have followed one another upon Russian soil — who have there formed empires more or less durable: Scythian, Sarmatian, Goth, Avar, Bulgarian, Hungarian, Chazar, Petcheneg, Lithuanian, Mongol, Tatar; without counting the previous migrations

of the Celts and Teutones, or of peoples whose very names have perished, but among whom even the most obscure have left upon the population some impression whose origin to-day it is impossible to trace.

While the configuration of Russia has left her open to every invader, the structure of her soil forbade the development of the invaders into organised nations independent of one another. Instead of being the consequence of slow development by physical causes, this multiplicity of races and tribes is an historical heritage. Without considering the glacial regions of the north, uninhabitable save for hunters and fishers, or the sandy and saline steppes of the southeast, where wander only pastoral nomads, this complexity of races and tribes, far from being a result of adaptation to the soil — far from being in harmony with physical conditions, is directly opposed to them. Far from having a tendency to race diversion, the natural conditions made for unity and harmony. The absence of boundaries made it impossible for the different tribes to isolate themselves.



In the immense quadrilateral comprised between the glacial ocean and the Black Sea, between the Baltic and the Ural, there is not a single mountain — not a single dividing line. Over this even surface the different tribes have been obliged to scatter at random — just as the waters have flowed together, having no ridge to separate them, no banks to contain them. Thus, while custom, religion, and language prevented their mingling, they were yet obliged to live side by side: to invade one another, to mingle one with another without loss of individuality, as the rivers which flow together without confounding their waters. Exhausted in the effort to spread over too large expanses, or broken up into fragments, all these races have the more easily submitted to the domination of one rule; and under this domination they have been the more rapidly unified and mingled. From this fusion, begun centuries ago under the Christian empire and the Muscovite sovereignty, have sprung the Russian people — that mass of about 129,000,000 souls, which, compared with other peoples, resembles the sea devouring its own shores, a sea dotted with islands which it swallows one by one.

Out of the seeming chaos of Russian ethnology emerge definitely three principal elements — Finn, Tatar, and Slav, which last has to-day to a great extent absorbed the other two. Not counting the three millions of Jews in the west, the seven or eight hundred thousand Rumanians in Bessarabia, the eight or nine hundred thousand Germans of the Baltic provinces and the southern colonies; without counting the Kalmucks of the steppe of the lower Volga, the Circassians, the Armenians, the Georgians, and the whole babel of the Caucasus — all the races and tribes which have invaded Russia in the past and all which inhabit her to-day can be traced to one of these three races. As far back as history goes, are to be found upon Russian soil, under one name or another, representatives of all these three groups; and their fusion is not yet so complete that we cannot trace their origin, their distinctive characteristics, or their respective original dominions.

The Finnish tribe seems in olden times to have occupied the most extensive territory in what is to-day called Russia. It is manifestly foreign to Aryan or European stock, whence, with the Celts and Latins, Germans and Slavs, most of the European peoples have sprung. Ethnological classifications usually place the Finns in a more or less comprehensive group known variously as Turanian, Mongolian, and Mongoloid.

The Mongols, properly so called, with the Tatars are usually arranged beside the Finns in the Ural-Altaic group; which, on the other hand, rejects the Chinese and other great nations of oriental Asia. This classification appears to be the most reasonable; but it must be noticed that this Ural-Altaic group is far from presenting the same homogeneousness as the Aryan or Semitic group. The relationship between the numerous branches is far less fundamental than between Latin and German; it is probably far more remote than that between the Brahman or Gheber of India and the Celt of Scotland or Brittany; at bottom it is perhaps less close than between the Indo-European and the Semite.

### *The Finns*

The Finnish race, which outside of Hungary is almost entirely comprised within European Russia, numbers five or six millions, divided into a dozen different tribes. To the Hungarian family in the north belongs the only Finnish people which ever played an important rôle in Europe, or arrived at a high state of civilisation — the Magyars of Hungary. In

the northwest we find the Finns properly so called; they are subdivided into two or three tribes, the Suomi, as they designate themselves, constituting the only tribe in the whole empire that possesses a national spirit, a love of country, a history, and a literature; also the only one that has escaped the slow absorption by which their kindred have been swallowed up. They form five-sixths of the population of the grand duchy of Finland — a population almost wholly rural. A Swedish element mingled with German and Russian is predominant in the cities.

St. Petersburg is, truth to tell, built in the midst of Finnish territory; the immediate surroundings only are russified, and that quite recently:

even half a century ago Russian was not understood in the hamlets lying at the very gates of the capital. To this Finnish branch belong the Livs, a tribe nearly extinct, which has given its name at Livonia; also the Lapps — the last, physically the ugliest, morally the least developed, of all the branches of this tribe.

The race is almost infinitely subdivided; its members profess all the religions from Shamanism to Mohammedanism, from Greek orthodoxy to Lutheranism. They are nomadic, like the Lapp; pastoral, like the Bashkir; sedentary and agricultural like the Esth and the Finn. They have adopted the customs and spoken the language of each and all, have been ruled by peoples of different origins, have been russified after having been partially tatarised — all these influences contributing to break up the race into insignificant fragments. As numerous as their Hungarian kindred, the Finns of the Russian Empire are far from being able to claim an equal political significance.



A TATAR  
(Russian)

Is it true that the alliance with the Finns is for Russia an irremediable cause of inferiority? It is doubtful. In their isolation and disruption, hampered by the thankless soil upon which they dwell, the Finns have been unable to achieve an original development; as compensation, they have everywhere manifested a singular facility of assimilation with more developed races with which they have come in contact; they allowed themselves easily to be overwhelmed by a civilisation which they themselves were unable to originate: if they possessed no blood-ties with Europe, they placed no obstacles in the way of annexation by her. Their religion is the best proof. The majority have long been Christians; and it is principally Christianity which has led the way to their fusion with the Slavs and their assimilation into civilised Europe. From Hungary to the Baltic and the Volga, they have accepted with docility the three principal historical forms of Christianity; the most modern, Protestantism, has thriven better among the Finnish and Esthonic tribes than among the Celtic, Iberian, and Latin peoples.

If we seek in language an unmistakable sign of race and intelligence, it must be admitted that certain Finns—the Suomi of Finland like the Magyars of Hungary—have brought their agglutinated languages to a perfection which for power, harmony, and wealth of expression well bears comparison with our most complex flexional languages. If it is true that the Finns are related to the Mongols, they have certainly the virtues of that race, which holds its own so well in its struggle with Europe: they possess the same stability, patience, and perseverance; hence perhaps the fact that to every country and every state which has felt their influence the Finns have communicated a singular power of resistance, a remarkable vitality.

#### ETHNOLOGICAL DISTRIBUTION OF RELIGIONS

The Finn has become Christian; the Turk or Tatar, Moslem; the Mongol, Buddhist: to this ethnological distribution of religion there are few exceptions. Hereto are attributable the causes of the widely different destinies of these three groups—particularly the neighbouring Finns and Tatars. It is religion which has prepared the one for its European existence; it is religion which has made that existence impossible for the other. Islam has given the Tatar a higher and more precocious civilisation; it has inspired him to build flourishing cities like the ancient Sarai and Kazan, and to found powerful states in Europe and Asia; it has achieved for him a brilliant past, while exposing him to a future full of difficulties: while saving him from absorption into Europe, it has left him completely outside the gate of modern civilisation.

It is the Tatars who have given to the Russians the name of Mongols, to which the Tatars themselves have but a questionable right. In any case the title is not applicable to the true Russians, who have at most but a drop or two of Mongol blood in their veins, and less of Tatar than the Spaniards have of Moorish or Arab.

At the same time with the process of absorption and assimilation of the Finnish element, another process has for centuries been going on—an inverse process of secretion and elimination of the Tatar and Moslem elements which Russia found herself unable to assimilate. After their submission a great number of Tatars left Russia, being unwilling to become the subjects of the infidels whose masters they had been. Before the progress of Christianity they spontaneously retreated to the lands still dominated by the law of the prophet. After the destruction of the Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan, they tended to concentrate in the Crimea and the neighbouring straits—in what up to the eighteenth century was known as Little Tartary; after the conquest of the Crimea by Catherine II they took their way still farther toward the empire of their Turkish brethren. Even in our own time, after the war of Sebastopol and after the conquest of the Caucasus, the emigration of the Tatars and the Nogaians began again on an enormous scale, together with that of the Circassians. In the Crimea the Tatar population, already diminished by one-half in the time of Catherine II, is to-day scarcely one-fifth of what it was at the time of the annexation to Russia. The introduction of obligatory military service in the year 1874 drove them out in large numbers. By defeat and voluntary exile have the Tatars been reduced to insignificant groups in a country where, formerly, they reigned for centuries—in some parts of which even they were the sole inhabitants.<sup>b</sup>



## THE SLAVS

As to the Slavs, who form the nucleus of the Russian population, it is now generally recognised that they migrated to Russia from the neighbourhood of the Carpathian Mountains. The Byzantine annalists of the sixth and the beginning of the seventh centuries, speaking of the Slavs, whom they called Sklaboi, a name appearing as early as the end of the fifth century, distinguish two branches of them: the Ants, living from the Danube to the mouth of the Dnieper; and the Slavs, properly so named, living northeast of the Danube and as far to the east as the source of the Vistula, and on the right bank of the Dniester. In this, their statement agrees with that of Jornandes,<sup>1</sup> the historian of the Goths. Some Russian scholars suppose

that before coming to the Danube the Slavs lived near the Carpathians, whence they invaded the Byzantine empire. These encroachments, beginning as far back as the third century, resulted

in the penetration of the Slavs into southern Austria and the Balkan peninsula. Byzantine annalists of the sixth and seventh centuries, Procopius and the emperor Maurice, who had to fight the Slavs in person, speak of them as being ever on the move: "They live in woods and on the banks

of rivers, in small hamlets, and are always ready to change their abode." At the same time these Byzantine annalists describe this people as exceedingly fond of liberty. "From the remotest period," says Procopius,<sup>d</sup> "the Slavs were known to live as democracies; they discussed their wants in popular assemblies or folk-motes." "The Slavs are fond of liberty," writes the emperor Maurice<sup>e</sup>; "they cannot bear unlimited rulers, and are not easily brought to submission." The same language is used also by the emperor Leo.<sup>f</sup> "The Slavs," says he, "are a free people, strongly opposed to any subjection." If the Byzantine historians do not speak of the invasion of the Slavs into the limits of the empire during the second part of the seventh



A FINNISH COSTUME

century, it is because their migration took at this time another direction: from the Carpathians they moved toward the Vistula and the Dnieper.

During the ninth century, the time of the founding of the first principalities, the Dnieper, with its numerous affluents on both sides, formed the limit of the Slavonic settlements to the east. This barrier was broken only by the Viatitchi, stretching as far to the northeast as the source of the Oka. On the north the Slavs reached the great Valdai plateau from which Russia's largest rivers descend, and the southern part of the great lake region, that of Ilmen.<sup>c</sup>

There is no indication that the race is deficient in genius. It was the Slavs who opened the way to the west by two great movements which inaugurated the modern era—the Renaissance and the Reformation; by the



discovery of the laws that govern the universe, and the plea for liberty of thought. The Pole Copernicus was the herald of Galileo; the Czech, John Huss, the precursor of Luther. Poland and Bohemia, the two Slav peoples most nearly connected with the west by neighbourhood and religion, can cite a long list of men distinguished in letters, science, politics, and war. Ragusa alone could furnish an entire gallery of men talented along all lines. There where remoteness from the west and foreign oppression have made study impossible and prevented single names from becoming widely known, the people have manifested their genius in songs which lack none of the qualities inherent in the most splendid poetry of the west. In that popular impersonal literature which we admire so frankly in the *romanceros* of Spain, the ballads of Scotland and Germany, the Slav, far from yielding the palm to the Latin or the Teuton, perhaps excels both. Nothing more truly poetical exists than the *pesmes* of Servia or the *doumas* of Little Russia; for, by a sort of natural compensation, it is among the Slavs least initiated into western culture that popular poetry has flowered most freely.

In temperament and character the Slavs present an ensemble of defects and qualities which unite them more nearly with the Latins and Celts than with their neighbours the Germans. They are characterised by a vivacity, a warmth, a mobility, a petulance, an exuberance not always found to the same degree among even the peoples of the south. Among the Slavs of purer blood these characteristics have marked their political life with a mobile, inconstant, and anarchical spirit which has rendered extremely difficult their national existence and which, taken with their geographical position, has been the great obstacle in the way of their civilisation. The distinguishing faculty of the race is a certain flexibility and elasticity of temperament and character which render it adaptable to the reception and the reproduction of all sorts of diverse ideas; the imitative faculty of the Slavs is well known. This gift is everywhere distributed among them; this Slav malleability, peculiar alike to Pole and Russian, is perhaps fundamentally but a result of their historical progress and of their geographical position. But lately entered in at the gate of civilisation, and during long years inferior to the neighbouring races, they have always gone to school to the others; instead of living by their own invention, they have lived by borrowing, and the imitative spirit has become their ruling faculty, having been for them the most useful as well as the most widely exercised.

In the west the Slavs fell under the influence of Rome; in the east, under that of Byzantium: hence the antagonism which during long centuries has set strife in the midst of the two chief Slavonic nations. United by their



A WOMAN OF YAKUTSK

common origin and the affinity of their languages, they are, however, separated by the very elements of civilisation — religion, writing, and calendar; therein lies the secret of the moral and material strife between Russia and Poland — a strife which, after having nearly annihilated the one, actually cost the other its life; as though from the Carpathian to the Ural, on those vast even plains, there was not room at one time for two separate states.

In the northwest, on the banks of the Niemen and Dvina, appears a strange group, incontestably of Indo-European origin yet isolated amidst the peoples of Europe; harking back to the Slavs, yet forming a parallel branch rather than offshoot — the Letto-Lithuanian group. Shut away in the north by marshy forests, restricted by powerful neighbours, the Lithuanian group long remained closed to all outer influences, whether of East or West. Last of all the peoples of Europe to accept Christianity, its language even to-day is the nearest of European tongues to the Sanskrit. The bone of contention among the Germans, the Poles, and the Russians, who each in turn obtained a footing among them and left an influence on their religion, they found themselves divided into Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox.

Mixed with Poles and Russians, menaced on both sides with complete absorption, the Lithuanians and the Samogitians, their brothers by race and language, still number in ancient Lithuania nearly two million souls, Catholics for the most part; they formed the majority of the population of Vilna and Kovno. In Prussia some two hundred thousand Lithuanians constitute the representatives of the ancient population of oriental Prussia, whose name is derived from a people of that race which kept its language intact up to the seventeenth century.

The second existing group of this family, the Letts, crossed probably with Finns, number more than a million souls; they inhabit chiefly Courland, Vitetsk and Livonia; but, converted, subjected, and made slaves of by the Teutonic knights, they still live under the dominion of the German barons of the Baltic provinces, with whom they have nothing in common but their religion — Lutheranism. Like the Finnish tribes outside of Finland, the Letts and Lithuanians, scanty in number and widely scattered, are incapable of forming by themselves a nation or a state. Out of this intermixture of races by the assimilation of the ruder by the more civilised, was formed a new people — a homogenous nation. In fact, contrary to popular prejudice there is in Russia something more than an intermixture of diverse races — there is what we to-day call a “nationality” — as united, as compact, and as self-conscious as any nation in the world. Russia, notwithstanding all her various races, is yet no incoherent mass, no political conglomeration or mosaic of peoples. She resembles France in her national unity rather than Turkey or Austria.

If Russia must be compared to a mosaic, let it be to one of those ancient pavements whose scheme is a single substance of solid color edged with a border of diverse forms and shades — most of Russia's original alien populations being relegated to her borders and forming around her a sort of belt of uneven width.

It is in the centre of Russia that is found that uniformity of much more marked among the Russians than among all other peoples of Europe; from one end of the empire to the other the language presents fewer dialects and less localisms than most of our western languages. The cities all look alike; the peasants have the same customs, the same manner of life. The nation resembles the country, having the same unity, almost the same monotony as the plains which it peoples.

*The Great Russians and the Little Russians*

There are, however, two principal types, almost two peoples, speaking two dialects and wholly separated from each other: the Great Russians and the Little Russians. In their qualities and in their defects they represent in Russia the eternal contrast of north and south. Their history is no less diversified than their nature; the first have their centre at Moscow, the second at Kiev. Stretching, the one to the northeast, the other to the southwest, these two unequal halves of the nation do not precisely correspond to the two great physical zones of Russia. This is due partly to nature, partly to history, which has hindered the development of the one and fostered that of the other. The southern steppes, open to every invasion, long arrested the expansion of the Little Russians, who for centuries were shut up in the basins of the Dnieper, the Bug, and the Dniester; while the Great Russians spread freely in the north and east and established themselves in the enormous basin of the Volga; masters of nearly all the forest regions and of the great Ural Lake, they took possession of the Black Belt and the steppes along the Volga and the Don.

The White Russian inhabits Mohilev, Vitebsk, Grodno, Minsk — a region possessing some of the finest forests in Russia, but whose soil is marshy and unwholesome. United politically with the Little Russian, the two have been classed under the name Western Russians. Subjected at an early date by Lithuania, whose dialect became its official language, White Russia was with the greater part of Little Russia united to Poland, and was for centuries the object of strife between that nation and the Muscovite czars, from the effects of which strife she still bleeds. Of the three Russian tribes this is perhaps the purest in blood; but thanks to the sterility of the soil and the remoteness of the sea, she has remained the poorest and least advanced in civilisation.

The Great Russians are the most vigorous and expansive element of the Russian nation, albeit the most mixed. Finnish blood has left its traces in their physique; Tatar dominion in their character. Before the advent of the Romanovs they formed alone the Muscovite Empire, and their czars took the title "Sovereign of all the Russias" long before Alexis, father of Peter the Great, justified this title by the annexation of the Ukraine. Hence Great Russia, under the name Muscovite, has been considered by certain foreigners the true, the only Russia. This is an error; since the Great Russian, the product of the colonisation of central Russia by the western Russians before the invasion of the Tatars antedates the state and even the village of Moscow. If, therefrom has emerged the Muscovite autocracy, it is impossible to cut the ties that bind it to the great Slav republic of the world whose name is still the active symbol of liberty — Novgorod.

Least Slav of all the peoples that pretend to the name, the Great Russian has been the coloniser of the race. His whole history has been one long struggle against Asia; his conquests have contributed to the aggrandisement of Europe. Long the vassal of the Tatar khans, he never forgot under Asiatic domination his European origin; and in the farthest limits of Muscovy the very name Asiatic is an insult to the peasant.

Conqueror over Asia, influenced morally and physically by all the populations assimilated or subjugated by him in his march from the Dnieper to the Ural, the Great Russian lost something of his independence, his pride, his individuality; but he gained in stability and solidity.

In spite of the obvious evidences of his mixed blood, the Great Russian is in perfect harmony with the Caucasian race by the exterior characteristics which distinguish it — his stature, his complexion, the colour of his hair and



eyes. He is apt to be tall, his skin is white, his eyes are very often blue; his hair is usually blond, light chestnut, or red. The long heavy beard so dear to the heart of the moujik and which all the persecutions of Peter the Great failed to induce him to dispense with, is in itself a mark of race, as nothing could be smoother than the chin of the Mongol, the Chinese, or the Japanese.

The Little Russians dwelling in the south have brown or dark chestnut hair, and are of purer race, dwelling nearer to the Occident; they pride themselves upon their comparatively unmixed blood, their more temperate climate, their less dreary land; they are a more imaginative, more dreamy, more poetic people than their neighbours of the north. It is in Little Russia that the Zaparogians belong, the most celebrated of those Cossack tribes which in the Ukraine or the southern steppes played so important a rôle between the Poles, the Tatars, and the Turks, and whose name will ever remain in Russia the synonym of freedom and independence. Even to-day the Zaparogian, with his liberal or democratic tradition, remains the more or less conscious and avowed ideal of the majority of the Little Russians. Another reason, in the history of the Ukraine, which makes for democratic instincts in the Little Russians is the foreign origin and denaturalisation of a great part of the higher classes among the Poles and Great Russians. From this double motive the Little Russian is perhaps more susceptible to political aspirations, more accessible to revolutionary seduction than his brother of Great Russia.

Of the Cossacks of to-day only those of the Black Sea transplanted to the Kuban between the sea of Azov and the Caucasus are Little Russians; the Cossacks of the Don and the Ural are Great Russians.<sup>b</sup>

#### SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANISATION

It is extremely difficult to draw an approximately correct picture of the life of the Russian Slavs even in its barest outlines. Among the widely scattered tribes there was hardly more than one element tending towards union — that of language. Frequent contact with the populations living on their borders and wedged in between them, must of itself have produced considerable modifications in their mode of life.

The entire social organisation of the early Slavs, like that of all other Aryan and non-Aryan peoples, was based upon kinship or descent from a common ancestor.<sup>a</sup> Even in the Varangian period we can discover traces of this primeval organisation in clans among a few tribes. In time of peace these clans were in the habit of meeting together in order to discuss common affairs. The chronicler<sup>h</sup> uses the expression "came together" when he wants to speak of decisions taken in common. This practice seems to have been known to all Slavonic peoples. Among the Russian Slavs these folk-motes were known under the name of *vetché*, and they remained to the end of their existence a necessary part of the political institutions, not only in the northern city republics, Novgorod and Pskov, but also in nearly all the principalities of Russia, with the exception of one of the latest founded, Moscow.

Among these tribes we also find native princes or clan chieftains (*kniaz*), and it is also certain that as early as the ninth century there were among the Russian Slavs private owners of tracts of land who occupied an advantageous position as compared with the great bulk of the members of the community, and from whom the latter nobles (*boyars*) were descended. But on the whole the village community formed the nucleus of the entire political and economic organisation of the eastern or Russian Slavs. It was a world complete in



itself, self-sufficient and independent both economically and juridically. The community was the possessor of the soil, which was periodically redistributed among its component members; the separate patriarchal families, and the assembly of the heads of the families was the body that judged and decided all things pertaining to the community. It is thus that we are to understand the apparently contradictory reports of the Byzantine writers, who say, on the one hand, that the Slavs know of no government and do not obey any individual, and on the other hand speak of a popular government that has existed from ancient times, that discusses all things in common, and that has many petty princes at its head.

It is self-evident that a government adapted to the requirements of a village community must assume a different character as soon as the settlement gains in extent and assumes the character of a city. And cities grew up quite early in northern and southwestern Russia. Toward the end of the ninth century Kiev had a wide fame as a large and populous city. Constantine Porphyrogenitus also knows of Novgorod, Smolensk, Ljubetch, Tchernigov, Vshgorod, and Vitichev; in the time of Igor more than twenty cities can be named. The question as to the origin of Russian cities has called forth much debate and an extensive literature.

The chief difficulty lies in a proper understanding of the so-called Bavarian geographer, a writer of the ninth or tenth century, who counts, in his description of the northern Slavs, some twenty peoples with more than 3,760 cities. These latter he calls now *civitates*, now *urbes*, without indicating that there is any distinction of meaning to be attached to these terms, so that we are left to conclude that both names denote settlements. The present consensus of opinion as to those old Russian cities is as follows:

The old word *grad*, (now *gorod*, city) denoted any space surrounded by a palisade or earthworks. Thus there were wooden and earthen cities built for protection in time of war, and every community had its city. But in the regions that offered a natural protection by their inaccessible and swampy character the need for these cities was not so urgent, so that the wooded and marshy north had fewer cities than the open south. Numerous remains of these ancient earth piles enable us to recognise the position and wide extension of these old Slavonic settlements. Sometimes they are circular in form, others consist of a double angular trench with outlying earthworks. These are to be distinguished from the wooden cities, which were originally built for trading purposes, and only later were fenced in and enclosed, so that they could also serve for protective purposes. They were built in favourable situations, adjacent to some trade route. The more complex social relations that grew up in them demanded a more thorough organisation of social and political life, for which the village community did indeed furnish the basis, but which, in the long run, was found to be inadequate. The questions of general interest to the city were settled in the first place by the *vetché*, which greatly resembled the village gathering of the family elders.

But the need of a power which should decide all questions that might arise while the *vetché* was in abeyance, was more pressing in the cities, and favoured the development of the power — originally very limited, — of the *kniazes* or princes, who were elective and whose dignity was neither hereditary nor lifelong. The prince did not even have a permanent military following: his dignity was of a purely personal nature. It is certain that not he but the *vetché* had the power to make laws. Our information concerning the political organisation of the earliest period of Russian history is very scanty, and we know more of what it lacked than of what it possessed. What strikes

us most is the absence of a military organisation. In times of danger, those who could defend themselves took up arms, the remainder fled to places of safety.

Nor can we discern with certainty any social differentiation into classes. On the other hand we know that a thriving trade was being carried on in the ninth century along the route which led from the gulf of Finland through Lake Ilmen to the Dvina and down the Dnieper to the Black Sea and thence to Greece. The oldest wooden cities lay along the famous route of the Varangians to the Greek Empire, along which amidst many dangers, the raw products of the north were exchanged for the finished commodities of the south. It is owing to these dangers that the trader had also to be a warrior, and it is into those ancient trade relations — peaceful intercourse enforced by warlike means — that we are to look for the most important arms of the old Russian state. Who discovered this trade route? We see no compelling reason to deny the honour to the Slavs, although it is established beyond doubt that even before the middle of the ninth century the Northmen reached Byzantium along this route. On the other hand, the marauding and trading expeditions which were carried on by Russians in the tenth century and earlier to the sea of Azov, the Caspian, and further still to the Caucasus and the shores of Persia, emanated from Scandinavians, and not from Slavs.



NATIVE OF YAKUTSK

#### RELIGION

The religious conceptions of the Russian Slavs were but little developed. All other Aryan peoples, including the western Slavs, excel them in this respect. There was neither a distinct priestly class, nor were there images of the gods, nor were there distinct types of gods. The Arabian travellers almost unanimously ascribe sun worship to the eastern Slavs, and Byzantine writers before the ninth century tell of a belief in a supreme being who rules the universe. It is now generally accepted that this supreme god was called Svarog and was a personification of heaven and light, while sun and fire were regarded as his children. Perun, the thunder god, and Veles, god of herds, both mentioned by the oldest chronicler, must be brought in relation to the sun. But it is highly probable that these two gods were taken over by the Slavs from their Varangian rulers. Water also was regarded as sacred, and, like the forest, it was filled with animate beings which must be propitiated with sacrifices, since they had relations to human beings. Water, fire, and earth were related to death. The *russalki*, shades of the dead, swam about in the water, and the bodies of the dead were given up to the flames in order to make easier their passage to the realm of the dead (*rai*). The

[862 A.D.]

slaves, as well as the wife and the domestic animals were burned on the funeral pyre, and cremation was preceded by a feast and games in honour of the dead. But burial also was common.<sup>g</sup>

We find the Russian Slavs about the middle of the ninth century split up into numerous tribes, settled on the soil and engaged chiefly in hunting and agriculture. A continental people, everywhere confining itself to the inland country, leaving the sea-borders to non-Slavonic tribes. Politically they were in the midst of the transition from the clan organisation to the village community, without any central authority, without any military organisation, and but little able to resist the inroads from north, south, and east, of populations who lived by plunder.<sup>a</sup> The primitive condition of their political organisation, their extreme subdivision into tribes and cantons, the endless warfare of canton with canton, delivered them up defenceless to every invader. While the Slavs of the south paid tribute to the Chazars, the Slavs of Ihnen, exhausted by internecine conflicts, decided to call in the Varangians. "Let us seek," they said, "a prince who will govern us and reason with us justly. Then," continues Nestor,<sup>h</sup> "the Tchud, the Slavs (of Novgorod), the Krivitchi, and other confederate tribes said to the Varangian princes: 'Our land is great and has everything in abundance, but it lacks order and justice; come and take possession and rule over us.'"

#### THE VARANGIAN PERIOD (862-1054 A.D.)

To the elements that have obtained a permanent foothold on the soil of modern Russia and affected the Slavs in a greater or less degree, a new one must now be added in the Varango-Russians. The brave inhabitants of Sweden and Norway, who were known in western Europe under the name of Northman or Normans, directed their first warlike expeditions against their Slavonian and Finnish neighbours. The flotillas of the vikings were directed to the shores of the Baltic, and *austregr* — the eastern route — was the name they gave to the journey into the country of the Finns and Slavs on the gulf of Finland and further inland. *Gardar* was the name they gave to the Slavo-Finnish settlements, *Holmgardar* was their name for Novgorod, *Kaenungardar* for Kiev. *Mikligardar*, for Constantinople, shows that the Normans first learned to know that city through the eastern Slavs. The Slavs, on the other hand, called those Scandinavians by a name given to them by the Finns — Rus. The Scandinavians who sent their surplus of fighting men to Russia and were destined to found the Russian state, lived — as we learn from the form of the names that have come down to us — in Upland, Södermanland, and Östergötland, that is, on the east coast of Sweden north of Lake Mälär. In these lands and throughout the Scandinavian north, men who were bound to military chiefs by a vow of fidelity were called *vaeringr* (pl. *vaeringjar*, O. Sw. Warung), a name changed by the eastern Slavs into *variag*. It was these Russo-Varangians who founded the state of Old Russia.<sup>g</sup>

At the call of the Slavs of Novgorod and their allies, three Varangian brothers, Rurik, Sineus, and Truvor (Scand. Hrurekr, Sikniutr, Thorwardr), gathered together their kindred and armed followers, or *družina*, and established themselves on the northern frontiers of the Slavs: Sineus to the north-east, on the White Lake; Rurik, the eldest, in the centre, on Lake Ladoga near the Volkhov River, where he founded the city of Ladoga; and Truvor to the northwest, at Izborsk, near Lake Pskov. The year 862 is usually assigned as the date in which the Varangians settled in Russia, and it is the



official year for the founding of the Russian empire; but it is more probable that they had come before that date.

Shortly after their settlement the two younger brothers died and Rurik became sole chief of all the Varangian bands in northern Russia and assumed the title of grand-prince. He now became so powerful that he was able to subject Novgorod, which he made the capital of an empire stretching from the lakes in the north to the sources of the Dnieper in the south.<sup>a</sup> The country drained by that river was also occupied by Varangians, but independently of Rurik. Two chiefs by the name of Askold and Dir (Scand. Hös-kalkr and Dyri) wrested Kiev from the Chazars and ruled over the Polians, the most civilized tribe of the eastern Slavs. In 865 they led against Byzantium an expedition which consisted of at least two hundred ships, and according to Venetian accounts of three hundred and sixty ships, to which would correspond an army of about fourteen thousand warriors. A tempest arose and destroyed the fleet in the sea of Marinora. The barbarians attributed their disaster to the wonder-working virgin, and it is reported that Askold embraced Christianity. This expedition has a two-fold importance: (1) it gives us the *first* certain date in Russian history; and (2) it introduced the seeds of Christianity into Russia. In the following year, 866, the patriarch Photius established a bishopric at Kiev.

After the death of his brothers Rurik reigned till his death in 879, when he was succeeded, not by his son Igor (Scand. Ingvarr), but by the eldest member of his family Oleg (Scand. Helge). In 882 he set out from Novgorod with an army composed of Varangians and the subject Slavo-Finnish tribes—Tchuds, Merians, Vesians, Ilmen Slavs, and Krivitchi—sailed down the upper Dnieper, took Smolensk, freed the Radimichi and the Severians from the yoke of the Chazars and incorporated them in his empire, and finally reached Kiev. Askold and Dir were then got rid of by an act of treachery, and Kiev was made the capital of an empire embracing nearly all the eastern Slavs.

### *The Treaty with Constantinople*

But Kiev was only one of the stages in the southward progress of the Varangians. The great city of the east, Constantinople, was the glittering prize that dazzled their eyes and was ever regarded as the goal of their ambition. Accordingly, in 907, Oleg sailed with a fleet of two thousand boats and eighty thousand men, and reached the gates of Constantinople. The frightened emperor was obliged to pay a large ransom for the city and to agree to a treaty of free commercial intercourse between the Russians and the Greeks. A particular district in the suburbs of the city was assigned as the place of residence for Russian traders, but the city itself could be visited by no more than fifty Russians simultaneously, who were to be unarmed and accompanied by an imperial officer.<sup>g a</sup>

Oleg's Varangian guard, who seem to have been also his council, were parties with him to this treaty, for their assent appears to have been requisite to give validity to an agreement affecting the amount of their gains as conquerors. These warriors swore to the treaty by their gods Perun and Volos, and by their arms, placed before them on the ground: their shields, their rings, their naked swords, the things they loved and honoured most. The gorged barbarian then departed with his rich booty to Kiev, to enjoy there an uncontested authority, and the title of Wise Man or Magician, unanimously conferred upon him by the admiration of his Slavonic subjects.



[911-913 A.D.]

*The First Written Document of Russian History (911 A.D.)*

Three years after this event, in 911, Oleg sent ambassadors to Constantinople to renew the treaty of alliance and commerce between the two empires. This treaty, preserved in the old chronicle of Nestor, is the first written monument of Russian history, for all previous treaties were verbal. It is of value, as presenting to us some customs of the times in which it was negotiated.

Here follow some of the articles that were signed by the sovereigns of Constantinople and of Kiev respectively:

II. "If a Greek commit any outrage on a Russian, or a Russian on a Greek, and it be not sufficiently proved, the oath of the accuser shall be taken, and justice be done.

III. "If a Russian kill a Christian, or a Christian kill a Russian, the assassin shall be put to death on the very spot where the crime was committed. If the murderer take to flight and be domiciliated, the portion of his fortune, which belongs to him according to law, shall be adjudged to the next of kin to the deceased; and the wife of the murderer shall obtain the other portion of the estate which, by law, should belong to him.

IV. "He who strikes another with a sword, or with any other weapon, shall pay three litres of gold, according to the Russian law. If he have not that sum, and he affirms it upon oath, he shall give the party injured all he has, to the garment he has on.

V. "If a Russian commit a theft on a Greek, or a Greek on a Russian, and he be taken in the act and killed by the proprietor, no pursuit shall be had for avenging his death. But if the proprietor can seize him, bind him, and bring him to the judge, he shall take back the things stolen, and the thief shall pay him the triple of their value.

X. "If a Russian in the service of the emperor, or travelling in the dominions of that prince, shall happen to die without having disposed of his goods, and has none of his near relations about him, his property shall be sent to Russia to his heirs; and, if he have bequeathed them by testament, they shall be in like manner remitted to the legatee."

The names of Oleg's ambassadors who negotiated this treaty of peace, show that all of them were Northmen. From this we may conclude that the government of the country was as yet wholly in the hands of the conquerors.

## THE REIGN OF IGOR

Igor, the son of Rurik, who was married to a Scandinavian princess named Olga (Helga), was nearly forty years of age when he succeeded Oleg in 913. He ascended the throne under trying circumstance, for the death of the victor revived the courage of the vanquished and the Drevlians raised the standard of revolt against Kiev; but Igor soon quelled them, and punished them by augmenting their tribute. The Uglitches, who dwelt on the southern side of the Dnieper, contended longer for their liberty against the voyevod Sveneld, whom Igor had despatched against them. One of their principal towns held out a siege of three years. At last they too were subdued and made tributary.

Meanwhile new enemies, formidable from their numbers and their thirst for pillage, showed themselves on the frontiers of Russia: these were the Petchenegs, famous in the Russian, Byzantine, and Hungarian annals, from

the tenth to the twelfth century. They were a nomad people, of the Turcoman stock, whose only wealth consisted in their lances, bows and arrows, their flocks and herds, and their swift horses, which they managed with astonishing address. The only objects of their desires were fat pastures for their cattle, and rich neighbours to plunder. Having come from the east they established themselves along the northern shores of the Black Sea. Thenceforth occupying the ground between the Greek and the Russian empires, subsidised by the one for its defence, and courted by the other from commercial motives — for the cataracts of the Dnieper and the mouths of the Danube were in the hands of those marauders — the Petchenegs were enabled for more than two hundred years to indulge their ruling propensity at the expense of their neighbours. Having concluded a treaty with Igor, they remained for five years without molesting Russia; at least Nestor does not speak of any war with them until 920, nor had tradition afforded him any clue to the result of that campaign.

The reign of Igor was hardly distinguished by any important event until the year 941, when, in imitation of his guardian, he engaged in an expedition against Constantinople. If the chroniclers do not exaggerate, Igor entered the Black Sea with ten thousand barks, each carrying forty men. The imperial troops being at a distance, he had time to overrun and ravage Paphlagonia, Pontus, and Bithynia. Nestor speaks with deep abhorrence of the ferocity displayed by the Russians on this occasion; nothing to which they could apply fire or sword escaped their wanton lust of destruction, and their prisoners were invariably massacred in the most atrocious manner — crucified, impaled, cut to pieces, buried alive, or tied to stakes to serve as butts for the archers. At last the Greek fleet encountered the Russian as it rode at anchor near Pharos, prepared for battle and confident of victory. But the terrible Greek fire launched against the invaders struck them with such dismay that they fled in disorder to the coasts of Asia Minor. Descending there to pillage, they were again routed by the land forces, and escaped by night in their barks, to lose many of them in another severe naval defeat. By the confession of the Russian chronicles, Igor scarcely took back with him a third part of his army.

Instead of being discouraged by these disasters, Igor prepared to revenge them. In 944 he collected new forces [which included a large number of Scandinavians collected for this special purpose by Igor's recruiting agents], took the Petchenegs into his pay, exacting hostages for their fidelity, and again set out for Greece. But scarcely had he reached the mouths of the Danube when he was met by ambassadors from the emperor Romanus, with an offer to pay him the same tribute as had been exacted by Oleg. Igor halted and communicated this offer to his chief men, whose opinions on the matter are thus reported by Nestor: "If Caesar makes such proposals," said they, "is it not better to get gold, silver, and precious stuffs, without fighting? Can we tell who will be the victor, and who the vanquished? And can we guess what may befall us at sea? It is not solid ground that is under our feet, but the depths of the waters, where all men run the same risks."

In accordance with these views Igor granted peace to the empire on the proposed conditions, and the following year he concluded with the emperor a treaty, which was in part a renewal of that made by Oleg.<sup>1</sup> Of the fifty

[<sup>1</sup> This treaty was not so favourable to the Russians as the one concluded with Oleg — a result, evidently, of the former defeat. Another point of importance is that it makes mention of Russian Christians, to whom there is no allusion in the treaty of 911. From this we may conclude that Christianity had spread largely during this interval.]

[948 A.D.]

names attached on the part of Russia to this second treaty, three are Slavonic, the rest Norman.

Igor, being now advanced in years, was naturally desirous of repose, but the insatiable cupidity of his comrades in arms forced him to go to war. From the complaints of his warriors it appears that the Russian, like the German princes, furnished their faithful band with clothing, arms, horses, and provisions. "We are naked," Igor's companions and guards said to him, "while the companions of Sveneld have beautiful arms and fine clothing. Come with us and levy contributions, that we may be in plenty with thee." It was customary with the grand prince to leave Kiev every year, in November, with an army, and not to return until April, after having visited his cities and received their tributes. When the prince's magazine was empty, and the annual contributions were not sufficient, it became necessary to find new enemies to subject to exactions, or to treat as enemies the tribes that had submitted. To the latter expedient Igor now resorted against the Drevlians. Marching into their country he surcharged them with onerous tributes, besides suffering his guards to plunder them with impunity. His easy success in this rapacious foray tempted him to his destruction. After quitting the country of his oppressed tributaries, the thought struck him that more might yet be squeezed out of them. With this view he sent on his army to Kiev, probably because he did not wish to let his *voyevods* or lieutenants share the fruit of his contemplated extortions, and went back with a small force among the Drevlians, who, driven to extremity, massacred him and the whole of his guard near their town of Iskorost.<sup>2</sup>

#### THE REGENCY OF OLGA

Olga, Igor's widow, assumed the regency in the name of her son Sviatoslav, then of tender age. Her first care was to revenge herself upon the Drevlians. In Nestor's narrative it is impossible to separate the historical part from the epic. The Russian chronicler recounts in detail how the Drevlians sent two deputations to Olga to appease her and to offer her the hand of their prince; how she caused their death by treachery, some being buried alive, while others were stifled in a bath-house; how she besieged their city of Iskorost and offered to grant them peace on payment of a tribute of three pigeons and three sparrows for each house; how she attached lighted tow to the birds and then sent them off to the wooden city, where the barns and the thatched roofs were immediately set on fire; how, finally, she massacred part of the inhabitants of Iskorost and reduced the rest to slavery.

But it was this vindictive barbarian woman that was the first of the ruling house of Rurik to adopt Christianity.<sup>d</sup> We have seen before how Christianity was planted in Kiev under the protection of Askold and Dir, and how the converts to the new religion were specially referred to in the commercial treaty between Oleg and the Byzantine emperor. There existed a Christian community at Kiev but it was to Constantinople that Olga went to be baptised in the presence of the patriarch and the emperor. She assumed the Christian name of Helena, and after her death she was canonised in the Russian church. On her return she tried also to convert her son Sviatoslav, who had by this time become the reigning prince, but all her efforts were unavailing. He dreaded the ridicule of the fierce warriors whom he had gathered about himself. And no doubt the religion of Christ was little in consonance with the martial character of this true son of the vikings. The chronicle of Nestor gives the following embellished account of Olga's conversion:<sup>a</sup>



*Nestor Tells of the Baptism of Olga*

In the year 948 Olga went to the Greeks and came to Tsargorod (Constantinople). At that time the emperor was Zimischi<sup>1</sup>, and Olga came to him, and seeing that she was of beautiful visage and prudent mind, the emperor admired her intelligence as he conversed with her and said to her: "Thou art worthy to reign with us in this city." When she heard these words she said to the emperor: "I am a heathen, if you wish me to be baptised, baptise me yourself: otherwise I will not be baptised." So the emperor and patriarch baptised her. When she was enlightened she rejoiced in body and soul, and the patriarch instructed her in the faith and said to her: "Blessed art thou

among Russian women, for thou hast loved light and cast away darkness; the sons of Russia shall bless thee unto the last generation of thy descendants." And at her baptism she was given the name of Helena, who was in ancient times empress and mother of Constantine the Great. And the patriarch blessed Olga and let her go.

After the baptism the emperor sent for her and said to her: "I will take thee for my wife."

She answered: "How canst thou wish to take me for thy wife when thou thyself hast baptised me and called me daughter? for with the Christians this is unlawful and thou thyself knowest it."

And the emperor said: "Thou hast deceived me, Olga," and he gave her many presents of gold and silver, and silk and vases and let her depart, calling her daughter.

She returned to her home, going first to the patriarch to ask his

blessing on her house and saying unto him: "My people are heathen and my son, too; may God preserve me from harm!"

And the patriarch said: "My faithful daughter, thou hast been baptised in Christ, thou hast put on Christ, Christ shall preserve thee as he preserved Enoch in the first ages, and Noah in the Ark, as he preserved Abraham from Abimelech, Lot from the Sodomites, Moses from Pharaoh, David from Saul, the three young men from the fiery furnace, and Daniel from the lions: thus shall he preserve thee from the enemy and his snares!" Thus the patriarch blessed her and she returned in peace to her own land and came to Kiev.

Olga lived with her son Sviatoslav and she repeatedly tried to induce him to be baptised, but he would not listen to her, for if any one then wished to be baptised it was not forbidden, but people mocked at him. And Olga often said, "My son, I have learned wisdom and rejoice; if thou knewest it, thou too wouldst rejoice." But he paid no heed to her, saying: "How



OLGA

[<sup>1</sup> According to another Ms., Constantine, son of Lev.]

964-971 A.D.]

should I alone adopt a strange faith, my droujina (followers, men-at-arms) would mock at me." She said: "If thou art baptised, all will do likewise," but he would not listen to his mother and persisted in the heathen customs, not knowing that who does not hearken to his mother shall fall into misfortune, for it is written, he that does not hearken to his father or mother, let him die the death.<sup>1</sup> And he was angered against his mother. However, Olga loved her son Sviatoslav, and said: "God's will be done! If God wills to have mercy on my race and on the Russian land, he will put into their hearts to turn to God, even as He did unto me." And having thus said, she prayed for her son and for the people night and day, and she brought up her son until he was grown to be a man.

## SVIATOSLAV; THE VICTORY OF NORTH OVER SOUTH

Sviatoslav assumed the reins of government in 964, and he ruled only till 972, but this short period was filled with warlike expeditions. He crushed the power of the Volga Bulgarians and of the Chazars, and he incorporated the Viatitchi in the empire — thus destroying the danger ever menacing from the east, and uniting all the Slavs under one dominion. In 968 he marched — at the instigation of the Greek emperor, who furnished him the means — with an army of sixty thousand men against the Bulgarians of the Danube, conquered Pereiaslavl (the location of which is unknown) and Durostorus (the modern Silistria), and began to form the project of erecting for himself a new empire on the ruins of the Bulgarian power, when tidings reached him of a raid of the Petchenegs against Kiev and of the imminent danger to his mother and children who were beleaguered in that town. Leaving garrisons in the conquered towns he hurried back by forced marches and drove the Petchenegs back into the steppe. He divided his Russian dominions among his three young sons, giving Kiev to Iaropolk, the land of the Drevlians to Oleg, and Novgorod to Vladimir; while he himself went back to Bulgaria, for "Pereiaslavl is dear to him, where all good things meet, fine stuffs, wine, fruits, and gold from Greece, silver and horses from Bohemia and Hungary, furs, wax, honey, and slaves from Russia."

In 970 he conquered Bulgaria and crossed the Balkans with an army of thirty thousand men. Defeated before Arcadipole (the present Lüle Burpas), his barbarian followers gave way to their plundering instincts, ravaged Macedonia, and scattered in all directions, while the emperor John Tzimiskes was making extensive preparations for their annihilation. Thus the year 971 was spent. In March of the next year the Russian garrison was almost annihilated at Pereiaslavl, which the Greeks took by storm, and only a small remnant reached Sviatoslav. In this hour of need Sviatoslav exhibited a tremendous energy. By recalling his roving bands he soon found himself at the head of sixty thousand men, and a pitched battle was fought. Twelve times the victory wavered from one side to the other, but finally their lack of cavalry and their inferior armament decided the day against the Russians, and they were forced back upon Drster. For three months they held the town against a regular siege, until, reduced in numbers by hunger and numerous sorties, Sviatoslav decided on a last desperate effort to break through the Greek lines. The battle is described in great detail by the Byzantine historians, in whom Sviatoslav's bravery excited admiration. Fifteen thousand Russians were left on the field, the survivors were forced

back into Durostorus. Surrounded on all sides, Sviatoslav sued for peace, and Tzimiskes granted an honourable retreat to a foe so gallant and withal dangerous. He renewed with him the old treaties, undertook to supply his army with provisions on its retreat, and also to induce the Petchenegs to grant a free passage into Russia. But at the rapids of the Dnieper these sons of the steppe surprised Sviatoslav and killed him, and only a small remnant of his force, led by the voyevod Svenedl, reached Kiev.<sup>9a</sup>

Sviatoslav's overthrow was, after all, a fortunate event for the Russian empire. Kiev was already a sufficiently eccentric capital; had Sviatoslav established the seat of government on the Danube, his successor would have gone still further; and Rurik, instead of being the founder of a mighty empire, would have been nothing more than the principal leader of one of those vast but transient irruptions of the northern barbarians, which often ravaged the world without leaving behind any permanent trace of their passage. But in the Greek emperor Tzimiskes, Sviatoslav met with a hero as pertinacious as himself, and with far more talent, and the Russians, driven back within the limits of Russia, were compelled to establish themselves there.<sup>i</sup>



VLADIMIR I  
(Died 1015)

Sviatoslav's death seems to have left no perceptible influence on the destinies of Russia, for his three young sons were in the undisputed possession of authority while he and his warriors were fighting for a new empire in the Balkan peninsula. But his division of Russia among his sons, as if it were his private estate, soon showed its mischievous effects. In 977 civil war broke out between Iaropolk, who was at Kiev, and Oleg, who was in the Drevlian country. The latter was defeated in bat-

tle, and in his flight met death by the breaking down of a bridge thronged with fugitives. His territory was thereupon annexed by Iaropolk to his own dominions.

Vladimir, prince of Novgorod, the youngest of the three brothers, now became alarmed for his own safety and fled across the sea to seek refuge among the Scandinavian Varangians. After two years he returned with a numerous force of Norse adventurers, expelled from Novgorod the voyevods whom Iaropolk had installed there during his absence, and led his army against Kiev. On his march he conquered Polotsk on the Dvina, an independent Varangian principality, killing its prince by the name of Rogvolod (Scand. Rangvaldr) and forcing his daughter Rogneda to marry him. Iaropolk, betrayed by his chief men, surrendered Kiev without offering any resistance and finally delivered his own person into the hands of Vladimir, by whose order he was put to death. Vladimir now became sole ruler of Russia.

The victory of Vladimir over Iaropolk was achieved with the aid of Northmen and Novgorodians. It was, therefore, a victory of the Russian north over the Russian south, of Novgorod, where paganism was still unshaken, over Kiev, which was permeated with Christian elements. Vladimir was brought up in Novgorod, and during his two years' stay in Sweden



[987 A.D.]

he must have become still more strongly impregnated with heathen ideas. Accordingly we find that no sooner was he firmly seated on his throne at Kiev than he tried to restore the heathen worship to more than its pristine strength among the Russian Slavs. Statues of the gods were erected: Perun, Dashbog, Stribog, Simargla, Mokosh — all of them, with the exception of Perun, known to us hardly more than by name. Human sacrifices were introduced, and two Christians, a father and his son, who resisted this blood-tax, were killed by a fanatical mob — the first and only Christian martyrs on Russian soil. One is tempted to assume that the Russian Slavs had originally no representations of the gods, and that it was their Norse princes who introduced them — at any rate there is no mention of images before the arrival of the latter; while the mode of worship introduced by Vladimir bears a bloody character, quite alien to the eastern Slavs. It is evident that he is making a last effort to impart to the colourless paganism of his subjects a systematic character which would enable it to resist the growing new religion.

But the circumstances of this prince soon underwent a change. His Norse auxiliaries, whose rapacity he could not satisfy, he was soon obliged to dismiss. According to northern sagas he was even involved in a war with Sweden, the stronghold of heathenism. His new capital was in constant commercial intercourse with Byzantium, and the reports that reached him of its gorgeous worship made a deep impression on the imagination of the barbarian. But if he was to accept the religion of the Cæsars, he was determined to do it not as a suppliant, but as a conqueror.<sup>g a</sup> In what follows we give in full the circumstantial account of Nestor.

#### NESTOR'S ACCOUNT OF VLADIMIR'S CONVERSION

In the year 987, Vladimir called together his boyars and the elders of the town, and said to them: "Behold, the Bulgarians have come to me saying: Receive our law; then came Germans and they praised their laws; after them came the Jews, and finally came the Greeks, blaming all other laws, but praising their own, and they spoke at great length, from the creation of the world, of the history of the whole world; they speak cunningly, and it is wonderful and pleasing to hear them; they say that there is another world, and that whosoever receives their faith, even though he die shall live to all eternity; but if he receive another law he shall burn in another world amidst flames. What think ye of it, and what will you answer?"

And the boyars and elders answered, "Thou knowest, prince, that nobody finds fault with his own, but on the contrary praises it; if thou desirest to test this matter deeply, send some of thy men to study their various faiths and see how each one serves God." And the speech pleased the prince and all the people; ten wise and good men were chosen and were told to go first to the Bulgarians and study their faith. So they went, and coming saw infamous doings, and how the people worshipped in their mosques, and they returned to their own country. And Vladimir said to them: "Go now to the Germans, and observe in the same manner, and afterwards go to the Greeks." They came to the Germans, and after having watched their church services, they went on to Tsargorad (Constantinople) and came to the emperor; the emperor asked them what brought them there, and they told him all that had happened. When he had heard it, he was glad and did them great honour from that day. The next day he sent to the patriarch saying: "There have come certain Russians to study our faith, prepare the church and thy clergy,

and array thyself in thy episcopal robes that they may see the glory of our God." When the patriarch heard this, he called together his clergy and they celebrated the service as for a great festival, and they burned incense and the choirs sang. And the emperor went with the Russians into the church and they were placed in a spacious part so that they might see the beauty of the church and hear the singing; then they explained to them the archiepiscopal service, the ministry of the deacons and the divine office. They were filled with wonderment and greatly admired and praised the service. And the emperors Basil and Constantine called them and said, "Return now to your country." And they bade them farewell, giving them great gifts and showing them honour.

When they returned to their own country, the prince assembled the boyars and elders and said to them: "These are the men whom we have sent; they have returned, let us listen to what they have seen." And he said: "Speak before the droujina." And they said: "First we went to the Bulgarians and we observed how they worship in their temples, they stand without girdles, they sit down and look about them as though they were possessed by the demon, and there is no gladness amongst them, but only sorrow and a great stench; their religion is not a good one. We then went to the Germans, and we saw many services celebrated in their temples, but we saw no beauty there. Then we came to the Greeks, and they took us where they worship their God, and we no longer knew whether we were in heaven or on earth, for there is nothing like it on earth, nor such beauty, and we know not how to tell of it; we only know that it is there, that God dwells among men, and their service surpasses that of any other land. We can never forget its beauty, for as every man when he has tasted sweetness cannot afterwards endure bitterness, so can we no longer dwell here." The boyars answered: "If the Greek religion were evil, then thy grandmother Olga, who was wiser than all men, would not have adopted it." And Vladimir replied: "Where then shall we be baptised?" They answered: "Where thou wilt." And the year passed by.

In the year 988 Vladimir marched with his troops against Kherson, a Greek town, and the inhabitants shut themselves up in the town. So Vladimir established himself on the other side of the town, in the bay, at an arrow's throw from the town. And the people of Kherson fought hard against him, but he blockaded the town and they were exhausted, and Vladimir said to them: "If you do not surrender I will stay three years if necessary." But they would not listen to him.

Then Vladimir ranged his men in battle array and commanded them to build a trench towards the town. And a man of Kherson, by name Anastasius, threw out an arrow, on which he had inscribed: "To the east of thee lie springs, the waters of which come into the town through pipes; dig there and thou shalt intercept the water." When Vladimir heard this he looked up to heaven and said: "If this comes to pass I will be baptised." He commanded his soldiers to dig above the pipes, and he cut off the water, and the people, exhausted by thirst, surrendered.

So Vladimir with his droujina entered into the town. And he sent messengers to Basil and Constantine, saying: "Behold I have conquered your famous town. I have heard that you have a maiden sister; if you will not give her to me, I will do with your capital even as I have done with this town." The emperors were grieved when this message was brought to them and sent back the following answer: "It is not meet to give a Christian maiden in marriage to a heathen. If thou art baptised thou shalt receive what thou

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askest, and the kingdom of heaven besides, and thou shalt be of the same faith as we, but if thou wilt not be baptised we cannot give thee our sister."

When he heard this, Vladimir said to the emperor's messengers, "Tell your emperor thus: I will be baptised, for I have already inquired into your religion, and your faith and rites please me well as they have been described to me by the men whom we have sent." And when the emperors heard these words they rejoiced and persuaded their sister, who was named Anna, and sent to Vladimir saying: "Be baptised and we will send thee our sister." Vladimir answered: "Let them come with your sister to baptise me." When the emperors heard this they sent their sister with some dignitaries and priests; and she did not want to go and said: "I am going like a slave to the heathen, it would be better for me to die." But her brothers persuaded her saying: "It is through thee that God shall turn the hearts of the Russian people to repentance, and thou shalt save the land of Greece from a cruel war; seest thou not how much harm the Russians have already done to the Greeks? And now if thou goest not they will do more harm." And they persuaded her with difficulty. So she took ship, kissed her parents, and weeping went across the sea to Kherson.

When she arrived, the people of Kherson came out to greet her, led her into the town, and took her to the palace. By the will of God Vladimir's eyes were then sore and he could not see anything, he was greatly troubled. And the czarina<sup>1</sup> went unto him saying: "If thou desirest to be delivered from this malady, be baptised as quickly as possible, or otherwise thou wilt not be cured." When Vladimir heard this he said: "If this is accomplished, truly the God of the Christians is great:" and he was baptised. The bishop of Kherson after having announced it to the people, baptised Vladimir together with the czarina's priests, and as soon as he laid his hands on him, he saw. When Vladimir perceived how quickly he was healed, he glorified God, saying: "Now only do I know the true God." And when his droujina saw it, many were also baptised. Vladimir was baptised in the church of St. Basil, which is in Kherson in the midst of the town, where the people hold their market.

After the baptism Vladimir was wedded to the czarina. And when he had been baptised the priests expounded to him the Christian faith. After this Vladimir with the czarina and Anastasius and the priests of Kherson took the relics of St. Clement and St. Theba, his disciple, as well as the sacred vessels and relics, and he built a church on an eminence in the middle of the town, which had been raised with the earth taken from the trench, and this church still exists. As a wedding present to the czarina he gave back Kherson to the Greeks, and himself returned to Kiev. When he came there he commanded all the idols to be overthrown, some to be chopped in pieces, others cast into the flames. Then Vladimir had the following proclamation made throughout the town. "Whosoever to-morrow, rich or poor, mendicant or artisan, does not come to the river to be baptised, will be as an alien to me," When the people heard these words, they came joyfully saying: "If this faith were not good, the prince and the boyars would not have adopted it." The next day Vladimir came with the czarina's priests and those of Kherson to the banks of the Dnieper, and an innumerable multitude of people were assembled and they went into the water, some up to their necks, others to their breasts; the younger ones stood on the banks, men held their children in their arms, the adults were quite in the water, and the priests stood repeating

[<sup>1</sup> In the original Nestor always calls thus the sister of the emperors.]



the prayers. And there was joy in heaven and on earth to see so many souls saved. When they were baptised the people returned to their homes and Vladimir rejoiced that he and his people knew God. He ordered that churches and priests should be established in all the towns, and that the people should be baptised throughout all the towns and villages; then he sent for the children of the chief families and had them instructed in book learning. Thus was Vladimir enlightened with his sons and his people, for he had twelve sons. And he henceforth lived in the Christian faith.<sup>h</sup>

### *The Death of Vladimir the Christian*

The chronicler then goes on to describe the changes wrought in Vladimir's character by his conversion: how this prince, who had hitherto been an oriental voluptuary and maintained in several places numerous harems with hundreds of wives, suddenly changed into the faithful husband of his Christian wife; and how he who had murdered his brother (whose wife he appropriated) and the father and brother of another of his wives, now became fearful of punishing offenders and criminals lest he commit a sin, so that it became the duty of his priests to admonish him to enforce justice and punish the guilty. All this, whether true or false, shows in what deep veneration the founder of Russian Christianity was held by subsequent generations.

On the other hand, his acceptance of Christianity does not seem to have diminished his love of war, which in those days, surrounded as the agricultural Russians were by semi-nomadic and marauding tribes, was indeed a social necessity. Throughout his reign he was engaged in suppressing revolts, reconquering territory lost during the reign of the weak Iaropolk — Galicia or Red Russia had then been lost to Poland — and punishing Lithuanians, Volga Bulgarians, and Petchenegs. To secure the southern frontier against these last, he erected a line of fortifications at strategical points and transplanted a large number of colonists from the north to the borders of the steppe.<sup>a</sup>

Vladimir died in 1015, leaving a large number of heirs by his numerous wives. From the division that he made among them of his states we learn what was the extent of Russia at that epoch. To Iaroslav he gave Novgorod; to Iziaslav, Polotsk; to Boris, Rostov; to Gleb, Murom — these last two principalities being in the Finn country; to Sviatoslav, the country of the Drevlians; to Vsevolod, Vladimir in Volhynia; to Mstislav, Tmoutarakan<sup>1</sup>; to his nephew Sviatopolk, the son of his brother and victim Iaropolk, the principality of Tourov, in the country of Minsk, founded by a Varangian named Tour, who, like Askold and Rogvolod, was not of the blood of princes.<sup>j</sup>

This division of the territories of the state among the heirs of the prince was in entire accord with the ideas of the Norse conquerors, who regarded their conquests as their private property. It was, moreover, dictated by the economic conditions of the time. Money being but rarely employed and all payments being made in service and in kind, it was indispensable, in making provision for the members of the ruling house, to supply them with territories and subjects. The immense extent of Russia, the lack of adequate means of communication, and its subdivision among a large number of tribes without any national cohesion, were further reasons for the introduction of this system of government.<sup>a</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> An antiquarian inquiry instituted by Catherine in 1794 resulted in proving that Tmoutarakan was situated on the isle of Taman, forming a key to the confluence of the sea of Azov with the Black Sea.<sup>k</sup>]

[1019 A.D.]

## SVIATOPOLK IS SUCCEEDED BY IAROSLAV (1019 A.D.)

Sviatopolk, who claimed a divided parentage between Vladimir and Iaropolk — being the son of the widow of the latter, who on the murder of her husband was forced to live with the former, she being already pregnant — was at Kiev when the news of Vladimir's death arrived. He had long indulged in a project for seizing the throne, which was favoured in its formation by the increasing imbecility of his father, whose death now ripened it into action. His ambitious schemes embraced a plan for securing the sole monarchy, by obtaining the grand principedom first, and then by artifice or treachery to put his brothers out of the way, so that he might thus reorganise under the one head the divided and independent governments. The moment had now arrived when this violent scheme was to be put into execution. His brother Boris, who was employed with the army against the Petchenegs, was the first object of his hate and fear, because his good qualities had so strongly recommended him, that he was the most popular of the brothers, and the most likely to gain the ascendancy through the will of the people. There was but one sure method to get rid of this formidable rival, and Sviatopolk did not hesitate to adopt it. When the intelligence of his father's decease reached Boris, he declared that the throne devolved properly upon the elder brother, and rejected the unanimous offer of the soldiery to assist in placing him upon it. This noble insensibility to the general wish alienated his troops, and exposed him to the designs of his treacherous rival. The assassins who were commissioned to despatch him found easy access to his tent, and having first slain a faithful Russian who threw himself before the person of his master, they soon effected their horrible purpose.

Two other brothers met a similar fate. Gleb was informed by letter that his father was ill, and desired his return. On his way he was so injured by a fall from his horse as to be forced to continue his journey in a litter. In this state he learned that Sviatopolk had issued orders for his murder, which, tempted probably by the reward, were carried into effect by his own cook, who stabbed him with a knife in the breast. Both Gleb and Boris were afterwards sainted, which appears to have been the last compliment paid by the Russians to their ill-used princes. These villainies alarmed a third brother, who fled to Hungary; but the emissaries of the triumphant assassin seized him in his flight, brought him back to the capital, and put him to death.

The way to the throne was now tolerably well cleared. Sviatopolk I found no further difficulty in assuming the government of Kiev, and calling in such of the tributary provinces as his recent excesses either terrified into submission or reduced within his control. But the most powerful opponent yet remained to be subjugated.

Iaroslav, prince of Novgorod, alarmed and outraged by the cruelties of his brother, and apprehending that, unless they were speedily arrested, they would spread into his own principality, determined to advance upon Kiev and make war on the usurping fratricide. The Novgorodians, to whom he was greatly endeared by the wisdom and mildness of his sway, entered so warmly into the expedition, that the tyrant was driven out of Kiev without much cost of blood, and obliged to flee for refuge to his father-in-law, the duke of Poland. At that period Poland was resting from the ruinous effects of a disastrous and straggling campaign in Germany which had considerably reduced her power, and curtailed her means of satisfying the ambition of her restless ruler. The representations of Sviatopolk rekindled the ardour of the Poles, who, animated as much by the desire of recovering those provinces which

Vladimir had formerly wrested from Miecelsas, as by the prospect of ulterior aggrandisement, readily fell into the proposals of the exiled prince to make an attempt for his restoration to the throne. Boleslav at the head of a powerful force, advanced into Russia. Iaroslav, however, apprised of the movements of the enemy, met them on the banks of the Bug, prepared for battle. The army of Boleslav lay at the opposite side. For some time the invader hesitated to ford the river under the fire of the Russian soldiers; and might, probably, have returned as he came, had not a petty occurrence excited his impetuosity, and urged him forward.



IAROSLAV I  
(Died 1054)

A Russian soldier one day, while both armies lay inactive within sight of each other, stood upon the bank of the river, and with gesticulations and bold language mimicked the corpulent size and gait of the Polish duke. This insult roused the spirit of Boleslav, who, plunging into the water, and calling on his men to follow, landed in the face of the Russians at the head of his intrepid troops. A long and well-contested action took place, and tardily closed in favour of the Poles, who, flushed with victory, pursued the fugitives to the walls of the capital. Sviatopolk was now reinstated in his throne, and Iaroslav, disheartened by defeat, made his way to Novgorod, where, doubtful even of the fidelity of his own people, he prepared to cross the Baltic in order to get beyond the reach of his brother. The Novgorodians, however, were faithful, and proved their attachment to his person by taking down the rigging of the vessels which had been got in readiness for his departure, and by levying contributions amongst themselves for

the purpose of enabling him to procure auxiliary troops to assist in the recovery of the grand principality.

In the meantime, Sviatopolk was unconsciously facilitating his own downfall. After the Poles had helped him to re-establish himself, he began to feel the oppressive superiority of their presence, and plotted a base design to remove them. He instigated the inhabitants and the soldiery to conspire against the strangers, and massacre them in the midst of their security. Boleslav discovered the plot before it had time to be carried into execution; and, disgusted at a design so cruel and treacherous, he resolved to take ample revenge. The capital was plundered of its accumulated wealth by the incensed Poles, who, but for the moderation of their leader, would have burned it to ashes; and, loaded with treasures, they returned towards the Russian frontiers. Sviatopolk was artful enough to turn the whole transaction to the discredit of his ally, and thus to rouse the courage of his followers, who were easily persuaded to take the field against Boleslav. The belligerents met on the banks of the Bug before the Poles had passed the boundaries. The battle that ensued terminated in the discomfiture of



[1019 A.D.]

Sviatopolk, who now returned with broken fortunes to the capital which he had so lately entered with acclamations of triumph. This was the opportunity for Iaroslav to appear with his followers. The usurper's troops were so reduced by his late disasters, that he was forced to seek assistance from the Petchenegs, the hereditary enemies of the country; and they, tempted by hopes of booty, flocked to his standard to resist the approach of Iaroslav. The armies met on a plain near the place where Boris had been assassinated by the command of the fratricide. The coincidence was fortunate, for Iaroslav, taking a prudent advantage of the circumstance, employed all his eloquence in describing to his soldiers the righteousness of the cause in which they were engaged against a second Cain, the shedder of a brother's blood. His oration, concluding with a fervent prayer to the Almighty to nerve his arm, and direct his sword, so that he might be made the instrument of reparation in so just a fight, wrought powerfully upon the assembled army, and excited them to an unexampled display of bravery. The advantage of numbers was on the opposite side; but such was the courage exhibited by the Novgorodians, that after a desperate battle, which lasted throughout the whole day, they succeeded in putting the enemy completely to flight. Sviatopolk took to horse and fled, but died in a wretched condition on the road.

The zeal and bravery of the Novgorodians were not forgotten by Iaroslav when he ascended the throne and concentrated the sole dominion in himself. His first attention was directed to the revision of the ill-constructed laws of their city, and to the grant of certain franchises, which had the effect of procuring unanimity amongst the inhabitants, and of establishing the peaceful arts and commercial interests of the place upon a sure and solid foundation. He at once evinced a capacity for legislation beyond the abilities of his most distinguished predecessors, and set about the labours of improvement in so vigorous a temper, and with so much aptitude for his objects, that the happiest results sprang up under his administration in all parts of the empire.

But it was not in the destiny of the age in which he lived to permit such extensive benefits to progress without interruption. His brother Mstislav, the seventh son of Vladimir, a warrior distinguished in his wars against the Kossoges, discontented with the enlarged authority that the grand principedom vested in the hands of Iaroslav, transmitted to him a petition praying of him to cede to him a part of the fraternal appanage which he governed. Iaroslav partially assented to the request, by granting to his brother the small territory of Murom. This grant was insufficient to satisfy Mstislav, who immediately equipped an army and proceeded to wage an offensive war against the monarch. In this war the invader was successful, but he was not ungenerous in his triumph; for when he had vanquished the grand prince, he restored to him so large a portion of his possessions that the empire became equally divided between them. In this league of amity the brothers continued to govern for seven years, during the remainder of the life of Mstislav; and at his death the colossal empire, with all its appanages, reverted to the hands of Iaroslav.

It is in this part of his reign, and in this memorable period in the annals of the nation, that we find the first development of justice in Russian legislation, and the first application of philosophy to the management of public affairs. Although Iaroslav's career commenced with war, and although he extended his arms into Finland, Livonia, Lithuania, and Bulgaria, and even penetrated into Byzantium, yet it was not by war that the glory of his name or the ability of his rule was to be accomplished. His wars could hardly

claim the merits of conquests; and in some instances they terminated in such vague conclusions, that they resembled drawn battles on which much treasure had been lavished in vain. In Greece he was routed. He was driven before the soldiers of Sviatopolk, and forced to surrender at his own gates to the victorious Mstislav. His utmost successes amounted to preservation against aggression; and so indifferent was he to the barbarian mode of elevating the empire by wanton and hazardous expeditions into the neighbouring countries, that on most of those occasions he entrusted the command of his army to his lieutenants. It is necessary to explain that part of his character, in order that the loftiness of his nature may be the more clearly understood.

At this period the Russian Empire comprehended those enormous tracts that lie between the Volga and the lower Danube, and stretch from the Black Sea to the Baltic. This accumulation of territory was not the work of a progressive political system; it was not accomplished by the growth of a powerful government or by the persevering pursuit of co-operating interests, and the increasing circles of acquisition were in a constant state of dismemberment, separation, and recall. The surface of the land from the days of Rurik was overrun by revolutions. The marauder, legalised by his tribe, haunted the forest and devastated the populous places, carrying away with him plunder, or usurping authority wherever he remained. The feudal system, introduced by the Scandinavians as a provision for troublesome leaders, was carried to excess. The nominal head was disavowed and resisted at will; and the subordinate governments made war upon each other, or joined in schemes of rapine, with impunity. The maintenance of each fief seemed to depend upon civil war; and the office of the grand prince was not so much to govern the dominions he possessed, as to keep, if he could, the dominion he was called upon to govern.

Russia, combining these gigantic outlines of territory, was now, for the second time, united under one head; but, for the first time, under a head that could discern her necessities, and provide for them. Her civilisation was in progress, but it wanted the impetus of knowledge, and the control of law. The reign of the sword had done its work: what was required was the reign of justice and wisdom to improve and consolidate the triumphs and acquisitions of the barbarian era. In Iaroslav, Russia found a prince whose genius was adapted to her critical circumstances. He effectually raised her from obscurity, and placed her for a time amongst the family of European states. He made her church independent, increased the privileges of the people, facilitated the means of instruction, and elevated her national dignity by contracting domestic alliances with the most powerful countries. His sister was queen of Poland; his three daughters-in-law were Greek, German, and English princesses; and the queens of Norway, Hungary, and France were his daughters. But these were the least memorable evidences of his greatness. He gave Russia a code of laws, which was more valuable to her than the highest connections, or the most ambitious accessions of dominion.

#### IAROSLAV'S CODE OF LAWS

This code must be judged in reference to the times in which it was enacted and in comparison with the formless mass of confused precedents it superseded. The existence of commercial cities in Russia so far back as the invasion of Rurik, may be accepted as presumptive proof that there were not wanting some regulations to render individuals amenable to the common good. But these were merely the rude precepts of the hunting and agricul-

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tural nations matured into a stronger form, and adapted to the wants of the commercial community. When the Scandinavians subjugated the aborigines, the languages, customs, and laws of both fell into still greater confusion by admixture. When each was imperfect, it was unlikely that a forcible intermixture would have improved either, or led to the harmonious union of both. It is to be observed, too, that none of the nations that made up the population possessed written laws; so that whatever notions of legislation they entertained, were constantly liable to the fluctuations of capricious opinion, and were always subject to the interpretation of the strong over the weak. Where there were no records there was but little responsibility, and even that little was diminished by the character of the rulers and the lawlessness of the ruled. The exclusive attention of the princes being of necessity confined to the most effectual methods of preserving their sovereignties, of enlarging their domains, and of exacting tributes, it was natural that the unsystematic and crude usages that prevailed should fall into further contempt, and, instead of acquiring shape and consistency from experience, become still more oppressive, dark, and indecisive.

It was this matter of incongruities that Iaroslav cast out; supplying its place with a series of written laws, in which some sacrifices were made to popular customs, but which, on the whole, was an extraordinary boon to a people that, like mariners at sea without a compass, were tossed about in a tumult of uncertainty and perplexity. Had Iaroslav been a mere soldier, like the majority of his predecessors, he would have employed his talents in the field, and directed the enormous physical means at his command to the purposes of a wild and desolating ambition. But his policy was in advance of the heathen age: it restrained boundless licentiousness, created immunities, protected life and property, bestowed rewards, enacted punishments, established safeguards and facilities for trade, and expounded and confirmed those distinctions of ranks in which a community on a large scale recognises the elements of its permanency. He had the magnanimity to forego vulgar conquests for the higher conquest of prejudices and ancient habits. The people, probably fatigued with the restlessness of their mode of life, and yearning after repose and settlement, rendered now more necessary by the rapid increase of their numbers, received his laws with gratitude.

A short outline of the leading provisions of these laws will form a curious and valuable commentary upon the character of the grand prince, and the actual state of the people at this period (1018). The first article of the code empowers the friends of a murdered man to take satisfaction upon the murderer; constituting the law as the public avenger only in cases where there are no friends to take their vengeance in kind. In the event of there being no relatives to take the revenge into their own hands, the law goes on to enact that the assassin shall pay into the public treasury a certain fine, according to the rank of his victim. Thus, for the murder of a boyar, orthane of the prince, the mulct was fixed at the highest penalty of eighty grivnas;<sup>1</sup> for a page of the prince, his cook, or other domestics, for a merchant, for the sword-bearer of a boyar, and for every free Russian, without distinction of origin, forty grivnas; for a woman, half the usual fine: no fine for killing a slave; but if killed without sufficient cause, the value to be paid to the master: for a serf belonging to a boyar or free Russian, five grivnas to the owner; for the superintendent of a village, an artisan, schoolmaster, or nurse, twelve grivnas; for a female servant, six grivnas to the master, and twelve to the state.

<sup>1</sup> A copper coin, of the value, as near as we can ascertain, of about  $4\frac{1}{2}$ d. of English money.



From these penalites a correct estimate may be formed of the principles upon which the social fabric was erected. In all these provisions the rich were favoured above the poor, the strong above the weak. The life of a woman, because her utility in a barbarous community was rated according to its menial value, was fixed at half the worth of a man's, to be proportioned according to her station. The murder of a slave was not visited with any penalty whatever; the exception constituting, in fact, the privilege to kill a slave at pleasure. Slavery was carried to extremity in Russia. Prisoners of war and their posterity were condemned to perpetual slavery; the poverty of the soil, and the oppression of its lords, forced many to sell their freedom for limited periods; insolvent debtors became slaves by law; and all freemen who married slaves unconditionally, participated in their servitude.

Yet, degrading as these institutions must be considered, it appears that the rights of the person were scrupulously maintained. Thus this code enumerates penalties for striking a blow, describes the different degrees of the offence, and regulates the responsibility accordingly. The distinctions drawn between the different modes of striking are singular, and help to show that, ill as the Russians could appreciate public liberty, they had a jealous sense of that individual respect which, in modern Europe, is called the point of honour. The penalty for striking a blow with the scabbard or handle of a sword, with the fist, a stick, cup, or goblet, was twelve grivnas — equal to the fine for murdering an artisan or a schoolmaster. If the blow was struck with a club, which, we presume, was considered a plebeian weapon, the penalty was only three grivnas. But the most characteristic penalty was that of twelve grivnas for pulling a man by the beard, or knocking out a tooth. The origin of this law may be easily traced to the Goths and Germans, who were rigid in the preservation of their hair, to which they attached extraordinary importance. In the same spirit was the enactment that prohibited the making use of a horse without the permission of the owner, and that visited with imprisonment for life the crime of horse-stealing. This legal protection of the horse is still preserved in the Saxon laws.

The prevailing tendency of the code was to secure to each man his lawful property, and to arm him with the means of protection. Yet it must be remarked as a strange inconsistency, in the midst of this anxiety to erect safeguards around property, that fraudulent debtors were granted a direct escape from liability to consequences. It was enacted, that if one man lent money to another, and the latter denied the loan, the ordeal should not apply; the oath of the defendant being deemed a sufficient release from the debt. This law was the more unaccountable in a country where the legal interest of money was forty per cent., — a circumstance calculated to increase the motives to dishonesty.

Another enactment makes a distinction between the Varangians and Slavs, which illustrates the fact that the latter had always been more advanced in civilisation than the former. By this enactment, a Kobleian or a Varangian was compelled to take an oath where such a test was required, but a Slavonian was exempted. It would therefore appear, if the conclusion may be safely ventured upon, that judicial combats, which formed the final appeal when a defendant in a cause acquitted himself in the first instance by a solemn oath, were not adopted amongst the Slavs, who were satisfied with a public examination of facts, and an adjudication, without the sacred or the physical test. It is sufficient, however, for the great uses of historical inquiry, to know that a difference so remarkable between two branches of the people was recognised and confirmed by law.

[1019 A.D.]

One of the most important declarations of the code was that which divided the population into three classes — the nobles, the freemen, and the slaves. Of these three, the slaves alone were left unprotected. The freemen, who were fenced in from the encroachments of the nobles, were composed of the citizens, the farmers, the landholders, and hired servants. They were sub-classified into centuries, each of which elected a head, who filled an office equivalent to that of a tribune. The civil magistracy, thus created, had a separate guard of their own, and were placed, in virtue of their office, on an equality with the boyars. The city of Novgorod, which maintained, under a nominal principedom, the spirit of a republic, exhibited these municipal franchises in a more complete form than any of the Russian cities; all of which, however, possessed similar privileges, more or less modified according to their relative importance, or the circumstances under which their charters were granted. The chief of the Novgorodian republic was a prince of the blood; the title of his office was that of *Namestnick*. He took no share in the deliberations of the people, nor does it appear that he even possessed a veto upon their decisions. His oath of instalment bound him as the slave rather than the governor of the city; for it pledged him to govern agreeably to the constitution as he found it; to appoint none but Novgorodian magistrates in the provinces, and even these to be previously approved of by the *Posadnick* or mayor; to respect strictly the exclusive rights possessed by the citizens sitting in judgment on their own order, of imposing their own taxes, and of carrying on commerce at their own discretion; to interdict his boyars from acquiring landed property within the villages dependent on Novgorod, and to oblige them to travel at their private cost; to discourage immigration; and never to cause a Novgorodian to be arrested for debt. A principedom, accepted on such restrictive conditions, was but the shadow of a sceptre, as the municipal union of the legislative and judicial abundantly proved. The first officer was the *Posadnick*, or mayor, chosen by election for a limited time; the next was the *Tisiatski*, or tribune, who was a popular check upon the prince and mayor; and the rest of the functionaries consisted of the senate, the city assembly, and the boyars, all of whom were elective. By the electoral system, the people preserved a constant guard over the fidelity of their representatives in the senate, and their officers of justice; so that, while the three grades propounded by law were kept widely apart, and socially distinguished, the prerogatives of each were rigidly protected against innovation from the other two. All that this little republic required to render its security perfect, was liberty. It was based upon a system of slavery, and sustained its dominion more by fear than righteousness. Nor was it independent of control, although all its domestic concerns were uninterruptedly transacted within its own confines. It was an appanage of the grand principedom; but on account of its fortunate geographical position on the northern and north-western frontiers, which were distant from the capital — a circumstance that delegated to Novgorod the defence of those remote boundaries — it acquired a degree of political importance that preserved it for four centuries against the cupidity of the succession of despots that occupied the throne. The removal of the seat of empire from Kiev to Vladimir, and finally to Moscow, by drawing the centre nearer to Novgorod, diminished its power by degrees, and finally absorbed it altogether.

One of the enactments of the code of Iaroslav will show what advances had been made towards the segregation of the people into different orders, and how much the government partook, or was likely to partake, of a mixed form, in which a monarchical, an hereditary, and a representative estate were com-

bined. It made the prince the heir-at-law of every freeman who died without male issue, with the exception of the boyars and officers of the royal guard. By this regulation the prerogative of the crown was rendered paramount, while the hereditary rights of property were preserved unconditionally to the families of the nobles alone. A class of rich patricians was thus formed and protected, to represent, by virtue of birth, the interests of property; while commerce and popular privileges were fully represented in the assembly of the elected senators. The checks and balances of this system were pretty equal; so that, if the constitution of which these outlines were the elements, had been allowed to accumulate strength and to become consolidated by time, it would at last have resolved itself into a liberal and powerful form; the semi-savage usages with which it was encrusted would have dropped away, and wiser institutions have grown up in their stead.

So clearly were the popular benefits of the laws defined, that the code regulated the maximum demand which the proprietor of the soil might exact from his tenant; and it neither enforced taxation, nor recognised corporal punishment, nor in the composition of a pecuniary mulct admitted any distinction between the Varangians and the Slavs, who formed the aristocracy and the democracy. The prince neither possessed revenue nor levied taxes. He subsisted on the fines he imposed for infractions of law, on the tributes he received from his estates, on the voluntary offerings of the people, and the produce of such property as had fallen to the private title of the sovereignty. Even the tribute was not compulsory; it was rather a right derived from prescription. The only dependence of the lords of fiefs was in that they were compelled to render military service when required to the grand prince; and it was expected that they should come numerous, well armed, and provisioned. The tribute was the mark of conquest, and was not considered to imply taxation.

But while the monarchical principle was thus kept within proscribed limits, the power of the democracy was not sufficiently curbed: over both there was a check, but the hands of the prince were bound too tightly. His dominion was despotic, because he was surrounded by men devoted to his will; but the dominion of the people was boundless, because opinion was only in its rickety infancy, and the resistance to the offending prince lay in the demonstration of physical superiority instead of moral combination. They never hesitated to avail themselves of their numerical advantage. They even carried it to extravagance and licentiousness; and so much did they exult in their strength, that they regulated the hours at which the sovereign was permitted to enjoy relaxation, punished the obnoxious heads of the church by summary ejection, and in several instances, taking the charter of law into their own keeping, deposed their princes. The checks, therefore, established in Iaroslav's wise convention between the government and the constituency were overborne by the rudeness of the times.

That the period had arrived when laws were necessary to the settlement of the empire, was sufficiently testified by the circumstances, external and domestic, in which the people were placed. The adoption of Christianity had partially appeased the old passion for aggression against Constantinople, which, having now become the metropolis of their religion, was regarded with some degree of veneration by the Russians. A war of plundering Byzantium, therefore, could not be entertained with any prospect of success. The extension of the empire under Vladimir left little to be coveted beyond the frontiers, which spread to the east, north and south as far as even the wild grasp of the lawless tribes of the forests could embrace. To the west, the



[1054 A.D.]

Russians had ceased to look for prey, since Boleslay, by his easy conquest of Kiev, had demonstrated the strength of Poland. Having acquired as much as they could, and having next, in the absence of warlike expeditions abroad, occupied themselves with ruthless feuds at home, they came at length to consider the necessity of consulting the security of possessions acquired at so much cost, and so often risked by civil broils. This was the time for a code of laws. But unfortunately there still existed too many remains of the barbarian era, to render the introduction of legal restraints a matter easy of accomplishment. The jealousy of Greek superiority survived the admission of the Greek religion. The longing after power still inspired the petty chiefs; and hopeless dreams of larger dominion wherewith to bribe the discontented, and provide for the hirelings of the state, still troubled the repose of the sovereign. The throne stood in a plain surrounded by forests, from whence issued, as the rage propelled them, hordes of newly reclaimed savages, pressing extraordinary demands, or threatening with ferocious violence the dawning institutions of civilisation. In such a position, it was not only impossible to advance steadily, but to maintain the ground already gained.

*Iaroslav Dies (1054 A.D.)*

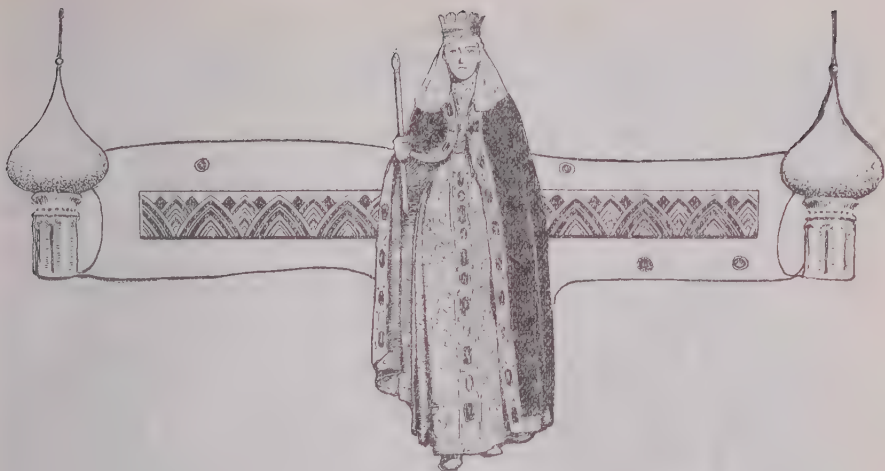
Could the character of Iaroslav, the legislator, have been transmitted through his successors, the good of which he laid the seeds, might have been finally cultivated to maturity. But his wisdom and his virtues died with him. Nor, elevated as he was in moral dignity above the spirit of his countrymen, can it be said that he was free from weaknesses that marred much of the utility of his best measures. One of his earliest errors was the resignation of Novgorod to his son Vladimir, who had no sooner ascended the throne of the republican city, than, under the pretext of seeking satisfaction for the death of a Russian who had been killed in Greece, he carried arms into the Byzantine empire. The folly of this wild attempt was abundantly punished in the sequel; fifteen thousand men were sacrificed on the Grecian plains, and their chief hunted back disgracefully to his own territories. Yet this issue of one family grant did not awaken Iaroslav to the danger of partitioning the empire. Before his death he divided the whole of Russia amongst his sons, making, however, the younger sons subordinate to the eldest, as grand prince of Kiev, and empowering the latter to reduce the others to obedience by force of arms whenever they exhibited a disposition to dispute his authority.

This settlement, enforced with parting admonitions on his death-bed, was considered by Iaroslav to present a sufficient security against civil commotion and disputes about the succession. But he did not calculate upon the ungovernable lust for power, the jealousy of younger brothers, and the passion for aggrandisement. His injunctions were uttered in the amiable confidence of Christianity; they were violated with the indecent impetuosity of the barbarian nature.

With the death of Iaroslav, and the division of the empire, a new period of darkness and misrule began. The character of the legislator, which influenced his own time, was speedily absorbed in the general confusion. Iaroslav's name was held in reverence, but the memory of his excellence did not awe the multitudes that, upon his decease, sprang from their retirement to revive the disastrous glories of domestic warfare. Much as he had done for the extension of Christianity, he had failed in establishing it in the hearts

of the people. He was an able theologian, and well acquainted with the church ordinances, agenda, and other books of the Greek religion, many of which he caused to be translated into the Russian language, and distributed in copies over the country. So strong an interest did he take in the cultivation of the doctrines of the church, that he established a metropolitan at Kiev, in order to relieve the Russian people and their priests from the inconveniences of attending the residence of the ecclesiastical head at Constantinople, and also with a desire to provide for the more prompt and certain dissemination of the principles of faith. But the value of all these exertions expired with their author. He did much to raise the fame and consolidate the resources of the empire; but the last act of his political career, by which he cut away the cord that bound the rods, had the effect of neutralising all the benefits he meditated to accomplish, as well as those that he actually effected, for his country. His reign was followed by a period of savage anarchy that might be said to have resolved the half-civilised world into its original elements.<sup>k</sup>





## CHAPTER II

### THE PERIOD OF THE PRINCIPALITIES

[1054-1224 A.D.]

#### THE CHARACTER OF THE PRINCIPALITIES

THE period extending from the year of Iaroslav's death (1054) to the year of the appearance of the Tatars (1224) is one of the most troublous and confused epochs in the history of Russia. As the Scandinavian custom of partition continued to prevail over the Byzantine idea of political unity, the national territory was constantly divided.

The princely anarchy of oriental Europe finds a parallel in the feudal anarchy of the Occident. Pogodine enumerates for this period sixty-four principalities which enjoyed a more or less protracted existence; two hundred and ninety-three princes who during these two centuries contended over Kiev and other Russian domains; eighty-three civil wars in which the entire country was concerned. Foreign wars helped to augment the enormous mass of historical facts. The chronicles mention against the Polovtzi alone eighteen campaigns, while these barbarians invaded Christian territory forty-six times.

The ancient names of the Slav tribes have entirely disappeared, or are preserved only in the names of towns — as, for instance, that of the Polotchanes in Polotsk; that of the Severians in Novgorod-Seversk. The elements in the composition of Russia were thus rather principalities than peoples. No more is said of the Krivitchi or of the Drevlians; we hear only of Smolensk or of Volhinia. These little states were dismembered at each new division among the children of a prince; they were then reconstituted, to be again divided into appanages. In spite of all these vicissitudes, however, some among them had an uninterrupted existence due to certain topographical and ethnographical conditions. Setting aside the distant principality of



Tmoutorakan, established almost at the foot of the Caucasus in the midst of Turkish and Circassian tribes and counting eight different princes, the following are, from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, the principal divisions of Russia:

(1) The principality of Smolensk, which occupied the important territory which is in a manner the central point of the orographic system of Russia; it comprises the old forest of Okoy, where the three greatest rivers of Russia, the Volga, the Dnieper, and the Dvina, have their rise. Hence the political importance of Smolensk, which is attested by the many wars undertaken against her; hence also her commercial prosperity. It is noticeable that all her towns were built on some one of the three rivers; all the commerce of ancient Russia thus passed through her bounds. Besides Smolensk it is necessary to cite Mozhaïsk, Viasma, and Toropets, the capital of a secondary principality, the domain of two famous princes — Mstislav the Brave and Mstislav the Bold.



LAPLANDER

(2) The principality of Kiev, which was *Rus* — Russia in the strict sense of the term. Its situation on the Dnieper, the proximity of Greece, the fertility of its Black Lands, long assured to this state the supremacy over all other Russian principalities. To the south it was bordered by the Nomad tribes of the steppe. Against the inroads of these tribes the princes of Kiev were obliged to construct frontier fortresses; though frequently they ceded them lands and took them into their pay, constituting them into veritable military colonies. The principality of Pereiaslavl was a

dependency of Kiev; Vishgorod, Bielgorod, Tripoli, and Tortshok were at different times constituted into appanages for princes of the same family.

(3) The two principalities of Tchernigov with Starodub and Lubetz and of Novgorod-Seversk with Putivl, Kursk and Briansk, which extended along the tributaries flowing into the Dnieper from the left — the Soj and the Desna swelled by the Seim. Tchernigov, extending towards the upper Oka, had thus one foot in the basin of the Volga; its princes, the Olgovitchi, were the most redoubtable rivals of those of Kiev. As for the princes of Seversk, they were ceaselessly occupied with wars against their dangerous rivals on the south, the Polovtsi. It is the exploits of a prince of Seversk against these barbarians which form the subject of a *chanson de geste* — The *Song of Igor*.

(4) The duplex principality of Riazan and Murom, another state whose existence was maintained at the expense of ceaseless war against the nomads.

[1054 A.D.]

The principal towns were Riazan, Murom, Pereiaslavl-Riazanski, on the Oka; Kolonna, at the junction of the Moskva with the Oka; and Pronsk, on the Pronia. The upper Don bounded it on the west. This principality was established in the midst of Finnish tribes — the Muromians and the Meshtseraks. The warlike character and the rude and coarse habits attributed to the people of the principality doubtless resulted not less from the assimilation of the aborigines by the Russian race than from the continuous brutal strife of the inhabitants with the nomads.

(5) The principalities of Suzdal — with their metropolitan towns of Tver, Suzdal, Rostov, Turyev-Polski, and Vladimir on the Kliasma; of Iaroslavl and Pereiaslavl-Zaliesski — which were established on the Volga and the Oka, in the densest of the northern forests, surrounded by Finnish tribes — Mouromians, Merians, Vesses, and Tcherimisses. Though situated at the extreme limit of the Russian world, these principalities nevertheless exercised great influence over it. We shall see their princes now reducing Novgorod and the Russia of the lakes to a certain political dependence, the consequence of a double economical dependence; then victoriously intervening in the quarrels of the Russia of the Dnieper. The Suzdalians were of the same character as the Riazanians — rude and warlike. The characteristics of a new nationality were already noticeable among these two peoples. That which differentiated them from the Kievans and the Novgorod-Severskans, who, like themselves, were occupied in the great struggle against the barbarians, was that the Russians of the Dnieper, sometimes mingling their blood with that of their enemies, became fused with Turkish tribes, nomadic and essentially mobile, while the Russians of the Oka and the Volga united with Finnish tribes, agricultural and essentially sedentary. This difference between the two foreign elements which entered into the blood of the Slavs, without doubt contributed to that marked difference in character between the two branches of the Russian race. During the period from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries, as colonization advanced, from the basin of the Dnieper to the basin of the Volga, the divisions of Little Russia and Great Russia were formed.

(6) The principalities of Kiev, Tchernigov, Novgorod-Seversk, Riazan, Murom, and Suzdal, which formed the marches of Russia on the borders of the steppe with its devastating hordes — constituting its frontier states. On the confines of the northwest, opposite the Lithuanians, the Letts and the Tchuds, the same rôle devolved on the principality of Polotsk, occupying the basin of the Dvina, and on the republican principalities of Novgorod and Pskov on the lakes of Ilmen and Peipus. The principality of Minsk was attached to that of Polotsk. It was situated in the basin of the Dnieper and, owing to that circumstance, its possession was frequently disputed by the grand princes of Kiev. The towns of Torzhok, Volok-Lamski, Izborsk, and Veliki Luki belonged to Novgorod; at times they were the capitals of individual states.

Southwestern Russia comprehended (1) in the fan-shaped territory formed by the Pripet and its tributaries — Volhinia, with Vladimir in Volhinia, Lutsk, Turov, Brest, and even Lublin, which is unquestionably Polish; (2) in the basins of the San, the Dniester, and the Pripet — Galicia proper, or Red Russia, whose ancient inhabitants, the white Croats, seem to have originated in the Danubian Slavs. Its principal towns were Galitch, founded by Vladimirkko about 1444; Peremishl; Terebovia, and Svenigorodka. The near neighbourhood of Hungary and Poland contributed to these two principal distinctive characteristics, as well as a more advanced civilisation.

In the epic songs Galicia, the land of the hero Dvorik Stepanovitch, is a country of fabulous wealth. *The Narrative of the Expedition of Igor* gives an exalted idea of the power of its princes: "Iaroslav Osmomysl of Galicia," cries the poet addressing one of them, "high art thou seated upon thy golden throne! With thy iron regiments thou guardest the Carpathian mountains, thou shuttest the gates of the Danube, thou barrest the way to the king of Hungary; at will thou openest the gates of Kiev, and thine arrows reach far into the distance."

#### THE UNITY OF THE PRINCIPALITIES

The disposition of these fifteen or sixteen principalities confirms what has been previously stated concerning the essential unity of the configuration of the Russian soil. None of the river-basins forms a closed or isolated region; no line of heights establishes between them barriers or political frontiers. The greater number of the Russian principalities belonged to the basin of the Dnieper, but pushed their limits everywhere beyond. Kiev, with Pereiaslavl, is the only one strictly confined within it; but Volhinia puts the basin of the Dnieper in communication with those of the Bug in the south and of the Vistula; Polotsk connects it with the basins of the Niemen and the Dvina, Novgorod-Seversk with that of the Don, Tchernigov and Smolensk with that of the Volga. Between these principalities, water-courses everywhere establish communications. Russia, though divided into appanages, was already making toward a great united empire. The lack of cohesion among nearly all the states and their frequent dismemberments prevented their becoming actual nationalities. The principalities of Smolensk, of Tchernigov, of Riazan never possessed that definite historical existence so characteristic of the duchy of Brittany or the county of Toulouse in France, the duchies of Saxony, Swabia, or Bavaria in Germany.

The interests of the princes and their ambition to provide an appanage for each of their children, necessitated at the death of every sovereign a fresh distribution of Russian territory. Yet a certain cohesion was evident in the midst of these vicissitudes. There was visible a unity of race and language, the more marked, notwithstanding differences of dialect, in that the Russian Slavs, excepting in the southwest, were surrounded everywhere by entirely dissimilar peoples — Lithuanians, Tchuds, Finns, Turks, and Magyars. There was also unity of religion; the Russians were differentiated from nearly all their neighbours in that, in contradistinction to the Slavs of the west, the Poles, Czechs, and Moravians, they represented a distinct form of Christianity, acknowledging no tie with Rome and rejecting Latin as the church language.

There was also a unity of historical development, since hitherto the Russian Slavs had all followed the same destiny, had equally accepted Greek civilisation, submitted to Varangian conquest, and pursued in common certain great enterprises, such as the expeditions against Byzantium and the wars with the nomads. There was finally political unity, as among all — in Galicia as in Novgorod, by the Dnieper as in the forests of Suzdal — the same family sat upon all the thrones. All the Russian princes were descended from Rurik, from St. Vladimir, and from Iaroslav the Great. The civil wars which desolated the country affirmed anew this unity. No state in Russia could regard the rest as outsiders, when the princes of Tchernigov and Suzdal were seen to take up arms solely to decide which among them was the eldest — which held the right to the title of grand prince and to the throne of Kiev. There were descendants of Rurik who governed successively the most distant states in



[1054 A.D.]

Russia, and who, having reigned at Tmoutarakan on the straits of Ienikale, at Novgorod the Great, at Toropetz in the country of Smolensk, finished by obtaining recognition of their right to reign over Kiev.<sup>b</sup>

## THE THEORY OF SUCCESSION

If the question be asked why the Russian state continued undivided throughout the two hundred years of the Varangian period, our answer is that it was due solely to the fact that during the greater part of this period the grand princes left one son and heir. Whenever the case was otherwise, as after the death of Sviatoslav and Vladimir, the brothers straightway entered upon a struggle for mastery that did not terminate until all but one were destroyed. That one then became undisputed master, for no one dared dispute the possession of power with the descendants of Rurik.

The theory of succession in the Rurik family was as follows: the grand prince of Kiev was lord paramount of Russia. He disposed of all vacant principalities, and was supreme judge and general; but each of his brothers had, according to his seniority, the right of succession to the throne. The death of every elder brother brought the younger ones a step nearer to that goal. The order of advance was from Smolensk to Pereiaslavl, from Pereiaslavl to Tchernigov, from Tchernigov to Kiev. But none could attain to the highest dignity, save him whose father had held it before him. Sons of a father who had died before reaching the goal were excluded from Kiev and were confined to the possessions in their hands at the time of their father's death. The technical Russian term for those members of the Rurik family who were excluded from the highest dignity was Isgoi, and the attempts of the Isgoi to break through the law of exclusion have had no small share in the bloody and desolate history of Russia during the period upon which we now enter. But another factor contributed to the same end. The power of the grand prince was not so pre-dominant as to enable him to enforce his will and put down disobedience. His position was based on the idea of patriarchal power, and was respected by the princes only when it was to their advantage. To maintain himself he had to resort to the expedient of making coalitions with some of the princes against the others, and the sword was the final arbiter between the grand prince and his nominal vassals.<sup>c</sup> Accordingly the whole of Russia was always divided in its support of the claims of this or that candidate. The civil wars which ensued were after all but family quarrels.<sup>a</sup>



A KORIAK

## CIVIL WARS

Iaroslav left five sons. To Iziaslav, the oldest, he gave Kiev; to Sviatoslav, Tchernigov; to Vsevolod, Pereiaslavl; to Viatcheslav, Smolensk; and to Igor, Vladimir in Volhinia. The order in which they are given here represents the order of their respective dignities and their position in the line of succession. Two of the brothers did not long survive their father. In 1056 Viatcheslav died, and Igor, in accordance with the law of succession, moved to Smolensk, where he too died in 1060.

About this time a new wave of migration set in from Asia towards the south-Russian steppe — the Turkish tribe of the Polovtsi. In 1055 Vsevolod of Pereiaslavl concluded peace with them by bribing them to retire into the steppe. In 1061 he suffered a defeat at their hands, but they did not follow up their success and again retired into the steppe. The civil wars, however, which soon broke out, were to bring them back as an ever-menacing plague to the Russian population.

Among the minor princes, who were excluded from the succession, was Vseslav of Polotsk, a descendant of St. Vladimir. He had helped his uncles in a war against the Torks, a tribe kindred to the Polovtsi, and expected a reward in an accession of territory. Being disappointed, he determined to help himself. First he ravaged the territory of Pskov, but being unable to take that city, he invaded the territory of Novgorod, and it seems that for a while he was master of the city. His bold procedure compelled his uncles



SVIATOSLAV

Iziaslav, Sviatoslav, and Vsevolod to unite against him; but, though beaten by their superior forces, he could not be expelled from the north. The uncles thereupon resorted to treachery. They proposed to him a friendly meeting under a guarantee of his personal security and liberty, which they confirmed by an oath upon the cross. But when he had reached the vicinity of Smolensk, beyond the Dnieper, he was surprised, captured, and brought to Kiev, where he was imprisoned. At this juncture the Polovtsi made another of their raids and defeated the united forces of the brothers, so that Sviatoslav was obliged to take refuge at Tchernigov, while Iziaslav and Vsevolod fled to Kiev. There they intended to await the nomad hordes behind the walls of the cities, sacrificing the open country to the invaders. But the citizens of Kiev thought differently. At a stormy meeting of the *vetche* it was decided to take up arms, and when Iziaslav refused to lead them against the enemy they liberated Vseslav from his confinement and made him their prince (1068). Iziaslav was obliged to flee to Poland, where he found a champion in Boleslav the Bold. Menaced in front by the Poles, and suspicious of his uncles in his rear, Vseslav thought himself obliged to flee to Polotsk, leaving the Kievans to the vengeance of Iziaslav (1069). The events of two generations previous,

[1075-1078 A.D.]

when Boleslav the Brave captured Kiev for Sviatopolk, were now to be repeated. The Poles demeaned themselves as masters and committed many excesses. The Kievans bore it for a year; then exasperated, fell upon the Poles, who were scattered in their various quarters, and compelled Boleslav to evacuate the city. After protracted fighting and negotiations, Polotsk was finally restored to Vseslav, and the old order seemed re-established, when the two brothers of Iziaslav became suspicious of his designs and suddenly appeared before Kiev. Iziaslav now fled for the second time, Sviatoslav became grand prince, while Vsevolod advanced to the principality of Tchernigov.

Iziaslav left nothing unattempted to regain his position. He had escaped with his treasure into Poland, but Boleslav was unwilling to renew his former adventure. The German king Henry IV, whom Iziaslav met at Mainz in January, 1075, was more favourably disposed and sent an embassy to Sviatoslav; but it accomplished nothing. Iziaslav also entered into negotiations with pope Gregory VII, to whom he sent his son Iaropolk. The pope hoped to be able to annex Russia to the western church, and even went so far as to grant it to Iaropolk as a fief from the holy see.

But meanwhile Sviatoslav died (1076) and Vsevolod, a man whose mild character did not exclude the possibility of a peaceful settlement, became grand prince. Boleslav now lent troops to Iziaslav (1077), and though Vsevolod marched against him with an army of his own, yet they soon came to terms. Iziaslav was to be reinstated grand prince for the third time, while Vsevolod was to retire to Tchernigov, in return for which he was secured in the succession. Thus Iaropolk's plans came to naught, and with them the hope of a reunited church.

However, Vseslav of Polotsk did not yet give up his ambitious designs. Foiled in his attempt on the throne of Kiev, he tried to create an empire for himself in the Russian north, and it required three campaigns of the south-Russian princes to annul his plans. It was during these wars that Vladimir Monomakh, son of Vsevolod and son-in-law of King Harold of England, first distinguished himself, though not in a glorious manner. He was the first Russian prince to engage in a domestic quarrel the Polovtsi, with whose aid he ravaged the city and principality of Polotsk. Vseslav died in 1101 as prince of Polotsk, and his memory lived long after him in the traditions of the people, by whom he was regarded as a sorcerer. The *Song of Igor* tells how he accomplished in one night a march from Kiev to Tmoutorakan, and how he could hear at Kiev the ringing of the church bells as Polotsk.

Russian dynastic conditions had now been restored to the legal order, and there seemed nothing left to disturb the tranquillity. But the cupidity of the grand prince soon brought on new dissensions among the members of the house of Rurik. Viatcheslav and Igor died at an early age, leaving minor sons whom their uncle refused to provide with appanages. They therefore tried to gain their right by force. Boris, a son of Viatcheslav, temporarily got hold of Tchernigov, but being unable to maintain himself in that city he fled to Tmoutorakan, the last refuge of all the discontented. There he was soon joined by his brother Gleb, who was expelled by Iziaslav from Novgorod, and by another brother from Volhinian Vladimir, both of whose appanages were divided among the sons of Iziaslav and Vsevolod. In the civil war which followed, the nephews at first had the advantage and captured Tchernigov; but they were defeated in a decisive battle fought near that city on the third of October, 1078. Both the grand prince Iziaslav and Boris fell, and Oleg was obliged to flee once more to Tmoutorakan.



*Vsevolod*

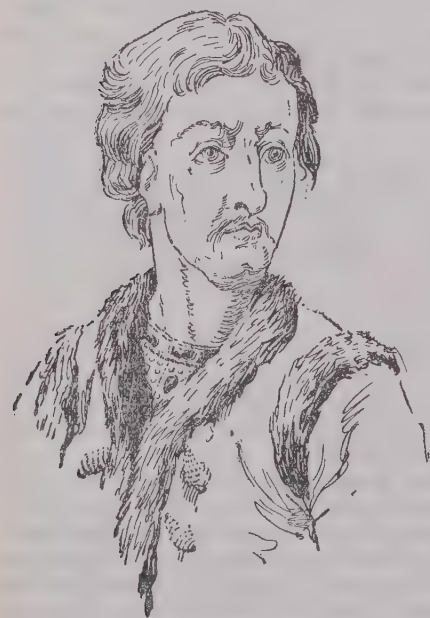
Iziaslav was succeeded by Vsevolod, whose reign (1078-1093) was even more unfortunate than his brother's had been. He too favoured his own sons and those of Iziaslav at the expense of his other nephews and in consequence the sons of Sviatoslav and Igor and of his nephew Rostislav waged against him unrelenting warfare with the aid of the Polovtsi and Chazars, who wasted the country. Vsevolod's attempt in 1084 to conquer Tmoutorakan, the breeding-place of revolts, failed miserably. Finally even Iaropolk, the son of Iziaslav, who had received so many favours from his uncle, revolted against him and was assassinated during the war. In those days of turmoil and confusion, even old Vseslav ventured forth once more from Polotsk and plundered Smolensk. The grand prince was ill most of the time at Kiev and the conduct of his affairs lay in the hands of his son Vladimir Monomakh.

*Sviatopolk*

Vsevolod died April 13th, 1093, leaving two sons, Vladimir Monomakh, who held Tchernigov, and Rostislav, who held Pereiaslavl. He was succeeded

by Sviatopolk, the second son of Iziaslav, who was the rightful successor after the death of his brother Iaropolk, who, it will be remembered, was assassinated. Monomakh could easily have made himself grand prince, for he was the most popular of the princes and gained great fame in his campaigns against the Polovtsi, whom he defeated twelve times during the reign of his father; but he was anxious to avoid violating the law of succession and thus inviting civil war.

Sviatopolk's reign began with a violation of the law of nations by imprisoning ambassadors of the Polovtsi, who had come to negotiate a treaty with him. In retaliation the nomads invaded the country, and with so great a force that Vladimir and Rostislav, who had come to the aid of the grand prince, advised him to purchase peace from the enemy. He paid no heed to them, but the event soon justified the prudence of their counsel. In the battle of Tripole, fought on May 23rd, 1093, the Russians sustained a disastrous defeat.



SVIATOPOLK

Rostislav was drowned, while Sviatopolk and Vladimir saved themselves by flight. The next year's campaign against the Polovtsi was equally disastrous, and Sviatopolk returned to Kiev with but two companions. Tortchesk was compelled to capitulate, and the nomads returned to the steppe rich with booty and prisoners. Sviatopolk now bought peace and took to wife a daughter of the Polovtsian khan. They returned, however, the same year under the leadership of Oleg, son of Sviatoslav, who had stayed till now in Tmouto-

[1097-1110 A.D.]

rakan and thought the moment opportune for enforcing his undoubted rights upon Tchernigov, which had been the original seat of his father as the second son of Iaroslav, and which was held by Monomakh, who was the son of Iaroslav's third son.

Oleg, was therefore, no Isgoi and would not be treated as such. When he appeared before Tchernigov, Monomakh had only a small band with him, and after a siege of eight days was compelled to evacuate the city and retire to Pereiaslavl, where he had to defend himself during the next three years against continual irruptions of the Polovtsi. The refusal of Oleg to join in a combined campaign of the princes against the Polovtsi, and the sudden capture of Smolensk by his brother David, gave the occasion for a general war that lasted two years and covered the whole territory of Russia, from Novgorod to Murom and thence to the steppe, and in course of which one son of Monomakh fell in battle, while two other sons suffered a decisive reverse at the hands of Oleg. Finally, a congress of princes was held at Lubetz, in the territory of Tchernigov, for the settlement of all existing disputes. The result of its deliberations was that the grand prince was to retain Kiev and Turov, while to Vladimir were assigned Pereiaslavl, Smolensk, and Rostov; Novgorod to his son Mstislav, and Tchernigov with all its dependencies to the sons of Sviatoslavl — Oleg, David, and Iaroslav. The latter thus gained possession of the greater part of Russia. There still remained to be satisfied the three Isgoi, Volodar, and Vassilko, sons of Rostislav, and David, son of Igor. Of the former two, Volodar received Peremishl, Vassilko received Terebovl, while Vladimir in Volhinia was given to David. Polotsk remained in the hands of Vseslav.

The congress of Lubetz (1097) brought a respite to the sorely tried Russian north, but the south was soon subjected to new calamities. Vassilko, son of Rostislav, was revolving in his mind extensive plans of conquest in Poland, among the Danubian Bulgarians, and finally against the Polovtsi. He had begun making extensive preparations, and had taken into his pay several nomad hordes. David of Volhinia, who was ignorant of Vassilko's plans, became alarmed at these warlike preparations, began to suspect a conspiracy between Monomakh and Vassilko, and succeeded in inculcating the grand prince with his own alarms and suspicions. Vassilko was allured to Kiev to attend a religious festival, and there he was captured, thrown into chains, dragged to Bielgorod, and blinded in an unspeakably cruel manner. The horror of the bloody deed resounded throughout Russia. Monomakh united his forces with those of his old enemies, the sons of Sviatoslav, and marched upon Kiev. The grand prince tried to clear himself of blame and throw the guilt upon David, and peace was arranged through the mediation of the metropolitan of Kiev and of Monomakh's mother.

The grand prince took upon himself the obligation to revenge the outrage on Vassilko, who was surrendered to Volodar; and David was obliged to flee to Poland (1099). The grand prince annexed David's territory, and then turned, most unjustifiably, against the sons of Rostislav. Defeated by Volodar, he formed an alliance with Koloman, king of Hungary. The alliances now assumed a most unexpected and distorted character. David united with the Rostislavitchi and with Buiak, khan of the Polovtsi; and at Peremishl defeated the grand prince and his allies. The war, the horrors of which were increased by repeated raids of the Polovtsi, seemed to draw out without end or aim, when finally Monomakh convoked a second congress of the princes, which met in August, 1100, at Uvetitchi, on Kievian territory. The result of its deliberations was that only a few towns of Volhinia were left to David, the

greater part of the principality being transferred to Iaroslav, son of Sviatopolk; while the Rostislavitchi were to remain in the undiminished possession of their territories.

Thus order was restored for some time, but the direction of affairs really passed out of the hands of the grand prince into those of Monomakh. Under his leadership the Russian princes were now united against the Polovtsi, and there ensued a series of campaigns of which no clear account has come down to us. The Russians generally had the upper hand, but for a long time the balance wavered, and the enemy seemed so dangerous to the princes that, following the example of Sviatopolk, they entered into matrimonial alliances with him. Thus Monomakh, as well as the two sons of Sviatoslav, David and Oleg, took Polovtsian wives for their sons. But the year 1111 witnessed a decisive campaign, in which Monomakh is again seen at the head of the Russian princes. After crossing the Dnieper and the Vorskla, the Russians pressed on into the enemy's country as far as the Don. Two Polovtsian cities were taken, and one was reduced to ashes; the Don was crossed, and on March 24th and 26th a great battle was fought. The Russians were on the Sula, the last tributary of the Don before reaching the sea of Azov, in a most unfavourable position and surrounded from all sides by the Polovtsi. But the scales were turned when the drujinas of David and Monomakh, which had been kept all the time in the rear, made a terrific onset on the exhausted enemy, who fled in panic. According to tradition, angels preceded the Russians and smote the Polovtsi with blindness.

*Vladimir Monomakh (1113-1125 A.D.)*

After a reign filled with civil war and misfortune Sviatopolk died (April 16th, 1113), and all eyes turned toward Monomakh. Legally, however, the throne belonged to his cousin Oleg, son of Sviatoslav, and Monomakh seemed at first resolved to recognise his superior right. But the Kievans were determined to accept no one but Monomakh, and an uprising of theirs, which was directed primarily against the Jews, whom Sviatopolk had employed for fiscal purposes, but which threatened to assume larger dimensions, induced him to yield to the universal demand. Thus the race of Sviatoslav — otherwise called the Olgovitchi — was excluded, and Monomakh succeeded in bringing a large part of Russia under his house. During his reign he continued the wars against the Polovtsi, as well as against the Finns in the north and east, and the Poles in the west. The steppe was cleared so thoroughly that tradition, with its customary exaggeration, says that he forced the Polovtsi back into the Caucasus.

His relations with the Byzantine Empire have not yet been sufficiently cleared up. He himself was the son of a Byzantine princess, and his daughter Maria was married to Leo, son of the unfortunate emperor Romanus Diogenes, who was blinded in 1071 and banished to an island. Leo then made an attempt at revolt against Alexius Comnenus, but was poisoned in 1116. Vladimir now espoused the cause of Leo's son Basil and sent an army to the Danube, which returned without accomplishing its purpose. According to a later tradition, which arose under the influence of Moscow, the emperor Alexius Comnenus, in order to put an end to the devastation of Thrace by the Russian troops, sent to Vladimir a diadem and other imperial insignia through Neophyte, metropolitan of Ephesus, who put the diadem on Vladimir's head and called him czar. But contemporary accounts tell us nothing of all this, and it is inherently improbable that Byzantium would bestow



[1122-1125 A.D.]

upon the Russian grand prince, who was no longer formidable, a title whose exclusive possession it so jealously guarded. On the other hand, it is known that in 1122, or six years after the supposed campaign to Thrace, a granddaughter of Monomakh was married to a prince of the House of Romania.

But the greater portion of Monomakh's military activities fell into the reigns of his two predecessors. He was in his fortieth year when he became grand prince, and he naturally avoided all fighting in so far as he could be avoided, employing force only when requisite to maintain his position as overlord of Russia. As far as circumstances permitted, he was a prince of peace, and a number of most important legislative measures are ascribed to him, especially the laws relating to money and to the half-free (*halap*). Russia had suffered very severely from the civil wars and the raids of the Poles and men of small property were reduced to extreme poverty. Being unable to maintain themselves on their wasted lands, they went to live in large numbers on the estates of the rich, who sought to reduce them to absolute slavery, or else they borrowed money at enormous rates and soon sank into a servile condition. To remedy this ruinous state of affairs, Monomakh reduced the rate of interest from 120 per cent. to 20 per cent., and decreed that one who had paid one year's interest according to the old rate, was thereby absolved from his debt. He also ordered the expulsion of the Jews from the whole of Russia.<sup>1</sup> But the problem of the *halap* could not be solved in this summary fashion. According to the regulations adopted they were to be regarded as free men who had become bound to the soil by contract, but who retained the right to acquire property and were not subject to the master's jurisdiction. A half-free man lost his freedom only when he attempts to escape from his master. It was also fixed what payments and service he was to render, and it was made impossible for the lord to reduce him to a condition of uncontracted serfdom.

Monomakh died in 1125, at the ripe age of seventy-three. He has left us a curious paper of instruction to his sons, which dates from 1117 and in which he gives them much sound advice, gathered by example from his own life.<sup>2</sup>

### *The "Instruction" of Vladimir Monomakh*

The grand prince begins by saying that his grandfather Jaroslav gave him the Russian name of Vladimir and the Christian name of Vasily, and his father and mother that of Monomakh; either because Vladimir was early through his mother the grandson of the Greek emperor Constantine Maniakes, or because even in his tenderest youth he displayed remarkable warrior valour. "As I draw near to the grave," writes he, "I give thanks to the Most High for the increase of my days. His hand has led me to a venerable age. And you, my beloved children and who ever come this way, observe the rules set forth in it. When your heart does not approve them, do not condemn my intention, but only say: The old man's mind was already weakened." Having described in their chief features, and for the greater part in the words of the Psalmist, the beauty of the world and the goodness of the Creator, Vladimir continues:

"O my children! give praise to God and love also mankind. Neither fasting, nor solitude, nor monastic life shall save you, but good deeds. Forget

[<sup>1</sup> They were selling the Moscow Jews, the representatives of the common people, for a great price—a heavy payment in the "natural economy" of that time. Hence the universal hatred against them.]

not the poor, feed them; and remember that every possession is God's, and only confided to you for a time. Do not hide your riches in the bowels of the earth: this is against the law of Christianity. Be fathers to orphans; judge the widows yourselves: do not let the strong destroy the weak. Do not slay either the righteous or the guilty: the life and soul of the Christian are sacred. Do not call upon the name of God in vain; ratify your oath by kissing the cross, and do not transgress it. My brothers said to me: Let us drive out the sons of Rostislav and take their possessions, otherwise thou art not ally of ours! But I answered: I cannot forget that I kissed the cross. I turned to the Psalter and read with compunction: 'Why art thou so vexed, O my soul? O put thy trust in God, for I will yet thank him. Fret not thyself because of the ungodly: neither be thou envious against the evil doers.' Do not forsake the sick and do not fear to look upon the dead: for we shall all die; receive the blessing of the clergy lovingly; do not withdraw yourselves from them; do good unto them, for they shall pray to the Most High for you.

"Do not have any pride either in your mind or heart, and think: we are but mortal; to-day we live, to-morrow we are in the grave. Fear every lie, drunkenness and fornication, equally pernicious for the body and the soul. Esteem old people as fathers, love the young as brothers. In your household see carefully to everything yourselves, do not depend either on your pages or bailiffs, that your guests may not blame either your house or your dinner. Be active in war, serve as an example to your captains—it is no time then to think of feasting and luxury. When you have set the night watch, take your rest. Man perishes suddenly, therefore do not lay aside your arms where you may meet danger; and get to horse early. When you travel in your dominions, do not let the princely pages be a cause of offence to the inhabitants, but wherever you stop give your host food and drink. Above all, respect your guests and do them honour, both the distinguished and the supplicants, both merchant and ambassador; if you cannot give them presents, at any rate regale them with food and drink, for guests spread good and evil reports of us in foreign lands. Greet every man when he passes by. Love your wives, but do not let them have an authority over you. Everything good that you learn, you must remember; what you do not know, learn. My father, sitting at home, spoke five languages, for which those of other lands praised him. Idleness is the mother of vices; beware of it. A man should ever be occupied; when you are on the road, on horseback, without occupation, instead of indulging in idle thoughts repeat prayers by heart—or the shortest, but best prayer of all, 'Lord have mercy!' Never sleep without bowing yourself down to the earth; and if you feel unwell, bow down to the earth three times. Let not the sun find you in your bed! Go early to church to render morning praise to God: so did my father; so did all good men. When the sun shone on them, they praised God joyfully and said: 'Lighten mine eyes, Christ God, and give me Thy beauteous light.' Then take counsel with the droujina, or judge the people, or go to the chase; and at midday sleep, for God has ordained that not only man but also the beasts and birds should rest at midday.

"Thus lived your father. I myself did all that could be ordered to a page, at the chase and at war, day and night, in the heat of summer and the cold of winter I knew no rest. I did not put my trust in burgomasters or heralds, I did not let the strong give offence to the poor and widows, I myself supervised the church and the divine service, the domestic organisation, the stables, the chase, the hawks and the falcons." Enumerating his military exploits, Vladimir thus writes: "My campaigns were in all eighty-three; the other

[1132 A.D.]

smaller ones I do not remember. I concluded nineteen treaties of peace with the Polovtsi, took prisoners more than a hundred of their chief princes and let them go free, and I had more than two hundred put to death and drowned in the rivers. Who has travelled faster than I? Starting early from Tchernigov, I was at Kiev with my parents before vespers. We loved the chase, and often trapped and caught beasts with your grandfather. How many times have I fallen from my horse! Twice I broke my head, injured my arms and legs, without caring for my life in youth or sparing my head. But the Lord preserved me. And you, my children, fear neither death nor combats, nor wild beasts, but show yourselves men in every circumstance sent from God. If providence decrees that a man shall die, neither his father nor his brothers can save him. God's protection is man's hope."

If it had not been for this wisely written testament, we should not have known all the beauty of Vladimir's soul; he did not lay waste other states, but was the glory, the defender, the consolation of his own, and none of the Russian princes has a greater right to the love of posterity, for he served his country jealously and virtuously. If once in his life Monomakh did not hesitate to infringe the law of nations and perfidiously slay the Polovtsian princes, we can but apply to him the words of Cicero, "The age excuses the man." Regarding the Polovtsi as the enemies of Christianity (they had burned the churches), the Russians thought that the destruction of them — no matter in what manner — was a work pleasing to God.<sup>d</sup>

### *The Fall of Kiev and the Rise of Suzdal*

In the forty-four years that followed the death of Vladimir Monomakh, the over-lordship passed eighteen times from one hand to another, the average duration of governments being only two years and a half, and the dignity attaching to the grand principedom declined in rapid progression until it sank to a complete nullity. With this constant change of rulers, the devastation and barbarisation of south Russia proceeded apace, so that it soon ceased to be the centre of political life. A rapid review of these evil years will suffice for an understanding of the causes that brought about this retrogression.

We have seen that Vladimir Monomakh reached the throne of the grand principedom in violation of the superior right of the Olgovitchi. He succeeded in bringing the greater part of Russia under his sons. Mstislav, the eldest, held Kiev and southern Russia, while his sons were in Novgorod, Kursk and Smolensk; Iaropolk held Pereiaslavl; Viatcheslav, Tourov; Iuri, Suzdal; and Andrew, Vladimir in Volhinia. On the other hand, the princes of Polotsk were independent; the descendants of Rostislav ruled in Red Russia or Galicia; and the descendants of Oleg, in Tchernigov, Murom, Riazan, erst-while the land of the Viatichi and Radimitchi, and in the extreme southeast, Tmoutorakan. With union among the descendants of Monomakh and with strong grand princes at Kiev, south Russia might have been able to maintain its ascendancy notwithstanding its unfavourable proximity to the steppe; but these conditions did not exist. Monomakh's first successor, Mstislav, did, indeed, maintain his position, and even annexed Polotsk, whose princes fled to Greece. But he soon died (1132), and his successor, the brave but wavering Iaropolk, sowed the seeds of discord in his family by bestowing Pereiaslavl upon the eldest son of Mstislav and naming him his successor. Therewith he offended his own younger brothers, one of whom, Iuri Dolgoruki (Longhand), sought to maintain his right by force. The prince of Pereiaslavl found support among the Olgovitchi, who were delighted at the



sight of quarrels among the descendants of Monomakh. One of the Olgo-vitchi, Vsevolod by name, raised himself to the grand principedom by utilising these quarrels (1139-1146). But immediately after his death his brother was overthrown, and Iziaslav, son of Mstislav, became grand prince (1146-1154). Twice he was expelled by Iuri Dolgoruki, and only maintained himself by making one of his uncles the nominal ruler.

After his death the turbulence and confusion increased still further. His

brother Rostislav of Smolensk was expelled after one week's reign by the prince of Tchernigov, who was expelled in his turn by Iuri Dolgoruki. The latter might have shared the same fate, for a confederation of the princes of Smolensk, Tchernigov, and Volhinia had already been formed against him, but for his timely death (1157). One of the confederates ruled for eight months, and then he had to make room for his successor, who ruled four months. In the eighty-three years that elapsed between the death of Iuri and the capture of Kiev by the Mongols, the government changed hands thirty times. How much the importance of Kiev and the dignity of the grand principedom had declined at this period, we can estimate from the refusal of Andrew of Suzdal, son of Iuri Dolgoruki, to take the throne, though he came next in the line of succession. He rightly comprehended that the future belonged to the Russian north, rather than to the south, and it was his constant endeavour to consolidate his power in that quarter; and when one of those powerless grand princes, Mstislav Iziaslavitch, attempted to strengthen himself by forming an alliance with Novgorod,



A MORDIENE WOMAN (ERGIAN TRIBE)

Andrew brought about a combination of eleven princes against him. After a three days' siege Kiev was taken by assault and plundered for two days (March, 1169), and Andrew's brother Gleb was then installed as grand prince of Kiev. The decay of the south is attributable chiefly to the following causes:

(1) Its geographical position exposed it to the constant inroads of the nomads of the steppe. This evil, it is true, existed from remotest times, but its seriousness was increased by the action of the Russian princes themselves, who employed the nomads in their civil wars. Many of these nomads, Torks, Berendians, and Petchenegs, settled on the Ros and Dnieper, meddled in Russian affairs, and contributed to the barbarising of the country. (2) Every new grand-prince brought with him into Kiev a new following from

[1157-1175 A.D.]

his own principality. These foreign elements contributed ever anew to the unsettling of existing conditions, and prevented the growth of a landed aristocracy that had its roots in the soil, and of a burgher class. The establishment of a political tradition thus became impossible. (3) The trade with Greece had greatly declined owing to the increasing dangers of the journey to the sea, and more than once the princes were obliged to defend caravans to and from Byzantium with their entire army.

But while the south was decaying, a new centre was forming in the north that was destined to gather around itself the whole of Russia, the principality of Suzdal-Rostov. The city of Rostov, situated in the country of the Finnish Merians, was one of the oldest in Russia, and it is reported that Rurik had bestowed it on one of his warriors. Suzdal also arose at an early date, at the latest toward the end of the ninth century. The early history of the region is not known to us, but we know that Yaroslav founded the city of Yaroslavl, that it was temporarily united to Novgorod, and that after the death of Sviatoslav II (1076) it was merged in the principality of Pereiaslavl. Vladimir Monomakh founded Vladimir on the Kliasma, a tributary of the Oka, and built a church at Rostov. The congress of Lubetz assigned the entire territory to Monomakh's sons, and Iuri Dolgoruki became the first independent prince of Rostov. Although this prince always looked to the south, yet the colonisation of the north made rapid progress during his reign. We know that three cities were founded by him, and the chronicle also attributes to him the foundation of Moscow in 1147. Suzdal was his capital. When he became grand-prince of Kiev he bestowed this whole country upon his son Vassilko, while he gave Vishgorod, to the north of Kiev, to his eldest son Andrew.

But the latter had no liking for the south, and fled from Vishgorod with a miracle-working image of the Virgin, which he deposited in a church that he built at a place where he had a vision and which he called Bogolubvo (God's love). After the death of his father, in 1157, Rostov and Suzdal refused to obey his younger brothers and called in Andrew, who was also joined by those of his father's followers who had fled from Kiev. But it is most characteristic of the man and his far-sighted policy that he made no claims to the throne of Kiev, nor did he establish himself at Rostov or Suzdal but stayed at Vladimir, where there were no old families nor refractory citizens to deal with. His brothers, his nephews, the boyars of his father, he expelled from his dominions and made himself sole ruler. In 1169 he gave Kiev to his brother Gleb, but he took to himself the title of grand prince. To become the virtual master of the whole of Russia he only needed to subject Novgorod, and though the combination of princes that he formed against it was routed before its gates, yet he ultimately succeeded, by cutting off its supply of corn, in compelling it to acquiesce in his supremacy and to accept the prince that he chose for it.

This first would-be autocrat of Russia also comprehended the importance of making the clergy subservient to his will. He tried to make his capital Vladimir independent of Kiev in church affairs by establishing in it a metropolitan, and though he failed in his object, owing to the determined refusal of the patriarch of Constantinople, yet he succeeded in obtaining the important concession that in future the Russian metropolitan was to be appointed only with the assent of the grand prince.

His despotic and cruel rule finally made him hated by his nobles, and he was assassinated on June 29th, 1175, at Bogolubovo. After a period of confusion his second brother, Vsevolod, became grand prince. During this

reign the influence of Suzdal was still further increased, and the entire north, and even the Olgovitchi of Tchernigov, recognised his supremacy. In the west and south, however, Roman Mstislavitch of Volhinia, who conquered Galicia and ruled temporarily at Kiev, offered a successful resistance. But after the death of the latter in battle with the Poles in 1205, Vsevolod conquered Riazan, and even deprived the Olgovitchi of Tchernigov, giving them Kiev in exchange. This prince, like his predecessor, attained his object by diplomacy rather than by the sword, and at his death in 1212 he was the most powerful prince in Russia.

His death was followed by a civil war between his two sons Constantine and Iuri. The latter, though the younger, was nominated by Vsevolod as his successor, but in 1217 he was beaten by Constantine and his allies — Novgorod amongst them — and compelled to resign the throne. But Constantine died in 1218 and Iuri reigned undisturbed till 1237. He fought with success against the Volga Bulgarians, and founded Nijni-Novgorod (1221). But his power never became as great as had been that of his father, and he exerted no influence in southern Russia, which was devastated by Petchenegs from the steppe and by Poles and Hungarians from the west. All south Russia now lay exhausted before the impending irruption of the Tatars.<sup>c</sup>







### CHAPTER III

#### THE TIME OF TATAR DOMINATION

[1235-1462 A.D.]

IN the thirteenth century the steppes of central Asia sent forth a new conquering horde, constituting the last wave of that migration of peoples which had commenced in remote antiquity.<sup>1</sup> This Mongol-Tatar horde dominated Russia for 240 years and left enduring traces of its domination. It definitively broke the bond between western and eastern Russia, and thus contributed to the formation of the principality of Lithuania in the west; while in the east it promoted the rise of the principality of Moscow, which finally absorbed all the other Russian principalities, threw off their Tatar yoke, recoiled in its turn upon the steppe, and finally, by turning Russia into an empire, made forever impossible another invasion from the steppe.

The cradle of the Mongolian race was in all probability the country lying at the foot of the Altai Mountains. At the time of the appearance of Jenghiz Khan the Mongols were divided into numerous tribes, which were governed by their elders and lived in mutual enmity. An unpleasing description of the exterior and life of the Mongols is given by a Chinese writer, a contemporary of Jenghiz Khan, and also by Mussulman writers:

"Their faces are wide, flat, and square, with prominent cheek-bones, their eyes have no upper lashes, their beard and moustaches are of scanty growth, their general appearance is repulsive. But the present Tatar sovereign, Temuchin (Jenghiz Khan) is of enormous stature, with broad forehead and long beard, and distinguished for his valour. They reckon the year

[<sup>1</sup> This is, of course, meant only in a limited sense. The migration of peoples still continues with unabated force, but its centre has moved from Asia to Europe. Thence it moves in a twofold direction: on the one hand, from western Europe to America and Australia; and on the other hand, from eastern Europe to the remotest confines of Asia.]

according to the growth of grass. When one of them is asked for his age, he replies — so many grasses. When asked for the number of the month, they laugh and reply that they do not know. The Tatars are born in the saddle and grow up on horseback. They learn to fight almost by instinct, for they hunt the whole year round. They have no infantry, but only cavalry, of which they can raise several hundred thousand. They hardly ever resort to writing, but all, from the commander-in-chief to the commander of ten, give their orders in person. When they want to take a big town, they first attack the small places in the vicinity, take all the inhabitants prisoners, and drive them forward to the attack. For this purpose a command is issued that every man on horseback should capture ten prisoners, and when this number is completed they are compelled to collect a certain amount of grass or wood, earth or stones. The Tatars urge them on night and day, killing those who become exhausted. Having reached the town, they are compelled to dig trenches or fill up fosses. In a siege the Tatars reckon not of the loss of tens of thousands: hence they are invariably successful. When they capture a city they kill all without sparing either young or old, the beautiful or the ugly, rich or poor, those who submit or those who resist. No person, however distinguished, escapes this unrevokable penalty of death. The spoil is divided in proportionate shares among high and low. This people have no need of baggage or provision wagons; their herds of sheep, cows, horses, and other animals follow them on their marches, and they eat meat and nothing else. Their horses do not know barley, but they tear up the ground with their hoofs and live on the roots. As to their faith, the Tatars worship the sun at the time of its rising. They do not regard anything as forbidden, and eat all animals, even dogs and pigs. Marriage is unknown to them, but many men come to a woman, and when a child is born it does not know its father."

Similar descriptions are met with in the narratives of Europeans who knew the Mongols in the days of their power.

#### JENGHIZ KHAN; THE TATAR INVASION

It was among this rude nomad people that Jenghiz Khan was born in 1162. The son of the chief of a tribe dwelling at the mouths of the Onon and the Ingoda, affluents of the Amur, Jenghiz was far removed from the focus of central Asian political life, and his power was originally very small. The first forty years of his life were spent in struggles with the surrounding peoples; it is even said that for ten years he was in captivity with the Nyûché, or Chûrché (the Manchurian rulers of northern China known under the name of the dynasty of Kin), during which time he became acquainted with Chinese customs and manners, and also with the weakness of the rulers of China. Having conquered various Mongolian tribes, he proclaimed himself emperor at a general assembly of the princes, which was held at the sources of the river Onon (1206).

"By thus taking the imperial title," says V. P. Vasiliev, "he gave perfect expression to the purely Chinese conception that, as there is only one sun in the heavens, so there must be only one emperor on earth; and all others bearing this title, all states having any pretensions to independent existence thereby offend the will of heaven and invite chastisement." His successes in Mongolia are explained by his surpassing military talent, the system of purely military organisation adopted by him, and by the fact that he gave places in his service to all those who were gifted, of whatever race they might

[1223-1228 A.D.]

be.<sup>1</sup> Jenghiz Khan's conquests advanced rapidly; in 1206 he devastated the kingdom of Tangut (in southern Mongolia) and in 1210 he commenced a war with the Nyüehé, ruling in northern China. The war dragged on, and meanwhile the shah of Khwarezm (Bokhara) gave offence to Jenghiz Khan by slaying the Mongolian ambassadors. Leaving his captains in China, the Mongolian khan marched to Bokhara (1219), whence, partly in pursuit of the shah and partly led on by the passion for pillage, the Mongolian troops directed their way to the west, doubled the southern shore of the Caspian Sea, crossed the Caucasus, and penetrated into the steppes of the Polovtsi.

The leaders of these troops were Chépé and Subutai Bahadar. The Polovtsi applied for help to the Russian prince Mstislav Mstislavich, and he called together the princes of southern Russia, amongst whom the most important were Mstislav Romanovitch of Kiev and Mstislav Sviatoslavitch of Tchernigov. The armies of the princes moved to the help of the Polovtsi, and although the Tatars sent ambassadors saying, "God has permitted us to come on our steeds with our slaves against the accursed Polovtsi; come and make peace with us, for we have no quarrel with you," the princes decided upon a battle which took place by the river Kalka in the government of Tekaterinoslav. The Russian princes, who did not act in unison, were beaten (1223), and many were killed, amongst others Mstislav of Kiev. The Tatars did not penetrate far into Russia, but turned back and were soon forgotten.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile the Tatar captains returned to Jenghiz Khan, who, having definitively subdued Tangut and northern China, died in 1227. He had during his lifetime divided his possessions amongst his four sons: to the descendants of Juji (then already dead) was allotted Kiptchak (that is the steppe extending from central Asia into southern Russia); to Jagatui, Turkestan; to Okkodaï (Ogdai) China; to Tuli, the nomad camps adjoining the shore of Okkodaï. Over these princes was to be exalted the great khan, chosen in a solemn assembly of all the princes. In 1228 Okkodaï was proclaimed great khan.

At first the question of succession, then the fiscal consolidation of the empire in northern China, and then again the commencement of the war with the south kept the princes around the great khan, and it was only in 1235 that Okkodaï sent his nephew Batu, son of Juji, together with Manku, son of Tuli, and his own son Kuliuk, to conquer the western lands; to their number was added Sabutai, famous for his Kiptchak campaign. First of all they conquered the Bulgarians on the Volga, and then came to the land of Riazan. Here they exacted from the princes a tribute of a tenth of all their possessions

[1 A modern army inevitably loses in numbers and its difficulties increase as it advances from its base of operations into the enemy's country. The very reverse was the situation of the Tatars. They needed no base of operations, for they took along with them their flocks, their tents, and all their belongings, and while their flocks fed upon the grassy steppes, they in turn fed upon their flocks. And the nomadic and predatory tribes whom they encountered on their march led the same kind of life as themselves, and were easily induced to join in the certain expectation of plunder. Thus the tide kept on ever increasing and gaining in force. In fact, the Tatars can hardly be styled an army, but a people in motion.<sup>a</sup>]

[<sup>2</sup> At first the Russians had only very vague notions as to who this terrible enemy was. The old chronicler remarks briefly: "For our sins unknown people have appeared. No one knows who they are or whence they have come, or to what race and faith they belong. They are commonly called Tatars, but some call them Taurermen, and others Petchenegs. Who they really are is known only to God, and perhaps to wise men deeply read in books." Some of these "wise men deeply read in books" supposed them to be the idolatrous Moabites who had in Old Testament times harassed God's chosen people; whilst others thought that they must be the descendants of the men whom Gideon had driven out, of whom a reverent saint had prophesied that they would come in the latter days and conquer the whole earth, from the East even unto the Euphrates, and from the Tigris even unto the Black Sea.<sup>c</sup>]



both in lands and in men; the courageous resistance of the Riazan princes proved unsuccessful, chiefly because the princes of northern Russia did not unite, but decided on defending themselves separately. After the devastation of Riazan and the slaughter of her princes (1237), followed that of Suzdal. Having taken Moscow, the Tatars marched to Vladimir, where they slew the family of the grand prince, while he himself was defeated and killed on the banks of the Sit (1238). Thence they were apparently going to Novgorod, but returned — probably to avoid the marshes. On their way back, Kozelsk detained them for a long time, but it was finally taken and pillaged.

The tactics of the Tatars in this war consisted in first encompassing each region as hunters do, and then joining forces at one centre, thus devastating all. In the years 1239-1240 the Tatars ravaged southern Russia, and in 1240 they took and laid waste Kiev. All Europe trembled at the horrors of the Tatar invasion; the emperor Frederick II called for a general arming, but his calls were in vain. Meanwhile the Tatars advanced to Hungary (1241) and Poland, and defeated the Polish princes at Liegnitz in Silesia; and it was only the courageous defence of Olmütz in Moravia, by the Czech voyevode Iaroslav, and the gathering of armies under the command of the Czech king and the dukes of Austria and Carinthia, that finally caused the Tatars to turn back. They then founded their chief dwelling place on the Volga, where near the present town of Tsareva (government of Astrakhan) they established a wintering place for the horde — Sarai. There the Russian princes began to arrive with tribute. At first, however, they were obliged to go to the great khan in Mongolia; for the first khans, Okkodai, Kuiuk, and Mangku, were lawfully chosen by the princes, and maintained their authority over all the empire of Jenghiz Khan; and it was only from the time of Kublai (1260), who arbitrarily took possession of the throne and removed the seat of government to China, that the bond was definitively severed.

#### INFLUENCES OF TATAR DOMINATION

The domination of the Tatars over Russia is regarded by historians from various points of view: some (such as Karamzin and especially N. I. Kostomarov) ascribe a decided influence to the Tatars in the development of Russian life. S. M. Soloviov, on the contrary, is of the opinion that the influence of the Tatars was not greater than that of the Polovtsi. Both these opinions are extreme: it is senseless to deny the influence of the Tatars, for the reason that Russia was long associated with them, and that, since in her intercourse with the east, Moscow employed Tatar services, much that was eastern entered into the administration, notably the financial system; traces of eastern custom may also be found in the military organisation. These are direct consequences; the indirect ones are hardly less important, because a considerable share in the interruption of civilisation and the roughening of the manners and customs of the people may be ascribed to the separation of eastern Russia from western. On the other hand, it is impossible to regard the corporal punishments as entirely Tatar, for they were known in Byzantium, and came to Russia in the manuals of church statutes; they were known also in the west, and are to be met with in places which were but little under Tatar domination, such as Pskov. The opinion that the autocratic power had its origin in the domination of the Tatars must, it would seem, be entirely rejected, especially when we call to mind the constant preaching of the clergy, and the fact that John the Terrible directly appeals to the authority of the Bible and the example of the Roman emperors.

[1237-1241 A.D.]

Civilisation and letters were almost unknown to the Tatars. The writers in their chanceries were for the greater part taken from the nations they had conquered, as were also the artists who embellished the wintering places of their khans. Much luxury was to be met with amongst them, but neither elegance nor cleanliness: in this respect they kept to the very end the customs of the Mongolian steppes. Also in moral respects they showed themselves dwellers of the steppes even to the end of their career in history. Cruel and coarse though they were, they possessed, however, some good qualities. They were temperate in their lives, and their cupidity was not so great as that of other Asiatic nations; they were far less given to deceit in trade — in general, with them, violence predominated over deceit.<sup>b</sup>

Throughout all of their conquests in Russia, they obviously acted upon a principle which was well calculated to facilitate their own complete ascendancy. At first they destroyed the walled places that stood in the way of their projects, and afforded a means of defence to the people; they destroyed the population wherever they went, in order that the remnant which survived should feel the more surely the weight of their power; and, at length, as their advance became the more safe and certain, they relaxed slightly in their cruelties, enrolling under their standard the slaves they captured, thus turning their conquests into armaments. But the climate of Russia rendered it an unsuitable place for their location. As they could not remain upon the soil which they had vanquished, they established themselves on the frontiers to watch over their new possessions, leaving nominal Russian princes to fight for them against the invading tribes that continually rushed in. Those very invasions served also to strengthen the Tatar yoke, by weakening the resisting power of the natives.<sup>d</sup>

In conquering Russia they had no wish to take possession of the soil, or to take into their own hands the local administration. What they wanted was not land, of which they had enough and to spare, but movable property which they might enjoy without giving up their pastoral, nomadic life. They applied, therefore, to Russia the same method of extracting supplies as they had used in other countries. As soon as their authority had been formally acknowledged they sent officials into the country to number the inhabitants and to collect an amount of tribute proportionate to the population. This was a severe burden for the people, not only on account of the sum demanded, but also on account of the manner in which it was raised. The exactions and cruelty of the tax-gatherers led to local insurrections, and the insurrectionists were of course always severely punished. But there was never any general military occupation nor any wholesale confiscations of land, and the existing political organisation was left undisturbed. The modern method of dealing with annexed provinces was wholly unknown to the Tatars. The khans never for a moment dreamed of attempting to Tatarise their Russian subjects. They demanded simply an oath of allegiance from the princes, and a certain sum of tribute from the people. The vanquished were allowed to retain their land, their religion, their language, their courts of justice, and all their other institutions.

The nature of the Tatar domination is well illustrated by the policy which the conquerors adopted towards the Russian church. For more than half a century after the conquest the religion of the Tatars was a mixture of Buddhism and paganism, with traces of sabaism or fire-worship. During this period Christianity was more than simply tolerated. The grand khan Kuiuk caused a Christian chapel to be erected near his domicile, and one of his successors, Khubilai, was in the habit of publicly taking part in the

Easter festivals. In 1261 the khan of the Golden Horde allowed the Russians to found a bishopric in his capital, and several members of his family adopted Christianity. One of them even founded a monastery, and became a saint of the Russian church! The orthodox clergy were exempted from the poll tax, and in the charters granted to them it was expressly declared that if anyone committed blasphemy against the faith of the Russians he should be put to death. Some time afterwards the Golden Horde was converted to Islam, but the khans did not on that account change their policy.

They continued to favour the clergy, and their protection was long remembered. Many generations later, when the property of the church was threatened by the autocratic power, refractory ecclesiastics contrasted the policy of the orthodox sovereign with that of the "godless Tatars," much to the advantage of the latter.

At first there was and could be very little mutual confidence between the conquerors and the conquered. The princes anxiously looked for an opportunity of throwing off the galling yoke, and the people chafed under the exactions and cruelty of the tribute collectors, whilst the khans took precautions to prevent insurrection, and threatened to devastate the country if their authority was not respected. But in the course of time this mutual distrust and hostility greatly lessened. The princes gradually perceived that all attempts at resistance would be fruitless, and became reconciled to their new position. Instead of seeking to throw off the khan's authority, they sought to gain his favour, in the hope of thereby forwarding their personal interests. For this purpose they paid frequent visits to the Tatar



A FEMALE SAMOYED

chief, made rich presents to his wives and courtiers, received from him charters confirming their authority, and sometimes even married members of his family. Some of them used the favour thus acquired for extending their possessions at the expense of neighbouring princes of their own race, and did not hesitate to call in Tatar hordes to their assistance. The khans, in their turn, placed greater confidence in their vassals, entrusted them with the task of collecting the tribute, recalled their own officials who were a constant eyesore to the people, and abstained from all interference in the internal affairs of the principalities so long as tribute was regularly paid. The princes acted, in short, as the khan's lieutenants, and became to a certain extent Tartarised. Some of them carried this policy so far that they were reproached by the people with "loving beyond measure the Tatars and their language, and giving them too freely land, and gold, and goods of every kind."e



[1245 A.D.]

## ALEXANDER NEVSKI

The recognition of Tatar sovereignty was complete in the homage and tribute they demanded and received. Every prince was forced to solicit his investiture from the khan of Kiptchak; and even when Yaroslav was established as grand prince over the rest, Batu cunningly allowed several rivals to put in their claims to that authority, and obliged them to wait so long for his decision that the order of succession remained unsettled. This state of suspense in which the feudal lords were kept, and a series of famines which followed the destructive march of the Tatars, plunged the country into a condition of abject wretchedness.

During this period of indecision on the one hand, and forlorn imbecility on the other, the Lithuanians succeeded in appropriating to themselves some portions of the northwestern frontier of Russia; and the Swedes, and Danes, and Livonian knights of the sword proceeded to make demonstrations of a descent upon Novgorod. Alexander, however, who had succeeded his father in that principality, finding that the grand prince was unable to render him any assistance towards the defence of the city, anticipated the advance of the intruders, and giving them battle on the banks of the Neva gained a decisive victory. He immediately built strong forts on the spot to repel any future attempts, and returned in triumph to Novgorod. So signal was the overthrow of the enemy that Alexander was honoured by the surname of Nevski, in commemoration of the achievement.

Flushed with a triumph as unexpected as it was important, Alexander Nevski desired to enlarge the bounds of his power at home. The army was warmly attached to him, for his personal intrepidity was no less remarkable than his sagacity — qualities which were rarely so strongly developed in so young a man. The Novgorodians, however, always jealous of their municipal privileges, and suspicious of the motives of their rulers, resisted the extension of Alexander's power, and, apprehensive that he would abuse his advantages, they remonstrated against his proceedings, and at last broke out into open rebellion. The proud spirit of the young prince was justly offended at the impetuous revolt of his subjects, and he retired at once from the city, going over to his father at Vladimir, to request the aid of a sufficient force to restore order. But Yaroslav, in the conviction of his own inadequacy, was unwilling to interfere with the wishes of the Novgorodians; and, conferring upon Alexander the inferior principality of Pereiaslavl, he sent another of his sons, at the request of the people, to reign over the disaffected province.

The Novgorodians, however, speedily discovered their error. The Danes, induced to speculate upon the absence of Alexander, a second time appeared within the boundary, and the new prince, an inexperienced young man, made choice of such measures as clearly proved him to be unfit for his office. The people became dissatisfied, and, being now convinced that Alexander was the only man who could relieve them in their difficulty, petitioned him to return; but he indignantly rejected the request. A second embassy, headed by the archbishop, was more fortunate, and Alexander Nevski once more placed himself at the head of the army, and obtained a second victory over the invaders. Resolved to profit by the obligations under which he laid his subjects by resuming, at their own instance, the reins of government, and by freeing them from the presence of a dangerous foe, he now pushed on to Livonia, and routed the combined forces of a triple alliance of Germans, Danes, and Teutons, on the borders of Lake Peipus. This exploit, which the youthful hero achieved in the year 1245, not only obtained him the love and

admiration of his own subjects, but speedily spread his name through every part of the empire, until it finally reached the court of the Golden Horde, where it elicited an unusual degree of curiosity and applause.

In the person of the prince of Novgorod, a new dawn of hope broke over Russia, and nothing but the disheartening feuds of the chiefs checked the growth of that incipient desire for liberty which the influence of his successes was calculated to create. Alexander was adapted to the occasion; and if the disunited sovereigns could now have consented to forego their low animosities, and to merge their personal differences in the common cause, Alexander was the instrument of all others the most fit to undertake the conduct of so gallant an enterprise. But it required an extraordinary combination of circumstances to awaken the Russian princes to a full sense of their degradation, and to inspire them with resolution to set about the rescue of their country from the chains of the spoiler. Alexander's example was useless. He could do no more than demonstrate the possibility of improvement within the reach of his own domain; but for all purposes of a national and extensive character, his exertions failed to procure any favourable results.

On the death of the grand prince Iaroslav, whose reign appears to have passed unmarked by any events of importance, the khan invited or rather summoned Alexander to the horde. A number of competitors or claimants for the grand principedom had already brought forward their petitions: some were lingering in person at the court; others were represented by ambassadors bearing rich tributes; and all were in a state of considerable anxiety pending the decision of the Tatar. Alexander alone was silent. The fame of his deeds had preceded him. He did not come to supplicate for an honour to which he felt that he possessed an unexceptionable claim, but he attended as a point of duty, without reference to a nomination that could hardly increase his popularity. His independent bearing, his manly figure, and the general candour and fearlessness of his manners gained him at once the confidence and admiration of the khan, who did not hesitate to assure him that, although he had heard much in his favour, report had fallen short of his distinguished merits.

Auspicious, however, as this reception was, it did not terminate in Alexander's appointment to the suspended sceptre of Vladimir. The policy of the Tatar was to keep the order of succession in periodical uncertainty, so that the Russians might the more distinctly see how much the destinies of the country depended on his supreme will. It was not until Alexander paid a second visit to the horde, in 1252, that he was raised to the dignity of grand prince. It was accorded to him in a very gracious spirit, and he entered upon his new office with more earnest zeal than had for a long time before been displayed by his predecessors.

The first act of the grand prince was an expedition against Sweden, undertaken with two objects: (1) to crush a formidable foe that occasionally harassed the frontier districts; and (2) to give employment and opportunity for pillage to his numerous army, which he had already taught to calculate upon the rewards of spoliation. The expedition terminated in victory. The triumphant army laid a part of the Swedish territory under contribution, succeeded in capturing a number of prisoners, and returned home laden with spoils.

These successes and the skilful policy of the grand prince made the most favourable impression on the mind of the khan, who now, whenever dissensions arose amongst the princes, either referred the adjustment of their differences to Alexander, or confiscated their dominions and annexed them to the

[1252 A.D.]

grand principedom. Two instances of the latter description may be recorded as evidences of the cunning displayed by the Tatar in the protection of the Greek religion. While Alexander was at the height of his prosperity, the prince of Kiev, affected by some sudden admiration of the Roman Catholic ritual, signified his submission to the pope, acknowledging his holiness's supremacy over the churches of his principality. Another prince, his brother-in-law, adopted a similar measure, which was equally offensive to Tatars and Russians. The khan, irritated by proceedings so directly at variance with his will, deprived them of their authority, and transferred their territories to the grand prince, who, according to some writers, was even assisted by the Tatars in seizing upon them.

The tribute which had been originally imposed upon the Russians by their conquerors had always been levied by the princes, the khan being satisfied to receive it at their hands. As the power of Alexander increased, the khan gradually recalled this system of delegation, and adopted a more strict and jealous mode of collection. The first contribution was raised upon the princes, as tribute money, and they were left to procure it amongst their subjects as well as they could. But it now assumed the shape of a tax on persons and property. In order to ensure the regularity of its payment, and protect the khan against evasions, Tatar officers were appointed in every district to attend exclusively to the rigid collection of the revenue. From this tax, which was imposed without distinction upon every Russian, and rated according to his means, the clergy alone were exempt: and even they, in one instance, were attempted to be taxed in later times; but the khan who sought to enforce it was obliged to yield to the double argument of long-established usage and weighty presents from the wealthy monks.

The new burthen lay heavily upon the people, and the mode in which it was enforced through foreign collectors, of the nation of their oppressors enhanced its mortifications. Universal discontent followed the tax-gatherers. They were treated with unreserved displeasure. It was with great difficulty they could carry into effect the objects of their unpopular mission, and in some places, particularly the cities where the population was more compact, and the communication of opinion more rapid and complete, they were received with execration. This resistance on the one hand no doubt produced increased severity on the other; and as the levy advanced, the people became less cautious in the exhibition of their feelings, and the collectors more rigorous and despotic. Novgorod, which had always been the rallying point for the assertion of freedom in Russia, took the lead in this revolt against the khan's authority. The Novgorodians, to a man, refused to pay the tax, and even threatened to wreak their vengeance upon the officers who were appointed to collect it. The prince of Novgorod, one of Alexander's sons, urged to extremities by his republican advisers, sanctioned these declarations of independence, and openly signified his determination to prevent the exactions of so ignominious a tribute within the districts dependent upon his rule. Alexander, perceiving, in this dangerous obstinacy of his son, the source of serious calamity to the empire at large, and knowing well that neither the Novgorodians, nor any other fraction of the Russian people, were in a condition to resist the powerful armies of the khan, should he be provoked to compel compliance at the point of the sword, undertook in person to appease the growing tumult, and presenting himself in the city, rebuked the inhabitants for having perilled the safety of the country by their contumacy, severely punished rash advisers of his son, and finally arranged the payment of the tax to the satisfaction of the Tatar offices. Still the Novgorodians were not content.



They remonstrated against the unequal pressure of the tax, setting forth that it fell more grievously upon the poor than upon the rich, and that if they were obliged to submit to such a penalty, it should at all events be adjusted proportionately to the means of individuals. Even this difficulty Alexander was enabled to meet by assuming the responsibility of the payment himself, a vexatious and ungrateful duty, which, however, he willingly accepted, as it afforded him the means of quelling discontents that might have otherwise terminated in a sanguinary convulsion.<sup>d</sup>

### *Death of Alexander Nevski; Appreciation of His Character*

In 1262, disturbances arose in the country of Rostov, where the people became exasperated at the violence of the Tatar collectors of tribute; a council was called together and the collectors were driven out of Rostov, Vladimir, Suzdal, Pereiaslavl, and Iaroslavl; in the last mentioned town the enraged inhabitants killed the collector Izosim, who had embraced Mohammedanism to become a Tatar tax-gatherer, and persecuted his former fellow-citizens worse than the Tatars themselves. Naturally such an occurrence could not be calmly passed over by the horde, and Tatar regiments were already sent to take the Christians into captivity. In order to avert this calamity from the people, Alexander repaired a fourth time to the horde; he was evidently successful, possibly because of the Persian War which was then greatly occupying the khan Bergé. But it was his last work; he left the horde, where he had passed the whole winter, a sick man, and died on the way back to Vladimir on the 14th of November, 1263; "having laboured greatly for the Russian land, for Novgorod and Pskov, for all the grand principedom, and having given his life for the orthodox faith." By preserving Russia from calamities on the east, and by his famous exploits for faith and country in the west, Alexander gained for himself a glorious memory throughout Russia and became the most conspicuous historical personage in Russian history from Monomakh to Donskoi. A token of this remembrance and fame is to be found in the special narrative of his exploits that has come down to us. "The grand prince Alexander Iaroslavitch," says the author of the narrative, "conquered everywhere, but himself was nowhere conquered;" there came to Novgorod from the western countries a famous knight, who saw Alexander, and when he returned to his own land he said: "I have gone through many countries and nations, but nowhere have I seen such a one, no such king among kings and no such prince among princes;" and a similar honourable mention was made of him by the khan. When, after the death of his father, Alexander came to Vladimir, his coming was terrible, and the news of it flew even to the mouth of the Volga, and the Muscovite women began to frighten their children, saying: "Be quiet, the grand duke Alexander is coming!" It happened once that ambassadors were sent to him from great Rome by the pope, who had commanded them to speak to Alexander as follows: "We have heard of thee, O Prince, that thou art honourable and wonderful, and that thy country is great, therefore have we sent unto thee two of the wisest of our twelve cardinals, that thou mayest hearken to their teaching." Alexander, having taken counsel with his wise men, wrote down and described to the pope all that had taken place from the creation of the world to the seventh œcumenical council, and added: "All this is well known unto us, but we cannot accept your teachings." Following in the footsteps of his father, Alexander gave much gold and silver to the horde to ransom prisoners. The metropolitan Cyril was in

[1203 A.D.]

Vladimir when he heard of the death of Alexander, which he thus announced to the people: "My beloved children! learn that the sun of the land of Russia has set;" and all the people cried out in reply: "Then we perish!"<sup>e</sup>

"It was as vassal and agent of the khan," says Brueckner, "that Alexander broke the resistance of Novgorod and compelled it to pay tribute. On the one hand representing the interests of the khan and repressing the revolts of the Russians, on the other hand mollifying the anger of the khan and acting like a shrewd diplomat, Alexander represents a curious combination of egotism and patriotism. We are not in the possession of sufficient evidence to form a just estimate of the measure of his services or of his opportunistic policy, but he is certainly a most interesting character in that unfortunate and disgraceful period of Russian history."<sup>i</sup>

### *The Grand Principedom*

With the death of Alexander commenced afresh the hurtful contests of the princes for the grand principedom. The division of interests which had gradually grown up amongst the Tatars, greatly increased the internal disorders of Russia. Nogay, the Tatar chieftain, who had thrown off the rule of the khan of Kiptchak, asserted his sovereignty in the southern provinces, and contended against his rival of the horde, for the right of tribute in many districts which had hitherto acknowledged implicitly the government of the first conqueror. This strife between the ruling powers produced much treachery amongst the Russian princes, who generally allied themselves to the chief who happened at the moment to obtain the ascendancy, and who thus played a false game to assist them in the accomplishment of their own individual objects. In this way they wasted their strength; for whenever a prince profited by the sale of his allegiance, he paid so dearly for the assistance which procured him the end he had in view, that the gain in such a case was usually discovered to be a severe loss. The grand principedom was the prize for which they all struggled; and in the contentions which marked the struggle, almost every inferior principality became more enfeebled than before.

Alexander Nevski was one of the few great men whose names stand apart from the tumultuous throng that crowd the early pages of Russian history. He was a wise statesman, and a brave soldier. His victories over the enemies of his country were not less remarkable for completeness and brilliancy, than his measures of domestic improvement were distinguished by prudence and foresight. The Danes, the Swedes, the Lithuanians, and the Teutonic knights severally gave way before him: he enlarged the bounds of his territory, inspired his army with a fresh spirit of activity, rebuilt several Russian cities that had been destroyed during the Tatar invasions, and founded others in well-chosen situations. Russia, under his sway, might have redeemed her fallen fortunes; but the unnatural hostility of the feudal princes to the grand principedom, their hatred to any chief whose virtues elevated him above them, and their ruinous conflicts amongst themselves upon insignificant grounds of quarrel; paralysed the efforts of Alexander, and deprived him of the power of rendering that service to his country which he was eminently qualified to confer. His fame was so universal, that his death gave opportunity to the display of a fresh burst of superstitious feelings. His approaching decease was said to have been notified to the metropolitan by a voice from heaven; and as the body lay in the coffin, the dead man was said to have opened one of his hands, as the prayer of absolution was spoken

by the officiating clergyman. These miracles obtained Alexander a niche amongst the Russian saints; and, less in honour of his real merits than his attributed powers, he was duly canonised after death. Some centuries subsequently, a monastery was raised to his memory by Peter I, and his relics were removed to St. Petersburg with extraordinary ceremonies of devotion. An order of knighthood was afterwards instituted in his name, which ranks amongst its members some of the monarchs of Europe. These facts connected with the reputation of Alexander Nevski in Russia are memorable, as proofs of the veneration in which he was held.<sup>d</sup>



MUSCOVITE WOMAN

The khans committed a serious fault in preserving a grand prince; it was a still more striking one, and a consequence of the first, to place in his hands a sovereignty disproportioned to those by which he was surrounded, to select him for too long a time from the same branch, and to give him armies to establish himself, and the means of seducing even themselves by the most costly presents. The consequence of this was, that the appanaged princes dared not enter so readily into a contest with the grand princes, who were already more powerful than themselves, and were so formidably supported. Not daring to contend with them, they turned their arms against each other, and thus enhanced by their own weakness the strength of the grand princes.

Nevertheless, till 1324, that is, for a century posterior to the Tatar invasion, the power of the grand princes was doubtful; but then, amidst the crowd of pretenders to the grand principedom, two rival branches made themselves conspicuous, and the other princes of the blood resigned to them an arena, in which the scantiness of their own resources no longer permitted

them to appear. One of these branches was that of the princes of Tver; the other that of the princes of Moscow.<sup>g</sup>

#### THE GROWING ASCENDENCY OF MOSCOW

Moscow becomes a princely appanage at a rather late date, although it is mentioned in the chronicle as early as 1147. The place is also called Kutchkovo. With this appellation there is connected a tradition, which seems quite trustworthy, that Moscow had belonged to a certain Kutchka, and the chronicle also speaks of the Kutchkas as relatives of the wife of Andrew Bogoliubski and of his murderers. It seems that the first prince of Moscow was Michael Iaroslavitch, who died in 1248. Other princes are mentioned as having been at Moscow before that time, but it is difficult to decide whether they resided there temporarily or permanently. The true line of Moscow princes begins with Daniel Alexandrovitch [a son of Alexander



[1303-1313 A.D.]

Nevskij, who died in 1303 and was succeeded by his son Iuri, the famous rival of the Tver princes.<sup>b</sup>

Iuri married, in 1313, the sister of Usbek Khan. It was then that, after having excited the hatred of the Novgorodians, in persisting to subdue them by means of the Tatars, Michael of Tver drew down upon his head all the wrath of Usbek, by defeating Iuri, and taking prisoners his wife, who was the khan's sister, and Kavadgi, a Tatar general, who came to put the prince of Moscow in possession of the grand principedom.

For Usbek, after having preferred and supported the rights of Michael of Tver to the grand principality, had changed his mind in favour of Iuri of Moscow, who had become his brother-in-law. The enmity of Usbek, however, remained suspended, until his sister, the wife of Iuri, and the prisoner of Michael, expired at Tver. Iuri then hastened to the horde, and accused Michael of having poisoned the princess. The offended pride of Usbek lent itself to this base calumny; he entrusted the investigation of the affair to Kavadgi; appeared to the summons; the vanquished passed sentence on his vanquisher, whom he caused to be put to death; and the infamous Iuri of Moscow was appointed grand prince in the place of his murdered rival (1320). His triumph was short: being accused of withholding the tribute due to the khan, he journeyed to the horde, and was assassinated by the son of his victim, who was himself immediately executed by Usbek. This vengeance restored the grand principality to the branch of Tver, in the person of Prince Alexander Michael's second son. It remained in it for three years; but then, in 1328, this madman caused all the Tatars at Tver to be massacred. To the brother of Iuri, Ivan I, surnamed Kalita,<sup>1</sup> prince of Moscow, Usbek immediately gave Vladimir and Novgorod, the double possession of which always distinguished the grand principedom. This concession formed, in the hands of Ivan, a mass, the connection of which Tver, weakened as it was, did but little diminish. Consequently, with this power, and the troops that Usbek added to it, Ivan speedily compelled all the Russian princes to combine, under his orders, against the prince of Tver; who, after having undergone various misfortunes, was executed with his son at the horde.

Here begin the two hundred and seventy years of the reign of the branch of Moscow. This first union of the Russians, under Ivan I, denominated Kalita, constitutes an epoch; it exhibits the ascendancy of this second grand prince of Moscow over his subjects; an ascendancy the increase of which we shall witness under his successors; and for which, at the outset, this branch of the Ruriks was indebted to the support they received from the Tatars. For as a word from the khan decided the possession of the throne, that one of the two rival branches of Moscow and Tver was sure to triumph which displayed the most shrewd and consistent policy towards the horde. It was not that of the princes of Tver which thus acted. On the contrary they sometimes solicited the protection of the khans, and sometimes fought against them; we have even seen one of them ordering the massacre of the Tatars in his principality.

The princes of Moscow pursued a different system; they no doubt, detested the yoke of the khans as much as their rivals did; but they were aware that, before they could cope with the Tatars, the Russians must be united, and that it was impossible to subject and unite the latter without the assistance of the former. They therefore espoused the daughters of the khans, manifested the utmost submission to the horde, and appeared to be wholly devoted to its interests.

<sup>1</sup> Or the Purse.

Now this policy, which, at the commencement of the Mongol invasion, acquired for Alexander Nevski the empire of all Russia, gave it, seventy-four years later, still more completely to Ivan I: for the sway of the Tatars was then more recognised; the Russians were more docile to their yoke; and the cities, which composed the grand principality were more powerful in themselves, and also by comparison with the rest of Russia, which became daily more and more exhausted. The wealth of Ivan I was another cause of the extension of his power.

The complaints of the prince of Tver, in 1323, prove that Iuri I, grand prince of Moscow, when he undertook to execute the vengeance of his brother-in-law Usbek, against Tver, was also entrusted with the collecting of the tributes; which, however, he retained, instead of sending them to the horde. Ivan Kalita, his brother and successor, profited by this example. Thus it was, that by making themselves lieutenants of the khan, the Muscovite grand princes first became the collectors, and finally the possessors, of the taxes throughout the whole of Russia; and thus they succeeded to all the rights of conquest enjoyed by the Tatars, and to their despotism.

There can be no doubt that one of the most copious sources of power to those sovereigns was the periodical census and the perpetual imposts, so alien to feudalism, and especially to a feudalism of princes: these imposts and censuses nothing but the Tatar conquest could have established, and they were inherited by the grand princes. Already, in the first half of the fourteenth century, these taxes had rendered Ivan Kalita rich enough to purchase entire domains and appanages,<sup>1</sup> the protection of Usbek Khan, and the preference of the primate, who removed his residence from Vladimir to Moscow, by which means the latter city became the capital of the empire.

It was by virtue of his authority as collector for the Tatars that Ivan Kalita practised extortion upon his subjects. We see him requiring a double tribute from the Novgorodians, under pretext that such was the will of the khan. Armed against the Russians with the dread inspired by the Tatar name, and against the Tatars with the money of the Russians; intoxicating the khan and his courtiers with gold and adulation in his frequent journeys to the horde; he was enabled, as lord paramount, to bring about the first union of all the appanaged princes against his competitor, the prince of Tver, whom he drove from Pskov and from Russia, being aided by the primate with the thunder of the church, then heard in the empire for the first time. The nobility imitated the clergy. Impelled either by fear, or cupidity, several boyars of other princes rallied round this grand prince, preferring the fiefs of so rich and so potent a lord paramount to those of the petty princes whom they abandoned.

Ivan Kalita pushed forward with horrible vigour in his ambitious career. "Woe, woe to the princes of Rostov!" exclaims Nikon, "because their power was destroyed, and everything was concentrated in Moscow." In fact, from the Kremlin, which he fortified, Ivan proclaimed himself the arbiter of his kinsfolk; he reigned in their principalities by the medium of his boyars; he arrogated to himself the right of being the sole distributor of fiefs, judge, and legislator; and if the princes resisted, and dared to wage against him a war of the public good,<sup>2</sup> he hurried to the horde, with purse in hand, and denunciation

<sup>1</sup> In the governments of Novgorod, Vladimir, Kostroma, and Rostov, and the cities of Duglitch, Bielozersk, and Galitch. — [See Karamsin, and an act of Dmitri Donskoi.]

<sup>2</sup> From 1333 to 1339 the princes who held appanages espoused the cause of the prince of Tver against the grand prince of Moscow, whom they called a tyrant. In 1339 the grand prince of Moscow returned to the horde, and so terrified Usbek Khan by his denunciations

[1353 A.D.]

on his lips; and the short-sighted Usbek, deceived by this ambitious monitor, was impolitic enough to disembarass him of the most dangerous of his competitors, whom he consigned to frightful torments. The prince of Tver and his son were the most remarkable victims of this atrocious policy.

Meanwhile, Lithuania, which, from the period of the first overwhelming of Russia by the Tatars, had emancipated itself from its yoke, had now become a conquering state. About 1320, Gedimin, its leader, seized on the Russian appanages of the south and west, which had long ceased to be dependent upon the grand principality of Vladimir. Kiev, Galich, Volhynia, became sometimes Lithuanian, sometimes Polish or Hungarian: driven to despair, their inhabitants emigrated; they formed the two military republics of the Zaporogians and Cossacks of Don. Rallying around them the unfortunate of all countries, they were destined to become one day strong enough to make head against the Turks and Tatars, between whom they were situated; and thus to embarrass the communication between those two peoples, whom a common religion, origin, and interest conspired to unite.

The grand principality was, on the other hand, re peopled by unfortunate fugitives from the southern Russian provinces, who sought refuge at Moscow. The empire, it is true, lost in extension; but it was thus rendered more proportionate to the revived power of its grand prince, who had also fewer competitors in it: those who remained could not, in point of resources, be compared with the grand principality. After all, it was much better that the latter should one day have to recover some provinces from a foreign foe, than from its domestic enemies: it was suffering an external evil instead of an internal one, which is the worst of all.

Thus, the machiavellism of Ivan prospered. It is true that, by the confidence with which he inspired the horde, and the terrible war which he waged against his kinsmen, he restored to Russia a tranquillity to which she had long been a stranger. A dawning of order and justice reappeared under a sceptre acquired and preserved by such horrible acts of injustice; the depredations to which Russia had been a prey were repressed; commerce again flourished; great marts and new fairs were established, in which were displayed the productions of the East, of Greece, and of Italy; and the treasury of the prince was swelled still further by the profit arising from the customs.<sup>1</sup>

Such were the rapid effects of the first steps which Ivan took to execute the system of concentration of power; this great political impulse was so vigorously given, that it was perpetuated in his son Simeon the Proud, to whom Ivan left wherewithal to purchase the grand principedom from the horde, and in whom he revived the direct succession. Accordingly, Simeon effected, against Novgorod, a second union of all the Russian princes. It is to be remarked, that he was obliged to cede one half of the taxes to his brothers; but, at the same time, he reserved to himself the whole authority, which soon gives to its possessor the mastery of the revenue.

Simeon having died without children, in 1353, after a reign of twelve years, Ivan II, his brother, purchased the sovereignty with the wealth of Kalita. After the six years' reign of Ivan II, this system and this order of succession were, indeed, transiently interrupted in the person of a prince, alien to the branch of Moscow; but we shall soon see the great Dmitri Donskoi

against the prince of Tver and other princes, that the khan immediately summoned them to the horde, in order to restrain, or get rid of them. — [See Karamsin.]

<sup>1</sup> See Kamenevitch (translated by Karamsin), describing the great mart of Mologa, where the commerce of Asia and of Europe met in the seventy inns of its Slavonian suburb; and where seven thousand two hundred pounds' weight of silver were collected for the treasury of the prince.



establish them as fixed principles; that prince did not neglect to increase the wealth<sup>1</sup> of his grandfather Ivan. The people had given to Ivan the surname of The Purse; as much, perhaps, with allusion to his treasures, as to the purse, filled with alms for the poor, which is said to have been always carried before him. At a later period, the constantly progressive riches of the grand princes of Moscow enabled them to enfeoff directly from the crown lands three hundred thousand boyar followers; and next, to keep up a body of regular troops, sufficiently strong to reduce their enemies and their subjects.<sup>2</sup>

This system of concentration of power which Ivan Kalita commenced, by means of his wealth, by the union of the sceptre with the tiara, and by restoring the direct order of succession; his horrible but skilful machiavellism against the princes holding appanages; finally, the fifty years' repose which, thanks to his policy, and to their dissensions, the Tatars permitted Russia to enjoy; these are the circumstances which entitle Ivan to be considered as standing next after Alexander Nevski among the most remarkable grand princes of the third period. It was he who had the sagacity on this stubborn soil to open and to trace so deeply the path which led to monarchical unity, and to point out its direction so clearly to his successors that they had nothing to do but to persevere in it, as the only safe road which it was then possible for Russia to follow.

This concentration of power brought about great changes from 1320 to 1329; as, at that epoch, all the Russian princes in concert solicited from the horde the recall of the Tatar governors. It was then that, more firmly fixed, the throne of the grand princes became the rallying point of the Russians: along with the consciousness of their strength, it inspired them with a public spirit, which emboldened them. This good understanding was, in reality, an effect of the ascendancy which a direct and sustained succession, in a single branch of the Ruriks, had already given to it over all the others.

### *The Principle of Direct Succession*

In fact, sometimes natural justice, sometimes oriental negligence and cupidity, often the fear of being disobeyed, and lastly, and especially, the power and riches of the princes of Moscow — whose presents always surpassed those of the other princes — all these motives had induced the khans to allow the succession to the grand principality to descend regularly from father to son in the branch of Moscow.<sup>3</sup> This natural order of succession Dmitri Donskoi, in 1359, established by a treaty, in which his kinsmen con-

<sup>1</sup> See the treaty of Dmitri Donskoi with Vladimir his uncle, who promised to pay to him the tribute of his appanage, which bore the name of the khan's tribute; and the second treaty with the same Vladimir, by which the latter prince engaged that his boyars should pay to Dmitri the same tax which the grand prince might think proper to impose on his own boyars.

<sup>2</sup> It was thus that, in France, in 1445, Charles VII took advantage of the exactions of the English, and of the terror which they inspired, to render perpetual the temporary taxes, and to keep up a permanent corps of twenty-five thousand men.

<sup>3</sup> Usbek, it is true, with machiavellian policy, designated all the children of Ivan I as his successors; but, in 1340, he allowed Simeon, the oldest and ablest of them, to make himself sole master of the throne. Janisbek Khan nominated Ivan II, the brother of Simeon, after his death and that of his children, to the exclusion of a prince of the branch of Tver or Nevski. A prince Dmitri, of the Nevski branch, who had been made grand prince by a whim of Naurus Khan, was deposed in 1362 by Murat Khan, who chose Dmitri Donskoi, grandson of Ivan I, and son of Ivan II. Taktamusch also gave the throne to Vasili II, the eldest son of Donskoi (1389). Lastly, Ulu-Mahomet nominated Vasili III, son of Vasili II, and father of the great Ivan III, whom this long succession rendered so powerful that he completely crushed the horde.

[1359 A.D.]

sented to renounce the mode of succession from brother to brother. It was the most remarkable among them, Vladimir the Brave, who was the first to sign this act. In several other conventions, Vladimir acknowledged himself the vassal and lieutenant, not merely of Dmitri, but also of Vasili his son, and even of the son of Vasili, when he was only five years of age. This example, set by a prince who, of all the possessors of appanages, was the most renowned for his prudence and his valour, was followed by the others. Thus, like the Capets, kings of France, did Ivan I, and particularly Dmitri Donskoi, begin the monarchy by restoring the direct succession, in causing, while they lived, their eldest sons to be recognised as their successors. Afterwards we see Vasili, son of Dmitri, persevering in this practice, and Vasili the Blind, his grandson, raising up his tottering throne, and preparing the autocracy of the fourth Russian period, by associating with himself his next heir, the great Ivan III.

It is easy to conceive the infallible effect of this order of succession, and with what promptitude it must necessarily have extended and consolidated the power of the grand princes. In fact, the ideas of the father being transmitted to the son by education, their policy was more consistently followed up, and their ambition had a more direct object. The nobles could not fail to attach themselves more devotedly to a prince whose son and heir, growing up amongst them, would know only them, and would recompense their services in the persons of their children; for the necessary consequence of the succession of power in the same branch, was the succession of favours and dignities in the same families.

Even before Dmitri had established the principle, the boyars saw the advantages which this order of succession held out to them. Here, as elsewhere, the fact preceded the law. This was the reason of their restoring the direct line in the grandson of Ivan Kalita; it was they who made him grand prince at the age of twelve years, and who subjected the other princes to him. In like manner, about 1430, they maintained this order of succession in Vasili the Blind. Contemporary annalists declare that these ancient boyars of the grand principality detested the descent from brother to brother; for, in that system, each prince of the lateral branch arrived from his appanage with other boyars, whom he always preferred, and whom he could not satisfy and establish but at the expense of the old. On the other hand, the most important and transmissible places, the most valuable favours, an hereditary and more certain protection, and greater hopes, attracted a military nobility around the grand princes. In a very short time, their elevation to the level of the humbled petty princes flattered their vanity, and completed their junction with the principal authority. This circumstance explains the last words of Dmitri Donskoi to his boyars, when he recommended his son to their protection. "Under my reign," said he, "you were not boyars, but really Russian princes." In fact (to cite only some examples), we see that his armies were as often commanded by boyars as by princes, and that, from this epoch, it was no longer a prince of the blood, but a boyar of the grand prince, who was his lieutenant at Novgorod.

Nay, more, when the succession from father to son was once established, there were, at the very beginning, two minorities (those of Dmitri, and of Vasili, his grandson), during which the boyars composed the council of regency, governed the state, and were the equals, and even the superiors, of the princes who held appanages. This will explain why, in 1392, the boyars of Boris, the last prince of Suzdal, gave up him and his appanage to Vasili Dmitrievitch of Moscow. The motive is to be found only in their

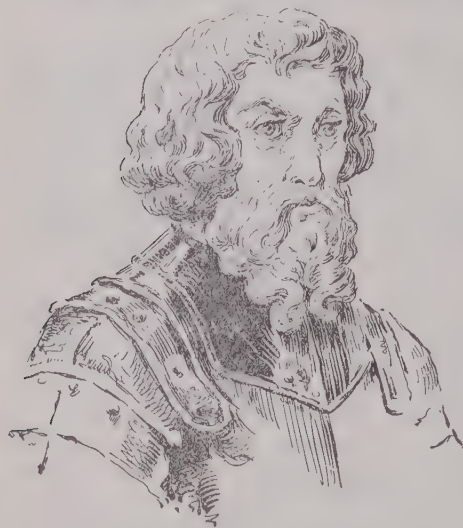
interest; as the grand prince of Moscow entrusted them with the government of the appanages, and thus substituted the nobles in the place of the princes.

A very remarkable circumstance, with respect to Dmitri Donskoi, is, on the one hand, the energy with which he subdued those princes, and, on the other, his circumspect treatment of his boyars. According to Karamsin, it is more especially to their pride and jealousy of the tyssiatchsky of Moscow (the boyar of the city, or of the commune, a sort of civil and military tribune, elected by the people), that we are to attribute the abolition of that office by Donskoi. During the preceding reign, another tyssiatchsky of Moscow, who claimed precedence of even the boyars of the grand prince, had been murdered by them.

When this hereditary protection afforded by the grand princes of the

Moscow branch was once fairly established, the nobles of each appanage, who constituted its army, had thenceforth an asylum, and, as it were, a tribunal for redress, to which they could appeal whenever they were dissatisfied with their prince. It was this which made Tver fall before Ivan Kalita; for the sovereign prince of that first and last rival of Moscow having preferred to his boyars the people of Pskov, who had defended him, the former withdrew to Moscow.

The power of Ivan Kalita being once raised by the Tatars' aid, and by the re-establishment of the direct line of succession, and thoroughly developed by his son and grandson, Simeon the Proud and Dmitri Donskoi, it followed, as a natural consequence, that he who was most able to reward and to



DMITRI DONSKOI

punish drew around him, and retained, the whole of the nobles. These constituted the sole strength of the appanaged princes; their defection, therefore, completed the subjugation of the princes. Dmitri Donskoi was, therefore, in reality sovereign, as is proved by his treaties with the princes who held appanages, all of whom he reduced to be his vassals. And, accordingly, notwithstanding the appanages which he gave to his sons, and the dissensions which arose out of that error — an error as yet, perhaps, unavoidable — the attachment of the nobles, for which we have just assigned a reason, always replaced the legitimate heir on the throne.

Already, so early as about 1366, the Russian princes could no longer venture to contend against their lord paramount by any other means than by denunciations to the horde; but to what khan could they be addressed? Discord had created several: what result was to be hoped from them? Divided among themselves, the Tatar armies had ceased to be an available force. The journeys to the Golden Horde, which had originally contributed to keep the Russian princes in awe, now served to afford them an insight into the weakness of their enemies. The grand princes returned from the horde with the confidence that they might usurp with impunity; and their competitors



[1380 A.D.]

with envoys and letters, which even they themselves well knew would be of no avail. It was, then, obvious in Russia, that the only protecting power was at Moscow: to have recourse to its support was a matter of necessity. The petty princes could obtain it only by the sacrifice of their independence; and thus all of them became vassals to the grand prince Dmitri.

Never did a great man arise more opportunely than this Dmitri. It was a propitious circumstance, that the dissensions of the Tatars gave them full occupation during the eighteen years subsequent to the first three of his reign: this, in the first place, allowed him time to extinguish the devastating fury of Olgerd the Lithuanian, son of Gedimin, father of Jagello, and conqueror of all Lithuania, Volhynia, Smolensk, Kiev, and even of Taurida; secondly, to unite several principalities with his throne; and lastly, to compel the other princes, and even the prince of Tver, to acknowledge his paramount authority.

The contest with the latter was terrible: four times did Dmitri overcome Michael, and four times did the prince of Tver, aided by his son-in-law, the great Olgerd, prince of Lithuania, rise again victorious. In this obstinate conflict, Moscow itself was twice besieged, and must have fallen, had it not been for its stone walls, the recent work of the first regency of the Muscovite boyars. But, at length, Olgerd died; and Dmitri, who, but three years before, could appear only on his knees at the horde, now dared to refuse the khan his tribute, and to put to death the insolent ambassador who had been sent to claim it.

We have seen that, fifty years earlier, a similar instance of temerity caused the branch of Tver to fall beneath that of Moscow: but times were changed. The triple alliance of the primate, the boyars, and the grand prince, had now restored to the Russians a confidence in their own strength: they had acquired boldness from a conviction of the power of their grand prince, and from the dissensions of the Tatars. Some bands of the latter, wandering in Muscovy in search of plunder, were defeated; at last the Tatars have fled before the Russians! they are become their slaves, the delusion of their invincibility is no more!

The burst of fury which the khan exhibited on learning the murder of his representative, accordingly served as a signal for the confederation of all the Russian princes against the prince of Tver. He was compelled to submit to the grand prince, and to join with him against the horde.

### *The Battle of the Don or Kulikovo (1380 A.D.)*

Russia now began to feel that there were three things which were indispensably necessary to her; the establishment of the direct succession, the concentration of the supreme power, and the union of all parties against the Tatars. The movement in this direction was taken very opportunely; for it happened simultaneously that the Mongolian chief, Mamai, was also disencumbered of his civil wars (1380), and he hastened with all his forces into Russia to re-establish his slighted authority; but he found the grand prince Dmitri confronting him on the Don, at the head of the combined Russian princes and an army of two hundred thousand<sup>2</sup> men. Dmitri put it to the choice of his troops whether they would go to encounter the foe, who were encamped at no great distance on the opposite shore of the river, or remain on this side and wait the attack? With one voice they declared for going

<sup>1</sup>From 1362 to 1380.

<sup>2</sup>150,000 in Soloviev and Rambaud.]

over to the assault. The grand prince immediately transported his battalions across the river, and then turned the vessels adrift, in order to cut off all hopes of escaping by retreat, and inspire his men with a more desperate valour against an enemy who was three times stronger in numbers. The fight began. The Russians defended themselves valiantly against the furious attacks of the Tatars; the hosts of combatants pressed in such numbers to the field of battle, that multitudes of them were trampled under foot by the tumult of men and horses. The Tatars, continually relieved by fresh bodies of soldiers as any part was fatigued by the conflict, seemed at length to have victory on their side. Nothing but the impossibility of getting over the river, and the firm persuasion that death would directly transport them from the hands of the infidel enemy into the mansions of bliss, restrained the Russians from a general flight. But all at once, at the very moment when everything seemed to be lost, a detachment of the grand prince's army, which he had stationed as a reserve, and which till now had remained inactive and unobserved, came up in full force, fell upon the rear of the Tatars, and threw them into such amazement and terror that they fled, and left the Russians masters of the field. This momentous victory, however, cost them dear; thousands lay dead upon the ground, and the whole army was occupied eight days in burying the bodies of the dead Russians: those of the Tatars were left uninterred upon the ground. It was in harmony of this achievement that Dmitri received his honourable surname of Donskoi.<sup>g</sup>

#### *Significance of Battle of Kulikovo*

The chronicles say that such a battle as that of Kulikovo had never before been known in Russia; even Europe had not seen the like of it for a long time. Such bloody conflicts had taken place in the western half of Europe at the beginning of the so-called Middle Ages, at the time of the great migration of nations, in those terrible collisions between European and Asiatic armies; such was the battle of Châlons-sur-Marne, when the Roman general saved western Europe from the Huns; such too was the battle of Tours, where the Frankish leader saved western Europe from the Arabs (Saracens). Western Europe was saved from the Asiatics, but her eastern half remained long open to their attacks. Here, about the middle of the ninth century, was formed an empire which should have served Europe as a bulwark against Asia; in the thirteenth century this bulwark was seemingly destroyed, but the foundations of the European empire were saved in the distant northwest; thanks to the preservation of these foundations, in a hundred and fifty years the empire succeeded in becoming unified, consolidated — and the victory of Kulikovo served as a proof of its strength. It was an omen of the triumph of Europe over Asia, and has exactly the same signification in the history of eastern Europe as the victories of Châlons and Tours have in that of western Europe. It also bears a like character with them — that of a terrible, bloody slaughter, a desperate struggle between Europe and Asia, which was to decide the great question in the history of humanity: which of these two parts of the world was to triumph over the other.

But the victory of Kulikovo was one of those victories which closely border upon grievous defeats. When, says the tradition, the grand prince ordered a count to be made of those who were left alive after the battle, the boyar Michael Aleksandrovitch reported to him that there remained in all forty thousand men, while more than four hundred thousand had been in action. And although the historian is not obliged to accept the latter state-

[1382 A.D.]

ment literally, yet the ratio here given between the living and the dead is of great importance to him. Four princes, thirteen boyars, and a monk of the monastery of Troitsa, were among the slain. It is for this reason that in the embellished narratives of the defeat of Mamai we see the event represented on one hand as a great triumph and on the other as a woeful and lamentable event. There was great joy in Russia, says the chronicler, but there was also great grief over those slain by Mamai at the Don; the land of Russia was bereft of all voyevods (captains) and men and all kinds of warriors, and therefore there was a great fear throughout all the land of Russia. It was this depopulation through loss of men that gave the Tatars a short-lived triumph over the victors of Kulikovo.<sup>e</sup>

## THE DESTRUCTION OF MOSCOW (1382 A.D.)

The immediate and inevitable consequence of the battle was a sensible reduction of the Russian army. The numbers that fell before the Tatars could not be easily or speedily supplied: nor were the means of a fresh levy accessible. Those districts from which the grand army was ordinarily recruited had already exhausted their population; all the remote principalities had contributed in nearly equal proportion, and the majority of the rest of the empire was composed of persons who were unaccustomed to the use of arms, having been exclusively occupied in tillage or commerce. These circumstances, which did not damp the joy of the victory, or diminish its real importance, presented to the implacable foe a new temptation for crossing the border. But it was not until two of the wandering hordes had formed a junction that the Tatars were able to undertake the enterprise. The preparations for it occupied them two years. In 1382, the hordes of the Don and the Volga united, and making a descent upon the frontier provinces with success, penetrated as far as Moscow. The city had been previously fortified by the boyars with strong ramparts and iron gates; and Dmitri, trusting with confidence to the invincibility of the fortifications, left the capital in the charge of one of his generals, while he imprudently went into the interior to recruit his army. His absence in the hour of danger spread consternation amongst the peaceable part of the inhabitants, particularly the clergy, who relied upon his energies on the most trying occasions. The metropolitan, accompanied by a great number of the citizens, left the city upon the approach of the Tatars. The small garrison that remained made an ineffectual show on the ramparts, and the Tatars, who might not otherwise have gained their object, prevailed upon the timidity of the Russians, who consented to capitulate upon a promise of pardon. The Tatars observed their pledge in this instance as they had done in every similar case — by availing themselves of the first opportunity to violate it. They no sooner entered Moscow than they gave it to the flames, and massacred every living person they met in the streets. Having glutted their revenge with a terrible scene of slaughter and conflagration, they returned home, satisfied with having reduced the grand principedom once more, after their own fashion, to subjection. They did not perceive that in this exercise of brutal rage they strengthened the moral power of Russia, by giving an increased motive to co-operation, and by rendering the abhorrence of their yoke still more bitter than before. All they desired was the physical and visible evidence of superiority; either not heeding, or not comprehending, the silent and unseen progress of that strength which combined opinion acquires under the pressure of blind tyranny.

Dmitri, thus reduced to submission, was compelled once more to per-



form the humiliating penance of begging his dignity at the hands of the khan. Empire had just been within his grasp; he had bound up the shattered parts of the great mass; he had effected a union of sentiment, and a bond of co-operation; but in the effort to establish this desirable end, he had exhausted the means by which alone it could be perpetuated. Had the Tatars suffered a short period more to have elapsed before they resumed the work of spoliation, it is not improbable but that a sufficient force could have been raised to repel them: but they appeared in considerable numbers, animated by the wildest passions, at a time when Dmitri was unable to make head against their approach. The result was unavoidable; and the grand prince, in suing to be reinstated on the throne from which he was virtually expelled, merely acquiesced in a necessity which he could not avert.

But the destruction of Moscow had no effect upon the great principle that was now in course of development all over the empire. The grand principedom was still the centre of all the Russian operations: the grand prince was still the acknowledged authority to which all the subordinate rulers deferred. While this paramount virtue of cohesion remained unimpaired, the incursions of the Tatars, however calamitous in their passing visitations, had no other influence upon the ultimate destiny of the country than that of stimulating the latent patriotism of the population, and of convincing the petty princes, if indeed any further evidence were wanted, of the disastrous impolicy of wasting their resources in private feuds.

#### THE DEATH OF DMITRI DONSKOI; HIS PLACE IN HISTORY

The example of Dmitri Donskoi had clearly pointed out the course which it was the policy of the grand prince to follow; but, in order to place his own views beyond the reach of speculation, and to enforce them in as solemn a manner as he could upon his successors, that prince placed a last injunction upon his son, which he also addressed in his will to all future grand princes, to persevere in the lofty object of regeneration by maintaining and strengthening the domestic alliances of the sovereignty, and resisting the Tatars until they should be finally driven out of Russia. His reign of twenty-seven years, crowned with eventful circumstances, and subjected to many fluctuations, established two objects which were of the highest consequence to the ultimate completion of the great design. Amidst all the impediments that lay in his way, or that sprang up as he advanced, Dmitri continued his efforts to create an order of nobility—the boyars, who, scattered through every part of the empire, and surrounding his court on all occasions of political importance, held the keys of communication and control in their hands, by which the means of concentration were at all times facilitated. That was one object, involving in its fulfilment the gradual reduction of the power of the petty princes, and contributing mainly to the security of the second object, which was the chief agent of his designs against the Tatars. In proportion as he won over the boyars to his side, and gave them an interest in his prosperity, he increased the power of the grand principedom. These were the elements of his plan: the progressive concentration of the empire, and the elevation of the grand principedom to the supreme authority. The checks that he met in the prosecution of these purposes, of which the descent of the Tatar army upon Moscow was the principal, slightly retarded, but never obscured, his progress. The advances that he had made were evident. It did not require the attestation of his dying instructions to explain the aim of his life: it was visibly exemplified in the institutions he bequeathed to

[1389 A.D.]

his country; in the altered state of society; and in the general submission of the appanages to a throne which, at the period of his accession, was shaken to its centre by rebellion.<sup>d</sup>

In 1389 Dmitri died at the early age of thirty-nine. His grandfather, his uncle, and his father had quietly prepared ample means for an open decisive struggle. Dmitri's merit consisted in the fact that he understood how to take advantage of these means, understood how to develop the forces at his disposal and to impart to them the proper direction at the proper time. We do not intend to weigh the merits of Dmitri in comparison with those of his predecessors; we will only remark that the application of forces is usually more evident and more resounding than their preparation, and that the reign of Dmitri, crowded as it was from beginning to end with the events



LIVE-FISH MERCHANT

of a persistent and momentous struggle, easily eclipsed the reigns of his predecessors with their sparse incidents. Events like the battle of Kulikovo make a powerful impression upon the imagination of contemporaries and endure long in the remembrance of their descendants. It is therefore not surprising that the victor of Mamai should have been given beside Alexander Nevski so conspicuous a place amongst the princes of the new north-eastern Russia. The best proof of the great importance attributed to Dmitri's deeds by contemporaries is to be found in the existence of a separate narrative of the exploits of this prince, a separate embellished biography. Dmitri's appearance is thus described: "He was strong and valiant, and great and broad in body, broad shouldered and very heavy, his beard and hair were black, and very wonderful was his gaze." In his biography the severity of his life is extolled, his aversion to pleasure, his piety, gentleness, his chastity both before and after marriage; among other things it is said: "Although he was not learned in books, yet he had spiritual books in his heart." The end of Dmitri is thus described: "He fell ill and was in great pain, then it abated, but he again fell into a great sickness and his groaning came to his heart, for it touched his inner parts and his soul already drew near to death."

The important consequences of Dmitri's activity are manifested in his

will and testament, in which we meet with hitherto unheard-of dispositions. The Moscow prince blesses his eldest son Vasili and endows him with the grand principality of Vladimir, which he calls his paternal inheritance. Donskoi no longer fears any rivals to his son, either from Tver or Suzdal. Besides Vasili, Dmitri had five sons: Iuri, Andrew, Peter, John, and Constantine; but the two latter were under age, Constantine having been born only four days before his father's death, and the grand prince confides his paternal domain of Moscow to his four elder sons. In this domain, that is in the town of Moscow and the districts appertaining to it, Donskoi had ruled over two parts or shares, the share of his father Ivan and of his uncle Simeon, while the third share was under the rule of Vladimir Andreevitch, to whom it now remained. Of his two shares the grand prince left one half to his eldest son Vasili; the other half was divided in three parts among the remaining sons, and the other towns of the principality of Moscow were divided among the four sons; Kolomna went to Vasili, the eldest, Zvenigorod to Iuri, Mozhaisk to Andrew, Dmitrov to Peter.

#### THE REIGN OF VASILI-DMITRIEVITCH (1389-1425 A.D.)

From the very commencement of his reign the young son of Donskoi showed that he would remain true to the traditions of his father and grand father. A year after the khan's ambassador had placed him on the grand prince's throne at Vladimir, Vasili set out for the horde and there purchased a *iarlik* (letter-patent of the khans) for the principality of Nijni-Novgorod, which not long before, after many entreaties, had been obtained from the horde by Boris Constantinovitch. When the latter heard of Vasili's designs, Boris called together his boyars and said to them with tears in his eyes: "My lords and brothers, my boyars and friends! remember your oath on the cross, remember what you swore to me!" The senior among his boyars was Vasili Rumianietz, who replied to the prince: "Do not grieve, my lord prince! we are all faithful to thee and ready to lay down our heads and to shed our blood for thee." Thus he spoke to his prince, but meanwhile he sent to Vasili Dmitrievitch, promising to give up Boris Constantinovitch to him. On his way back from the horde, when he had reached Kolomna, Vasili sent from there to Nijni the ambassador of Toktamish and his own boyars. At first Boris would not let them enter the town, but Rumianietz said to him: "My lord prince, the khan's ambassador and the Muscovite boyars come here in order to confirm peace and establish everlasting love, but thou wishest to raise dissensions and war; let them come into the town; what can they do to thee? we are all with thee." But as soon as the ambassador and boyars had entered the town, they ordered the bells to be rung, assembled the people, and announced to them that Nijni already belonged to the prince of Moscow. When Boris heard this he sent for his boyars and said to them: "My lords and brothers, my beloved drujina! remember your oath on the cross, do not give me up to my enemies." But this same Rumianietz replied: "Lord prince! do not hope in us, we are no longer thine, we are not with thee, but against thee!" Boris was seized, and when somewhat later Vasili Dmitrievitch came to Nijni, he placed there his lieutenants; and Prince Boris, with his wife, children, and partisans, he ordered to be carried away in chains to various towns and kept in strict imprisonment.<sup>e</sup>

The princes of Suzdal, Boris' nephews, were banished, and Vasili also acquired Suzdal. Later on the princes of Suzdal made peace with the grand



[1395-1412 A.D.]

prince and received back from him their patrimonial estates, but from generation to generation they remained dependants of Moscow and not independent rulers. In 1395 took place an event which raised the moral importance of Moscow: on account of an expected invasion of Timur (Tamerlane), which, however, never took place, Vasili Dmitrievitch ordered to be transported from Vladimir to Moscow that famous ikon which Andrew had formerly taken from Kiev to his beloved town of Vladimir; this ikon now served to consecrate the pre-eminence of Moscow over all other Russian towns.

Following in the steps of his predecessors, Vasili Dmitrievitch oppressed Novgorod, but did not however entirely attain to the goal of his designs. Twice he endeavoured to wrest her Dyvinsk colonies from her, taking advantage of the fact that in the Dyvinsk territories a party had been formed which preferred the rule of the Moscow grand prince to that of Grand Novgorod. The people of Novgorod were fortunate in defending their colonies, but they paid dearly for it: the grand prince laid waste the territory of Novgorod, and ordered some of the inhabitants who had killed a partisan of his at Torzhok to be strangled; but worse than all, Novgorod itself could not get on without the grand prince and was obliged to turn to him for help when another grand prince, namely the Lithuanian, attempted its conquest.

At that period the horde was so torn up with inward dissensions that Vasili had not for some years paid tribute to the khan and regarded himself as independent; but in 1408 an unexpected attack was made on Moscow by the Tatar prince Edigei, who like Mamai, without being khan himself, made those who bore the name of khan obey him. Vasili Dmitrievitch being off his guard and thinking that the horde had become weakened, did not take early measures against his wily adversary, who deceived him by his hypocrisy and pretended good-will. Like his father he escaped to Kostroma, but provided better than his father for the defence of Moscow by confiding it to his brave uncle, Prince Vladimir Andreevitch. The inhabitants themselves burned their faubourg, and Edigei could not take the Kremlin, but the horde laid waste many Russian towns and villages. Moscow now learned that although the horde had no longer the power to hold Russia in servitude, yet it might still make itself terrible by its sudden incursions, devastations, and capture of the inhabitants. Shortly thereafter, in 1412, Vasili went to the horde to do homage to the new khan Djelalledin, brought him tribute, and made presents to the Tatar grandees, so that the khan confirmed the grand principality to the prince of Moscow, although he had previously intended to bestow it upon the exiled prince of Nijni-Novgorod. The power of the khans over Russia was now only held by a thread; but for some time yet the Moscow princes could take advantage of it in order to strengthen their own authority over Russia and to shelter their inclinations under the shadow of its ancient might. Meanwhile they took measures of defence against the Tatar invasions, which might be all the more annoying because they were directed from various sides and from various fragments of the crumbling horde. In the west the Lithuanian power, which had sprung up under Gedimin, and grown great under Olgerd, had attained to its utmost limits under Vitovt.

Strictly speaking, the supreme authority over Lithuania and the part of Russia in subjection to it belonged to Jagello, king of Poland; but Lithuania was governed independently in the quality of viceroy by his cousin Vitovt, the son of that Keistut who had been strangled by Jagello. Vitovt, following the example of his predecessors, aimed at extending the frontiers of Lithuania at the expense of the Russian territories, and gradually

subjugated one after another of them. Vasili Dmitrievitch was married to the daughter of Vitovt, Sophia; throughout his reign, he had to keep up friendly relations with his kinsman, and yet be on his guard against the ambitious designs of his father-in-law. The Muscovite prince acted with great caution and prudence, giving way to his father-in-law as far as possible, but safeguarded himself and Russia from him. He did not hinder Vitovt from taking Smolensk, chiefly because the last prince of Smolensk, Iuri, was a villain in the full sense of the word, and the inhabitants themselves preferred to submit to Vitovt, rather than to their own prince. When however Vitovt showed too plainly his intentions of capturing Pskov and Novgorod, the grand prince of Moscow openly took up arms against his father-in-law and a war seemed imminent; but in 1407 the matter was settled between them, and a peace was concluded by which the river Ougra was made a boundary between the Muscovite and the Lithuanian possessions.

VASILI VASILIEVITCH (AFTERWARDS CALLED "THE BLIND" OR "THE DARK")

Vasili Dmitrievitch died in 1425. His successor, Vasili Vasilievitch, was a man of limited gifts and of weak mind and will, but capable of every villainy and treachery. The members of the princely house had been held in utter subjection under Vasili Dmitrievitch, but at his death they raised their heads, and Iuri, the uncle of Vasili Vasilievitch, endeavoured to obtain the grand principality from the horde. But the artful and wily boyar, Ivan Dmitrievitch Vsevolozhsky, succeeded in 1432 in setting aside Iuri and assuring the grand principality to Vasili Vasilievitch. When Iuri pleaded his right of seniority as uncle, and in support of his claim cited precedents by which uncles had been preferred, as seniors in years and birth, to their nephews, Vsevolozhsky represented to the khan that Vasili had already received the principality by will of the khan and that this will should be held above all laws and customs. This appeal to the absolute will of the khan pleased the latter and Vasili Vasilievitch remained grand prince. Some years later this same boyar, angered at Vasili because the latter had first promised to marry his daughter and then married Marie Iaroslavna, the grand-daughter of Vladimir Andreevitch Serpukhovski, himself incited Iuri to wrest the principality from his nephew. Thus Russia again became the prey of civil wars, which were signalised by hideous crimes. Iuri, who had taken possession of Moscow, was again expelled and soon after died. The son of Iuri, Vasili Kossol (the Squinting) concluded peace with Vasili, and then, having treacherously violated the treaty, attacked Vasili, but he was vanquished, captured, and blinded (1435). After a few years the following events took place at the Golden Horde: the khan Ulu Makhmet was deprived of his throne and sought the aid of the grand prince of Moscow. The grand prince not only refused him his aid, but also drove him out of the boundaries of the territory of Moscow. Ulu Makhmet and his partisans then established themselves on the banks of the Volga at Kazan, and there laid the foundations of a Tatar empire that during a whole century brought desolation on Russia. Ulu Makhmet, as ruler of Kazan, avenged himself on the Muscovite prince for the past, was victorious over him in battle, and took him prisoner. Vasili Vasilievitch only recovered his liberty by paying an enormous ransom. When he returned to his native land, he was against his will obliged to lay upon the people heavy taxes and to receive Tatars into his principality and give them estates. All this awakened dissatisfaction against him, of which the Galician prince Dmitri Shemiaka, the brother of Kossol, hastened to take

[1447-1448 A.D.]

advantage, and joining himself to the princes of Tver and Mozhaisk, in 1446 he ordered Vasili to be treacherously seized at the monastery of Troitsa and blinded. Shemiaka took possession of the grand principality and kept the blind Vasili in confinement, but observing an agitation among the people, he yielded to the request of Jonas, bishop of Riazan, and gave Vasili his liberty, at the same time making him swear that he would not seek to regain the grand principality. Vasili did not keep his oath, and in 1447 the partisans of the blind prince again raised him to the throne.

It is remarkable that from this period the reign of Vasili Vasilievitch entirely changed in character. While he had his eyesight, Vasili was a most insignificant sovereign, but from the time that he lost his eyes, his reign becomes distinguished for its firmness, intelligence, and decision. It is evident that clever and active men must have ruled in the name of the blind prince. Such were the boyars: the princes Patrikeev, Riapolovski, Koshkin, Plesktcheev, Morozov, and the famous voyevods, Striga-Obolenski and Theodore Bassenok, but above all the metropolitan Jonas.

### *Jonas Becomes Metropolitan*

Jonas was a native of Kostroma. When he was made bishop of Riazan he did not in any wise become a partisan of the local views, his sympathies inclined to Moscow because, in conformity with the conditions of that epoch, Jonas saw in Moscow alone the centre of Russian unification. In 1431, at the death of the metropolitan Photius, Jonas was elected metropolitan, but the patriarch of Constantinople had already named the Greek Isidore to that office. This Isidore had participated in the capacity of Russian metropolitan, in the Florentine council which had proclaimed the union of the Greek church with the Roman, the pope of Rome to be the head of the Universal church. Isidore, together with the patriarch of Constantinople and the Byzantine emperor had submitted to the pope; for Isidore was at heart a Greek: all his aims were directed to the salvation of his perishing country, and like many other Greeks he hoped through the pope to arouse Europe against the Turks. It was these hopes that had caused the Greeks of that time to sacrifice the independence of their church. In the eyes of Isidore Russia too was to serve as an instrument for Greek patriotic designs; but the union was rejected at Moscow, Isidore was driven out, and for some years the office of metropolitan of Moscow remained unoccupied. Kiev had its own metropolitans since the days of Vitovt, but Moscow did not wish to have anything to do with them. The bishop of Riazan, Jonas, having been already named metropolitan by the Russian clergy, enjoyed at Moscow a pre-eminent importance and influence, and finally, in 1448, this archbishop was raised to the rank of metropolitan by an assembly of the Russian bishops,



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without regard to the patriarch. This event was a decisive breach with the past, and from that time the eastern-Russian church ceased to depend upon the patriarch of Constantinople and acquired full independence. The centre of her supreme power was Moscow, and this circumstance definitively established that moral importance of Moscow, which had been aimed for by the metropolitan Peter, which had been held up by Alexis, and which had received greater brilliancy from the transfer of the ikon of the Blessed Virgin from Vladimir. From that time the Russian territories not yet subject to Moscow and aiming to preserve their independence from her — Tver, Riazan, Novgorod — were bound to her more closely by spiritual bonds.

When he had for the third time ascended the throne of Moscow, the grand prince designated as co-regent with himself his eldest son Ivan, who was thenceforth called grand prince like his father, as is shown by the treaties of that period. It was from that time that the political activity of Ivan commenced and gradually widened; and there is no doubt that when he attained his majority it was he, and not his blind father that directed the accomplishment of the events which led to the strengthening of Moscow. Prince Dmitri Shemiaka, who had been obliged to promise on his oath to desist from any further attempts upon the grand principality, did not cease to show his enmity against Vasili the Dark. The clergy wrote to Shemiaka a letter of admonishment, but he would not listen to their remonstrances, and the armies of Moscow marched with the blessing of Jonas and accompanied by the young prince, against Shemiaka in Galicia. Shemiaka was defeated and fled to Novgorod, where the inhabitants gave him a refuge, and Galicia with its dependencies was again joined to Moscow. Shemiaka continued to plot against Vasili, took Ustiug, and established himself there; but the young prince Ivan Vasilevitch drove him out, and Shemiaka again fled to Novgorod. The metropolitan Jonas issued an edict declaring Shemiaka excommunicated from the church, forbidding orthodox persons to eat and drink with him, and reproaching the people of Novgorod for having received him. It was then decided at Moscow to put an end to Shemiaka by secretly murdering him; the secretary Borodati, through Shemiaka's boyar Ivan Kotov, induced Shemiaka's cook to prepare and serve to him a poisoned fowl (1453).

Vasili the Dark died on the 5th of March, 1462, from an unsuccessful treatment of burns. He outlived his chief counsellor, the metropolitan Jonas, by a year, the latter having died on the 31st of March, 1461.<sup>b</sup>

#### A REVIEW OF THE INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT DURING THE TATAR PERIOD

The beginning of the fourteenth century was the commencement of a new epoch in the life of Russia; in its two halves two empires began to crystallize: that of Moscow in the east and that of Lithuania in the west, and the scattered elements began to gather around the new centres. Such a centre for eastern Russia was Moscow, until then an insignificant town, rarely mentioned in the chronicles, being the share of the younger and therefore less powerful princes. Under Daniel Aleksandrovitch<sup>1</sup> the town of Moscow constituted the whole principality. With the acquisition of Pereiaslavl (1302), Mozhaïsk (1303), and Kolomna (1308) this region became somewhat

<sup>1</sup> A son of Alexander Nevski.

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more extended, but when it fell to the share of Ivan Danilovitch after the death of his brother Iuri, it was still very insignificant; and yet through its resources the princes of Moscow managed to become the first in eastern Russia and little by little to gather round them the whole of eastern Russia. The rise of the principality of Moscow is one of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of Russia. It is therefore not surprising that particular attention should have been directed towards it by historians, and by the light of their united investigations the phenomenon becomes sufficiently clear.

In the thirteenth century, under the domination of the Tatars in eastern Russia, there was a continual struggle amongst the princes for the title of grand prince, to which they also strove to unite the possession of Vladimir. We also observe another distinctive feature of the time, which was that the princes did not remain to live in Vladimir, but only strove to unite it to their own possessions, and thus augment them, and, if possible, secure them for their families. The struggle was for the preponderance of one family over another through the extension of its territorial possessions. In the Kievan period, whoever became prince of Kiev, removed to Kiev, and named someone of his own family as ruler in his own principality, so that if Kiev were lost and it should pass into another family, he would not lose his own patrimony.

During the Tatar period we note a new phenomenon: the princes did not merely separate themselves from their patrimonial lands, but even from their capitals; for instance: Iaroslav lived in Tver, Basil in Kostroma, Andrew in Gorodeza, Dmitri in Pereiaslavl, and so on. The power of a grand prince at that time was only a hegemony, a preponderance over other princes; as a testimony of their independence the other princes, the elders of their families (such as Riazan, Tver, etc.) began also to call themselves grand princes, and the preponderance of the grand prince of Vladimir little by little lost its significance. To all this there must yet be added another special circumstance, that in order for anyone to unite Vladimir and its territory to his possessions and thus obtain the predominance, a *iarkik* or letter of the khan was required; no rights were necessary and a wide field was open for every guest. Thus there appeared a new basis for the right of succession: the favour of the khan. To obtain this favour was the aim of all the princes, to keep it—a peculiar art. Whoever possessed this art would be the head over all eastern Russia, and whoever could maintain this position was bound to subordinate all the rest to himself. In consequence of this, the first condition for success at that time was a dexterous tactfulness, and whoever possessed this quality must come out victor. This dexterousness was a peculiar distinction of the Muscovite princes, and in it lay the chief cause of their success. They had neither power nor higher rights, and all their hopes were founded on their own skill and the favour of the khan. They had no riches, and their patrimonial lands, poor and secluded, away from the great rivers which were then the chief means of communication, did not yield them large means.

But to ensure success with the khan, his wife, and the princes of the horde, money was necessary; so they became saving and scraping, and all their capacities were directed to the acquisition of gain. Their qualities were neither brilliant nor attractive, but in their position it was only by these sober qualities that anything could be obtained. Alexander Iaroslavitch (Nevski) pointed out to his successors that their policy should be to give way when necessary and to wait when uncertain. He who followed this

counsel was successful; whosoever hurried, like Alexander Mikhailovitch (of Tver), was a loser in the game.

But while taking advantage of every means of influence at the horde, the Muscovite princes did not lose sight of those means by which they could also act within Russia itself. Ivan Danilovitch managed to induce the metropolitan St. Peter to come to Moscow, and his successors continued to reside in that town. The alliance with the spiritual power, the only power that embraced the whole of Russia, was of extraordinary advantage to the Muscovite princes.

The metropolitan could exert his influence everywhere. Thus Theognost closed the churches at Pskov when that city offered an asylum to Alexander Mikhailovitch, and St. Sergius did likewise at Nijni-Novgorod when it accepted a prince to whom Moscow was opposed. This alliance was a most natural one: if the princes needed the authority of the church, the clergy — at that time the representatives of the most advanced ideas concerning the civil order — sought to realise that order of which it stood in need even for its purely economic interests. There is not the slightest doubt that one of the chief causes of the devotion of the clergy to the views and policies of the Muscovite princes, lay in its conviction that it was bound to derive material advantages from the concentration of all power in the hands of one prince. In fact, while the system of appanages prevailed, it was, on the one hand, extremely difficult for the clergy to enjoy its possessions and privileges in security, because the maintenance of this security depended not on one, but on many; while on the other hand, the princes of appanages infringed on clerical privileges more frequently than the grand prince. The dispersion of the monastic estates over several principalities still further contributed to the desire of the clergy for the abolition of the appanage system, which increased the difficulties of managing those estates. Especially in the case of war among the princes of appanages, the clergy of one appanage might easily be deprived of its possessions in another appanage, because at such a time all means of injuring the enemy were considered permissible.

In the increase of power of the Muscovite princes a leading part also belongs to the Moscow boyars, whose activity was principally displayed during the youth or minority of the grand princes.<sup>1</sup>

Such were the principal causes of the strength of the Moscow princes; to them should be added (according to the historians N. V. Stankovitch and S. M. Soloviov) the central position of the principality of Moscow, both in the

<sup>1</sup> "The origin of the Russian aristocracy," says Turgeniev<sup>f</sup>, quoting from Karamzin, "is lost in the most remote antiquity. The dignity of boyar is perhaps even more ancient than that of prince; it distinguished the knights and the most notable citizens, who, in the Slav republics, commanded the armies and administrated the country. This dignity appears never to have been hereditary, but only personal. Although in the course of time it was sometimes conferred by the princes, each of the ancient towns had nevertheless its own boyars, who filled the principal elective offices; even the boyars created by the princes enjoyed a certain independence. Thus, in the treaties of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, we often see the contracting parties confirming to the boyars the right of quitting the service of one prince to enter the service of another. Dissatisfied at Tchernigov, the boyar went with his numerous following to Kiev, Galitch, or Vladimir, where he found new fiefs and tokens of general respect. But when southern Russia had become transformed into Lithuania, when Moscow began to grow larger at the expense of the neighbouring principalities, when the number of princes possessing appanages began to diminish, at the same time that the sovereign's power over the people was becoming more unlimited, then the dignity of boyar also lost its ancient importance. Popular power was favourable to that of the boyars, which acting through the prince on the people, could also act through these latter on the prince. This support at last failed them. Nothing remained to the boyars but to obey their prince, or to become traitors or rebels; there was no golden mean to take, and in the face of the sovereign, no legal means of opposition existed. In a word absolute power was developing itself."



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sense that Moscow is near the sources of the chief rivers, and that an attack from without must first fall on the surrounding principalities. But these causes are evidently secondary and would have no significance without the others: Moscow is not so far from the other principalities that these advantages would belong to her alone. It was much more important that a wise policy, by preserving Moscow from the attacks of the Tatars, attracted thither an increased population and thus enriched the principality. A final important cause was the weakening of the Tatar horde and its dismemberment at the end of this period, of which the princes of Moscow did not fail to take advantage for their own ends.<sup>b</sup>

## THE INFLUENCE OF TATAR DOMINATION

Karamsin, in relating the history of the invasion of Russia by the Mongols, makes some reflections on the consequences of the domination of these barbarians for the Russian people. In spite of his devotion to autocratic power, he cannot prevent himself from keenly regretting the liberty which this power had superseded.

"There was a time," he says, "when Russia, shaped and elevated by the unity of the sovereign power, yielded neither in force nor civilisation to the foremost of the European powers founded by the peoples of Germany on the ruins of the Western Empire. Having the same character, the same laws, the same usages, the same political institutions, which were communicated to Russia by the Varangian or Norman princes, she took her place in the new political system of Europe with some real claims to a great importance, and with the remarkable advantage of being under the influence of Greece, the only one of all the powers which had not been overthrown by the barbarians. This happy time for Russia, is that of Iaroslav the Great. Strengthened by both Christianity and public order, she possessed a religious teaching, schools, laws, an important trade, a numerous army, a fleet, unity of power, and civil liberty. What was Europe at the beginning of the eleventh century? The theatre of feudal tyranny, of the weakness of sovereigns, of audacity amongst the barons, of slavery in the peoples, of superstition and of ignorance. The genius of Alfred and Charlemagne shone through the darkness, but soon faded away; their memory only has survived, their beneficent institutions, their generous intentions, disappeared with them.

"The shadow of barbarism, by veiling the horizon of Russia, hid Europe from its sight at the very time at which enlightenment was beginning to spread there; when the people began to shake off slavery, and the towns to contract alliances for their mutual guarantee against oppression; when the invention of the compass extended navigation and commerce; the time which saw the foundation of universities, in which fine manners began to soften, etc. During this period Russia, oppressed and torn asunder by the Mongols, was collecting all her forces merely that she might not perish. There was then no question of civilisation for the Russians. The rigours of the climate did not permit the Mongols to establish themselves in Russia as they had done in China and India. The khans wished to reign over Russia only from afar. But the envoys of the horde, representing the person of the khan, did what they chose in Russia; the traders, even the Mongol vagabonds, treated Russians as vile slaves. What was the natural consequence? Moral degradation. Forgetting national pride Russians learnt base cunning — the ruses and bravado of the weak. They deceived the Tatars, and one another they deceived still more. While ransoming themselves at the price of gold from

the oppressions of the barbarians, they became more greedy, and less sensitive to insults and to shame, exposed as they were to the violence of foreign tyrants. From the time of Vasili Iaroslavitch down to that of Ivan Kalita (that most unhappy period!) Russia resembled a black forest rather than a state; might appeared to be right; he who could pillage, pillaged, foreigners and natives alike; there was no safety, either on the roads or at home; robbery destroyed property everywhere. And when this terrible anarchy began to disappear, when the stupor and the terror had ceased, and law, which is the soul of society, could at least be re-established, it was then necessary to have recourse to a severity unknown to the ancient Russians. Light pecuniary fines had formerly sufficed for the repression of theft, but already in the fourteenth century, thieves were hanged. The Russian of Iaroslav's day knew no other blows than those he might receive in a private quarrel; under the yoke of the Mongols corporal punishment was introduced. It may be that the present character of the nation still offers traces which were impressed upon it by the barbarity of the conqueror. It must be remarked also that, together with other noble qualities, valour and military courage grew visibly weaker. Formerly the princes had struck with the sword; during this period they redressed their grievances by means only of baseness and complaints brought before the khans. If, after two centuries of such slavery, Russians have not lost all moral sense, all love for virtue, and all patriotism, let us thank the influence of religion; it is religion which has maintained them in the position of men and citizens, which has not allowed hearts to grow hard, and conscience to be silenced. Humiliated as Russians they again raised themselves under the name of Christians, and they loved their country as being a country of true believers.

The internal constitution of the state was changed; everything which was free, everything which was founded on ancient rights, civil or political, became extinct. After having humbly cringed to the horde, the princes returned to their homes as terrible masters, for they were commanding in the name of a supreme suzerain. That which could not be done either in the days of Iaroslav the Great or in those of Andrew and of Vsevolod III, was accomplished noiselessly and without difficulty in the time of the Mongols. At Vladimir and everywhere else, except Novgorod and Pskov, there was no longer heard the sound of the vetché bell, that manifestation of popular sovereignty; a manifestation which was often tumultuous, but dear to the descendants of Slavo-Russians. This right of the ancient towns was no longer known to the new towns, like Moscow and Tver, which became important during the Mongol dominion. Once only do the chronicles make mention of the vetché of Moscow and they speak of it as an extraordinary event — when the capital, threatened by the enemy, and abandoned by the sovereign, found itself thrown on its own resources. The towns had lost the right of electing their chiefs, who, by their importance and the splendour of their elective dignity, had given umbrage not only to the princely dignitaries but to the princes themselves.”<sup>f</sup>

### *Wallace's View*

The Tatar domination did not by any means Tatarise the country. The Tatars never settled in Russia proper, and never amalgamated with the people. So long as they retained their semi-pagan, semi-Buddhistic religion, a certain number of their notables became Christians and were absorbed by the Russian noblesse; but as soon as the horde adopted Islam, this movement was arrested.

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There was no blending of the two races such as has taken place — and is still taking place — between the Russian peasantry and the Finnish tribes of the north. The Russians remained Christians, and the Tatars remained Mahomedans; and this difference of religion raised an impassable barrier between the two nationalities.

It must, however, be admitted that the Tatar domination, though it had little influence on the life and habits of the people, had a very deep and lasting influence on the political development of the nation. At the time of the conquest Russia was composed of a large number of independent principalities, all governed by the descendants of Rurik. As these principalities were not geographical or ethnographical units, but mere artificial, arbitrarily defined districts, which were regularly subdivided or combined according to the hereditary rights of the princes, it is highly probable that they would in any case have been sooner or later united under one sceptre; but it is quite certain that the policy of the khans helped to accelerate this unification and to create the autocratic power which has since been wielded by the czars.<sup>c</sup>







## CHAPTER IV

### FROM IVAN THE GREAT TO IVAN THE TERRIBLE

[1462-1584 A.D.]

The great ruler who occupied the throne of Moscow at the end of the fifteenth century, was richly endowed with understanding; to his contemporaries he appeared more lucky than active, but meanwhile it was his active mind that directed all the complicated and tangled threads of the foreign and domestic relations. If his contemporaries did not always do justice to the great unifier of the land of Russia, neither is posterity always just to him. We must allow that much had been prepared by his predecessors, and this was also recognised by contemporaries; but it is nevertheless impossible not to acknowledge that Ivan towers far above his predecessors, both by his solution of ancient problems—the unification of Russia (which he had almost completed) and the throwing off of the Tatar yoke—and the raising of new ones. The ability to take advantage of circumstances places Ivan in the rank of great men. If we do not recognise his greatness, then we must apply the same judgment in part to Peter, who was largely only the more determined successor of his brother, father, and grandfather. — BESTUZHEV RIUMIN.<sup>b</sup>

#### ACCESSION OF IVAN (III) VASILIEVITCH

THE dynasty of the Muscovite princes, which commenced in the person of Ivan Kalita, and was preserved unbroken in the lincal descent, was fortunately strengthened by the accident of the longevity of his successors. The reigns of Ivan, of Simeon the Proud, of Dmitri Donskoi, of Vasili, and of Vasili the Blind, embraced a period of 130 years. During that time the people had become habituated to a right which saved them from the contests of rival competitors. So many protracted reigns had stamped the legitimate authority with an unquestioned ascendancy, and with this growth of time its powers inevitably increased. The manners of the Russians were now

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formed under a rule in which the succession was fixed and immutable, and under which a progressive system of legislation was gradually assuming a compact and tangible form. The chaos of antagonistic principles — of that misrule which is born of short-lived theories, of constant interruption, and unsettled governments — was rapidly dissolving; the light of defined administration and regulated power was rising upon the empire; and the people, who were now beginning to understand the benefits of constituted rights, were ready to support their maintenance.

Under these auspicious circumstances, Ivan III, or, as he is called by some historians, Ivan the Great, ascended the throne.

It was not to be expected that a liberal and enlightened government could at once spring from the materials which were accumulated in seasons of anarchy, relieved only by interstitial gleams of peace. The natural issue of a power purchased by enormous sacrifices, and reared up amidst difficulties, was unmitigated despotism. The grand principedom was erected in storms. Its power was built up by constant accessions won at the point of the sword, or procured by profligate bribery. It was not the growth of steady improvement, of public opinion, of the voluntary acquiescence of the people. It began by direct oppression, absolute tyranny, and open injustice. The acts of outrage which the grand princes committed in their efforts to sustain their authority were acts of necessity. They were placed in a situation of peril that exposed them equally to barbarian spoilers without, and insidious enemies within; and they were compelled to vindicate their authority by the force of arms and the arts of perfidy. Their whole career was a fluctuating war against a series of resistances. They conciliated less than they subdued, and the unity which was at last gained by perseverance in a mixed policy of violence and hypocrisy was more the bond of an interest in common, than the reasonable allegiance of a free people to a government of their own choice.

Throughout the struggle for the concentration of the supreme control in one head the church, as will already have been perceived, bore a prominent part. The authority of the clergy had gone on gradually assuming a more stern and arbitrary aspect, even while the political affairs of the country were undergoing daily vicissitudes. The evils that afflicted the state passed harmless over the church; and while the one was subjected to disasters that checked its progress towards prosperity, the other was constantly enlarging its powers, profiting by the misfortunes that surrounded it, and gleaning its share of the good fortune that occasionally improved the hopes of the people. In the early periods when Russia was merely the victim of her own dissensions, the church was freely admitted as a mediator, partly in virtue of her office as the dispenser of charity and peace, and partly from the veneration in which religion and its ordinances were held. When the Tatars invaded Russia, they perceived the mighty influence which the priests exercised over the passions of the people, and, fully persuaded of the wisdom of attaching to their cause an order of men who wielded so enormous a power, they increased their privileges, exonerated them from taxes, and placed such premiums of gain and protection upon the monkish habit, that the highest amongst the nobility, and many of the princes, embraced the clerical profession, and added their rich possessions to the revenues of the church. To such an extravagance was this estimation of the benefits of the cowl carried, that the majority of the grand princes took vows before their death, and died in the retired sanctuaries of the religious houses. The monks of the Greek religion, loaded with the spoils of friends and enemies, lived in fortified dwell-

lings, like the nobles of other lands, and were defended by formidable retinues. The primate held a court superior in magnificence to that of the grand prince, and surrounded by boyars, guards, and all the luxuries of the east, he possessed almost unlimited power over life and death; he was the first person who was consulted on all questions of difficulty, and, as a means of exhibiting the supremacy of his station, he instituted public ceremonies, at which the princes assisted, holding the bridle of the ass on which he rode. This tendency of the church to outgrow the space wherein its roots were laid, was greatly forwarded by the fertilizing contributions which flowed in upon it from all quarters. Whenever a phenomenon in the physical world alarmed the superstitions of the people, the major part of the population bequeathed their wealth to the monasteries, with the hope of propitiating the favour of Heaven and securing happiness in the next world. The corruptions of the church of Rome had already crept into the administration of the Greek faith. The system of donations that prevailed in Papal Italy, where even the kingdoms of earth were bartered for the kingdom of heaven, had set an example of which the Russian clergy were not slow to avail themselves. It was, perhaps, a natural conclusion that the clemency of the Godhead could be purchased in a country where earthly justice and exemptions from punishments were sold for pecuniary considerations.

But the lenity and favour shown by the Tatars to the Greek clergy did not produce the effect upon which they calculated. The Tatars, accustomed to rule people of different religions, and possessing within themselves no ecclesiastical foundations, for their wandering mode of life prevented their priesthood from resolving itself into a corporation, viewed with comparative indifference the spreading institutions and growing strength of the church. They only contemplated in the honours and advantages they heaped upon it, the policy of gaining over to their side a powerful body of auxiliaries. But the indestructible spirit of Christianity shrunk from a union with the creed of the pagans; while the barbarous intolerance of the Tatars furnished a further motive to array the priests against the enemies of their religion and their country. They knew that in the grand principedom resided the sole power by which the Tatars were ultimately to be driven out of the land; they saw that to arm that power with sufficient means it was necessary to enrich its treasury, to enlarge its bounds, and to attract within the circle of its sway the allegiance of the whole of the Russian principalities; they perceived in the civil commotions that oppressed the empire a constant source of internal weakness, and they dedicated their energies and their influence to the one object of rendering the grand prince supreme. Moham-medanism assailed them on the one hand, and the papal church on the other: they wanted a rallying point of resistance against both; and they could only find it in the elevation of the throne to an imperial height. Hence, the clergy supported the principle of legitimacy, which by its consistency and perpetuity was calculated to promote the progressive ascension of the princely authority; and thus by degrees, and the inevitable progress of an active doctrine that survived through every obstacle, the church became blended with the state; and the policy of the priesthood, exercising its subtle influence governed and directed the motions of the civil jurisdiction.

#### CHARACTER AND AIMS OF IVAN

Ivan the Great, favoured by such auspicious dispositions on the part of the clergy, and by the rapid coherence of the principalities, ascended the



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throne in 1462, at the age of twenty-two. He was a man of great cunning and prudence, and was remarkable for indomitable perseverance, which carried him triumphantly to the conclusions of his designs in a spirit of utter indifference to the ruin or bad faith that tracked his progress. Such a man alone, who was prepared to sacrifice the scruples of honour and the demands of justice, was fit to meet the difficulties by which the grand principedom was surrounded. He saw them all clearly, resolved upon the course he should take; and throughout a long reign, in which the paramount ambition of rendering Russia independent and the throne supreme was the leading feature of his policy, he pursued his plans with undeviating consistency. But that policy was not to be accomplished by open and responsible acts. The whole character of Ivan was tinged with the duplicity of the churchmen who held so high a place in his councils. His proceedings were neither direct, nor at first apparently conducive to the interests of the empire; but the great cause was secretly advancing against all impediments. While he forbore to risk his advantages, he left an opportunity for disunion amongst his enemies, by which he was certain to gain in the end. He never committed himself to a position of the security of which he was not sure; and he carried this spirit of caution to such an extremity that many of the early years of his reign present a succession of timid and vacillating movements, that more nearly resemble the subtleties of a coward than the crafty artifices of a despot.

The objects of which he never lost sight were, to free himself from enemies abroad, and to convert the principedom at home into an autocracy. So extensive a design could not have been effected by mere force of arms, for he had so many domestic and foreign foes to meet at once, and so many points of attack and defence to cover, that it was impossible to conduct so grand a project by military means alone. That which he could not effect, therefore, by the sword, he endeavoured to perform by diplomatic intrigue; and thus, between the occasional victories of his armies, and the still more powerful influence of his subtle policy, he reduced his foes, and raised himself to an eminence to which none of his most ambitious predecessors had aspired.

The powers against whom he had to wage this double war of arms and diplomacy were the Tatars and Lithuanians, beyond the frontier; and the independent republics of Novgorod, Viatka, and Pskov, and the princes of the yet unsettled appanages within. The means he had at his command were fully sufficient to have enabled him to subdue those princes of the blood who exhibited faint signs of discontent in their appanages, and who could have been easily reached through the widely diffused agency of the boyars; but the obstinate republics of the north were more difficult of access. They stood boldly upon their independence, and every attempt to reduce them was followed by as fierce a resistance, and by such a lavish outlay of the wealth which their commercial advantages had enabled them to amass, that the task was one of extraordinary difficulty. Kazan, too, the first and greatest of the Tatar cities, claimed a sovereignty over the republics, which Ivan was afraid to contest, lest that which was but a vague and empty claim might end in confirmed authority. It was better to permit the insolent republicans to maintain their entire freedom, than to hazard by indiscretion their transference to the hands of those Tatars who were loosened from the parent stock.

His first act, therefore, was to acknowledge, directly or indirectly, according to the nature of their different tenures, the rights of all his foes within and without. He appeared to admit the justice of things as he found them;

betrayed his foreign enemies into a confidential reliance upon his acquiescence in their exactions; and even yielded without a murmur to an abuse of those pretensions to which he affected to submit, but which he was secretly resolved to annihilate. This plausible conformity procured him time to prepare and mature his designs; and so insidiously did he pursue his purpose, that he extended that time by a servility which nearly forfeited the attachment of the people. The immediate object of consideration was obviously the Golden Horde, because all the princes and republics, and even the Poles and Lithuanians, were interested in any movement that was calculated to embarrass the common enemy. Ivan's policy was to unite as many of his enemies as he could against a single one, and finally to subdue them all by the aid of each other. Had he ventured upon any less certain course, he must have risked a similar combination against himself. He began by withholding the ordinary tribute from the khan, but without exhibiting any symptoms of insubordination. He merely evaded the tax, while he acknowledged the right; and his dissimulation succeeded in blinding the Tatar, who still believed that he held the grand prince as a tributary, although he did not receive his tribute. The khan, completely deceived, not only permitted this recusancy to escape with impunity, but was further prevailed upon to withdraw the Tatar residents, and their retinues, and the Tatar merchants, who dwelt in Moscow, and who infested with the haughty bearing of masters even the avenues of the Kremlin.<sup>9</sup>

#### IVAN VASILJEVITCH MARRIES THE GREEK PRINCESS SOPHIA (1472 A.D.)

By completing the work of his predecessors in destroying the independence of the townships and the appanaged princes, Ivan created the empire of Moscow. The form of government of this empire and all the outward surroundings of power were greatly influenced by the marriage of Ivan to Sophia, daughter of Thomas Palæologus, and niece of the last emperor of Byzantium, who brought to Moscow the customs and traditions of the Byzantine Empire. Ivan had lost his first wife in 1467, and two years later the question arose of his marriage with the Greek princess. Thomas Palæologus had retired with his family to Rome: the idea of finding a bridegroom for his daughter belongs to the Greek vissarion, one of the most zealous partisans of the union and at that time cardinal. The cardinal and pope had naturally in view the finding of a new champion against the then terrible Turks, and at the same time of bringing Russia into the union. The envoy sent to Moscow was a Greek by the name of Iuri, who said that Sophia had several suitors, whom she had refused because she did not wish to enter the Latin church. Ivan, after taking counsel with his mother and boyars, sent to Rome Karl Fiazin (whose brother Ivan had been coiner of money at the court of Moscow) to see the bride and confer with the pope: the latter gave his consent and required that boyars should be sent from Moscow to fetch the bride: Fiazin was sent for the bride and carried on the negotiations; finally in June, 1472, Sophia, accompanied by the papal legate, left Rome. She was met with honours at Pskov in November of the same year, and was afterwards greeted with like homage at Novgorod. When Sophia was drawing near Moscow, warm disputes arose in the grand prince's council as to whether it could be allowed that a Latin crucifix should be carried before the legate. The metropolitan declared that in the event of it being permitted, the pope's legate should enter by one gate and lie at another: it is unbecoming to us to hear of such a thing, not to say witness it, for he who shows honour and love to another

[1472 A.D.]

religion offends his own; finally the legate had to enter without the crucifix. On the day of the entry the marriage ceremony took place (November 12), after which the legate presented his credentials and entered into a controversy with the metropolitan Philip, who called to his aid the scribe Nikita Popovitch. The chronicler says that being in despair of getting the better of the Russian scribes, the legate gave up the controversy, saying that he had no books with him.<sup>b</sup>

The marriage of the sovereign of Moscow with the Greek princess was an event of great importance in Russian history. Properly speaking, an alliance with the Byzantine emperors was not a novelty, and such marriages, excepting the first of them — that of St. Vladimir — had no important consequences and changed nothing essential in Russian life. But the marriage of Ivan with Sophia was concluded under peculiar circumstances. In the first place, his bride did not come from Greece, but from Italy, and her marriage opened the way to intercourse between Muscovite Russia and the west. In the second place, the empire of Byzantium had ceased to exist, and the customs, political conceptions, the manners and ceremonies of court life, deprived of their original soil, sought a fresh field and found it in a country of a like faith — Russia. As long as Byzantium had existed, although Russia adopted her entire ecclesiastical system, yet in political respects she had always remained purely Russian, and the Greeks had no inclination to transform Russia into a Byzantium; now, however, that Byzantium no longer existed, the idea arose that Greece ought to re-incarnate herself in Russia and that the Russian monarchy ought to be a continuation by right of succession of Byzantium, in the same degree as the Russian Church was by order of succession bone of the bone and flesh of the flesh of the Greek church. It happened opportunely that eastern Russia had freed herself from the subjugation of the Tatars precisely at the time when Byzantium was enslaved by the Turks, and there arose the hope that the youthful Russian monarchy, strengthened and consolidated, would become the chief mover in the liberation of Greece.

The marriage of Sophia with the Russian grand prince thus acquired the signification of a transfer of the hereditary rights of the descendants of Pakeologus to the ruling house of Russia. It is true that Sophia had brothers who had otherwise disposed of their hereditary rights; one of them, Manuel, had submitted to the Turkish sultan, another, Andrew, had twice visited Moscow, but had not stayed there long, and had gone to Italy and sold his hereditary rights, first to the French king Charles VIII, and afterwards to the Spanish Ferdinand the Catholic. But in the eyes of the orthodox a transfer of the rights of the Byzantine monarchs to Catholic kings could not be regarded as lawful; and such being the case a far greater right was represented by Sophia, who had remained faithful to orthodoxy, who was the wife of an orthodox sovereign, who must become and did become the mother and ancestress of his successors, and who during her lifetime earned the reproaches of the pope and his partisans, who had been greatly mistaken in counting on her mediation to bring Muscovite Russia into the Florentine union.

#### THE GROWTH OF AUTOCRACY

The first visible and outward sign of the fact that Russia came to regard herself as a successor to Greece, was the adoption of the two-headed eagle, the arms of the eastern Roman Empire, which thenceforth became the arms of Russia. From that time much in Russia was changed and assumed a Byzantine likeness; the change was not effected suddenly, but proceeded dur-



ing the entire reign of Ivan Vasilievitch and continued after his death. In the court household the high-sounding title of czar was introduced, and the custom of kissing the monarch's hand. Court ranks were established also: master of the stables, master of the horse, and chamberlains (the latter, however, appeared only at the end of Ivan's reign). The importance of the boyars as the highest class of society fell before an autocratic sovereign; all became equal, all alike were his slaves. The honourable appellation of boyar was bestowed by the grand prince as a reward for services; besides the boyars there was also created a somewhat lower rank — that of the *Iokolnitchi*<sup>1</sup> — the commencement of the Russian hierarchy of ranks. To the time of Ivan Vasilievitch may also be attributed the establishment of bureaux (*prikazi*) with their secretaries and clerks. But most important and essential of all was the change in the dignity attaching to the grand prince, strongly to be felt and clearly visible in the actions of the deliberate Ivan Vasilievitch; the grand prince had become an autocratic sovereign. Even in his predecessors do we notice an approximation to this, but the first autocrat in the full sense of the word was Ivan Vasilievitch, and he became so especially after his marriage to Sophia. From that time all his activity was consistently and unswervingly consecrated to the strengthening of monarchy and autocracy.<sup>c</sup>

#### SUBJUGATION OF THE REPUBLICS

From the beginning of Ivan's reign there was no change in political policy; the old system of the gradual annihilation of the independent republican communities and appanaged princes continued, as well as the old waiting policy in regard to the Tatars, which was based on the exploitation of their internecine quarrels. Vasili had already prepared to deal the final blow to Novgorod, but had been prevented by the interference of Archbishop Jonas; and the inhabitants, remembering this, were in expectation of fresh action on the part of Moscow and sought support from other quarters. Such support could at that time be afforded them only by the grand prince of Lithuania, but it was difficult for the people of Novgorod to enter into relations with him, because such relations would have the signification of a betrayal of orthodoxy. This being well understood at Moscow, the rulers there hastened to forestall the danger: the grand prince wrote a letter to Archbishop Jonas, declaring to him that the Lithuanian metropolitan Gregory was a disciple of Isidore and a defender of the "unia," and that relations with him must not be entered into. In order to support the right on his side, the metropolitan of Moscow in the interests of Novgorod rejected the solicitations of the people of Pskov who wished to have a separate bishop; the grand prince himself left unheeded the insults shown to men of Moscow in Novgorod, and even the infringement of his ancient princely rights. Occupied in a war with Kazan, he only exchanged embassies with Novgorod.

Meanwhile the party in Novgorod which was hostile to Moscow became more and more rampant; the leaders of this party were the Boretski, the children of the dead burgomaster (*posadnick*). They were incited by their mother Martha, who as an "honourable widow" enjoyed great esteem; the Boretski were wealthy and had great influence in the *velché*. At their instigation Prince Michael Olelkovitch, brother of Simon, prince of Kiev, was invited to come from Lithuania to Novgorod. Previously the Lithuanian princes that had been called upon to serve Novgorod had lived together

<sup>1</sup> From *ókolo*, about, around — persons about the czar.

[1475 A.D.]

with the Muscovite lieutenants; now the question was already different and the Lithuanian party decided to go further. At the end of 1470 Jonas died and the question was raised in the *vetché* of having the archbishop nominated in Lithuania; this time, however, the archbishop Theophilus was chosen and his partisans stood out for his consecration in Moscow and were successful, so that a consent to his passing through was obtained from the grand prince. An ambassador coming from Pskov with the news that the grand prince called the men of Pskov upon Novgorod, and offering proposals of mediation, again gave preponderance to the Lithuanian party. The *vetché* assembled, and people in it began to cry out: "We are free men of great Novgorod and the grand prince of Moscow does us many wrongs and much injustice; we are for the king of Poland;" with the help of the "wicked peasants of the *vetché*" they gained the victory, and an embassy was sent to Casimir, the result of which was a convention for the submission of Novgorod to him. Olekovitch soon left Novgorod, having wronged the provinces of Novgorod in various ways. The grand prince still wished to try peaceful measures and sent his ambassador to Novgorod with an exhortation, and the metropolitan Philip sent a letter of admonishment. After the failure of this embassy the grand prince assembled his council (*douma*) and proposed the question: Shall we march on Novgorod now or wait until winter? It was well known that a march to Novgorod in summer was very difficult, yet it was decided to go at once, and a declaration of war was sent. In July, 1471, the grand prince himself with troops from Moscow and Tver, and accompanied by his brothers, set out from Moscow; the men of Pskov joined the Moscow troops on the way. A religious character was given to the expedition. Before starting, the grand prince went to pray in the cathedral of Moscow, and chroniclers liken this expedition to that of Gideon against the Midianites and that of Dmitri against Mamai.

After the battle at Tskorost, Prince Kholmiski, a *voyevod* of Ivan, decisively defeated the people of Novgorod at the river Shelon (July 14th, 1475?) and the same day the Moscow *voyevod* Obrazets defeated Prince Vasili Shuiski, who was in the service of Novgorod, at the river Shilenga, and subjugated all the Dvinsk territories; "everywhere the Lord God helped the grand prince to defend his rights." Nothing remained for Novgorod but to submit, for Casimir, occupied with his own affairs, had not come to her defence. Ivan, coming after his armies, first had Boretski and three other prisoners put to death, then he relented, accepted the petition of Theophilus which was supported by a letter from the metropolitan, took a ransom of 15,500 roubles from Novgorod, and concluded a treaty by which the inhabitants were bound not to be subject to Lithuania and to have their archbishop nominated at Moscow.

In October, 1475, Ivan visited Novgorod and remained there until February, 1476. Received with honours and gifts by great Novgorod and her dignitaries, the grand prince administered justice as of old; The Slavnovski and Nikitinski appeared with a complaint against the honourable burgo-master (*posadnick*), Vasili Annanin, and nineteen other boyars who had attacked and robbed them; a similar complaint was brought by the boyars Ponarin against other boyars who had made incursions into their lands and robbed them; for such incursions were of very frequent occurrence in Novgorod. Ivan sent the guilty persons to be imprisoned in Moscow, observing in his judgment all the ancient forms, and requiring that with his commissaries there should also be sent commissaries from Novgorod; it was also then that he allowed the authorities of Novgorod to conclude, as in ancient times, a treaty

with Sweden. In 1477 complainants from Novgorod came to Moscow; "Such a thing," says the chronicle, "had never happened before since the beginning of Novgorod and since it began to have grand princes from the house of Rurik." Their coming was quite comprehensible; the smaller folk were persuaded that it was only by appealing to the tribunal of the grand prince that they could obtain redress against the greater, and therefore they had recourse to him. Such a result having been attained, it only remained to await the first pretext in order to put an end to the independence of Novgorod. The occasion soon presented itself; in 1477 the envoys from the bishop and from all Novgorod, Nazar of Podvoiski and Zacharias, the secretary of the vetché, called Ivan and his son, young Ivan, *gospodá* and not lords,<sup>1</sup> as had always been previously done, and the grand prince sent ambassadors to Novgorod to demand the confirmation of this title. Tumults, brawls, and even murder took place in Novgorod, and the ambassador was sent away with an insulting message. Then Ivan assembled his troops to go against Novgorod; he called upon Tver and Pskov for aid, ordered his brothers to assemble, and sending before him the Tatar prince, Daniar Kasi-movitch, he set out himself. The people of Novgorod began to negotiate while the grand prince was still on the way; they had even tried to do so before, but Ivan, properly calculating that a satisfactory result could only be obtained by a warlike demonstration, avoided negotiations. All December, 1477, and the beginning of January, 1478 passed in negotiations; finally Novgorod submitted when her defender, Prince Vasili Shuiski, bent his knee<sup>2</sup> before Ivan and refused to serve Novgorod any longer. Novgorod submitted to the "entire will" of Ivan; the vetché was abolished and its great bell taken to Moscow to ring with other bells; estates were taken from the monasteries, and allotted to the grand prince, the first example of secularisation: till then the princes had not possessed estates in Novgorod. When he left, Ivan took with him the boyars and Martha Boretski, who is said to have died at Staritza.

It is reported that in 1479 Novgorod again tried to enter into relations with Casimir, and taking advantage of threatening danger from the Golden Horde, re-established the ancient form of government, and that the grand prince came to the town, ordered the gates to be opened, frustrated the attempt at the very beginning, and took away many of the inhabitants with him. This account is confirmed by the fact that other chronicles speak of the arrival of the grand prince at Novgorod, and of the imprisonment of the archbishop Theophilus. The loss of their independence was a heavy blow to the people, and as a consolation legends were composed of the foolishness of the first bishop sent from Moscow, Sergius by name, and of the flame that came out of the tomb of St. Bartholomew of Khoutinski and burned the feet of the grand prince.

Viatska, whose inhabitants refused to help the Moscow troops in the war against Kazan in 1469, was definitively subdued in 1489. The policy of the transfer of the natives to the ancient provinces and of sending others to take their places, was also applied to Viatska.

Pskov remained submissive and thereby preserved a shadow of independence; but the grand prince kept a zealous watch over all that was done there and did not allow any aspirations to greater independence. Although consenting that the inhabitants might ask for any prince they wished, he did not approve of any wilful change of princes, and strongly took the part of Prince Iaroslav

<sup>1</sup> *Gospodá*, plural of *gospodin*.

<sup>2</sup> Literally "beat his forehead."



[1482 A.D.]

Obolenski, who had had a quarrel with Pskov and whom the people wished to get rid of; it was only the desire to have done with Novgorod that induced the grand prince to give way to Pskov and give them a new lieutenant — Prince Vasili Shuiski (1477). When, later, Ivan named his son Vasili grand prince of Novgorod and Pskov, the inhabitants sent an envoy begging that they might be separated, but the grand prince replied wrathfully that he would give the principality to whomsoever he liked; Pskov also endeavoured in vain to get its province separated from the rule of the bishop of Novgorod.

Towards the appanaged princes Ivan pursued the same policy as towards the townships. Vasili, prince of Riazan, had already been taken by Vasili the Dark to be educated in Moscow; in 1464 he was sent back to Riazan, returned to Moscow, married a sister of the grand prince and went back to Riazan. He died in 1483, leaving two sons: Ivan and Theodore. Ivan, as grand prince, concluded a treaty with Moscow by which he was placed on a level with the brother of the grand prince of Moscow, Andrew Vasilievitch. In 1496 a treaty was concluded between the brothers, by which the younger was bound, in case he were to die childless, to leave his share to his elder brother; but Prince Theodore survived his brother and bequeathed his share to the grand prince of Moscow. In the year 1500 Ivan, grand prince of Riazan, died, leaving a young son under the guardianship of his mother and grandmother, who were entirely subservient to the prince of Moscow.

Since 1461 the prince of Tver, Michael Borisovitch, was Ivan's brother-in-law. When he came to the throne Ivan concluded a treaty with him, but although Michael helped Ivan against Novgorod, yet in their mutual relations the signs that usually preceded the fall of a separate principality might be observed. In 1476 certain boyars of Tver went over to Moscow. In 1484 it became known in Moscow that the prince of Tver had concluded a treaty with Casimir and married his granddaughter. Ivan sent troops to lay waste the districts around Tver; Michael hastened to appease him and concluded a new treaty with him, by which the prince of Tver was placed on a level with the second brother of the Moscow grand prince and bound himself not to appeal to Lithuania without his consent. Meanwhile the departure of the boyars from Tver continued and Ivan encouraged them by his policy; in the event of frontier disputes, if the men of Tver were injured they could not obtain justice, but if those of Moscow were injured, Ivan rigorously demanded satisfaction. Michael entered into relations with Casimir, but the envoy was seized, and Ivan sent his troops to Tver; the town surrendered, and Michael fled to Lithuania. In 1463 the princes of Yaroslav ceded their domain to the Muscovite monarch, and in 1474 the princes of Rostov, who ruled over only half of Rostov, for the other half had already been acquired by Kalita, sold their half to the grand prince. Equally slowly and gradually did the grand prince also crush the appanaged princes of Moscow; all these princes were his brothers, with the exception of Michael Andreevitch Vereiski (the son of Andrew Dmitrievitch, brother of Ivan of Mozhaisk). With Michael Ivan concluded several treaties that gradually cut down his rights; finally by the treaty of 1482 Michael ceded, after his death, Belozero to the grand prince. There was no pretext for this annexation, but one was soon found; desiring to make a present to his daughter-in-law Helen<sup>1</sup> (upon the occasion of the birth of his grandson Dmitri) of the ornaments that had belonged to his first wife, Ivan learned that the grand princess Sophia had given away much to her niece, who was married to a son of Michael named Vasili; the

<sup>1</sup> Daughter of Stephen, Gospodin of Moldavia, married to Ivan's son Ivan.

irritated grand prince then ordered Vasili to be seized, but he fled to Lithuania; whereupon Ivan took Vereia from Michael and only returned it to him as a possession for life. Michael Andreevitch died in 1485, leaving his domains by will to the grand prince. The appanages of the brothers also little by little, for one reason or another, were joined to the grand principality; in 1472 Iuri Vasilievitch, of Dmitriev, died, without leaving any testamentary disposition of his territory; the grand prince took possession of it; the brothers were angered, but satisfying them with some provinces, the grand prince concluded a treaty with two of them, Andrew of Uglitch and Boris of Volotsk, by which they recognised the priority of their nephew Ivan the Younger and renounced the succession after their brother.

In 1480 the younger brothers again rose against the elder, and Prince Obolenski Liko went from Moscow to enter the service of Boris; Ivan, probably learning of his brother's relations with the people of Novgorod, ordered Prince Obolenski to be seized at the court of Boris. The princes went to Rzhhev, thence to the boundary of Lithuania, and entered into relations with Casimir, who however did not help them. Until then they had rejected negotiations, but seeing Casimir's inaction, they asked for the intercession of their mother, but Ivan refused them; they also sought support in Pskov, but were unsuccessful. The invasion of Ahmed induced Ivan to make peace with his brothers, and Andrew received a part of the appanage of Iuriev. Andrew the younger died in 1481, leaving his domain to the grand prince. In 1484 the mother of the grand prince, who had in some degree restrained the dissensions of the brothers, died, and in 1486 Ivan bound his brothers by a new treaty to renounce their rights of inheritance in regard to appanages. In 1491 Andrew was seized and thrown into prison, where he died in 1494; his sons were imprisoned with him. Boris also died soon after, leaving his domains to his sons Theodore and Ivan: the latter, dying in 1504, left his part by will to the grand prince, whom he calls "gossudar"<sup>1</sup> (sovereign or sire).

#### THE FINAL OVERTHROW OF THE TATARS

The most conspicuous event in the reign of Ivan — the casting off of the Tatar yoke — is connected by many with his marriage. But it should be borne in mind that this was the ancient and sacred ideal of the Moscow princes, to the fulfilment of which all their desires had long been directed, and for which they had been gradually preparing the means. Such an event cannot be explained by one merely accidental circumstance, although it is impossible not to agree that the dependence of her husband upon the Tatar khan must have been humiliating to the proud Sophia, and therefore it cannot be denied that there is some truth in the traditions relating to this subject. But in any event the circumstance was a merely accessory one, for it is known that long before this the expression: "May the Lord cause the horde to perish," was to be met with in the wills of the Moscow princes; the same expression also occurs in the testament of Vasili the Dark. The Moscow princes had prepared for this by taking into their service Tatar princes, in whom they saw the best means of fighting their enemies, the Tatars. And in this work bequeathed to him by his forefathers, Ivan Vasilievitch remained true to the deliberate, persistent policy of his predecessors, never losing sight of his aim, but never hurrying too much in its attainment.

[<sup>1</sup> A title borne by the Russian emperors.]

[1487 A.D.]

At the time when Ivan Vasilievitch began to reign, the Tatar horde no longer constituted an undivided kingdom; previously it had been sometimes divided and then again reunited, but at this period it was definitively divided into three chief hordes; the Golden, the Kazanese, and the Crimean, at the head of the last of which, during the reign of Vasili the Dark, was Azi Girai.

Ivan's policy consisted in exploiting one horde against the other and one pretender against the other. Of the principal Tatar hordes, the nearest and weakest was the Kazan horde, and it was the first which he attempted to bring under his influence. In 1467 the vassal Kasim, who was in the service of Ivan, was invited by some of the Tatar princes (*mourzas*) to come to Kazan, but the khan Ibrahim met him at the Volga and prevented him from crossing the river; after insignificant mutual devastations in 1469 a great army was sent against Kazan, composed of sons of the boyars and Moscow troops, under the leadership of Constantine Bezzubtiev. The troops marched right up to the town, but beyond ravaging its territory nothing was done. In the summer of the same year, two of the grand prince's brothers, Iuri and Andrew the Big, marched against Kazan, besieged the town, and Ibrahim hastened to conclude peace "at the entire will of the grand prince and his voyevods," and liberated the prisoners that had been taken during the preceding forty years. For eight years there was peace, but in 1479 the Kazanese army made a raid on Russian territory (at Ustiug and Viatka). To avenge this, troops were sent from Moscow under the leadership of the voyevod Vasili Obrazets, while from the other side came the men of Viatka and Ustiug and besieged Kazan. Ibrahim again concluded peace "according to the will of the grand prince." At the death of Ibrahim disturbances arose in Kazan; one of his sons Ali Khan or Alegan, from the younger wife, became khan, and Muhammed Amin, the son of the elder wife, came to Moscow and asked for help against his brother.

In 1487 troops were despatched from Moscow under the leadership of Daniel Kholmiski, the town was taken, Alegan made prisoner, and Muhammed Amin established on the throne of Kazan; he was so entirely subject to Moscow that he asked the grand prince's permission to marry, and even paid a certain tribute to Moscow. In 1496 the people of Kazan, dissatisfied with Muhammed Amin, called in the Nogaians; the Moscow troops came to the aid of the khan, but hardly had they been dismissed before the Nogaiian prince Mamuk came to Kazan, and the khan fled to Moscow. Mamuk, fearing treason, seized the very persons who had called for him, and in general began to act arbitrarily. When he went to attack the princes of Arsk, the inhabitants of Kazan shut the gates against him and sent to Moscow to ask for another khan, only not Muhammed Amin. Ivan sent them Muhammed's brother, Abdul Letiv, and gave to the former Koshira and Serpukhov as fiefs. In 1502, at the complaint of the people of Kazan, Abdul Letiv was deposed and banished to Belozero. Muhammed Amin again returned, but he was already dissatisfied with Moscow, and in this attitude he was supported by his wife, the widow of Alegan. In 1505, under the pretext that the grand prince had not satisfied his complaints, Muhammed Amin plundered some Russian merchants that had come to the fair and marched against Nijni-Novgorod; Ivan died soon after, before he was able to revenge himself.

The extension of the Russian possessions in the east was accomplished in another way; in 1472 the grand prince sent troops to the territory of Perm — which was numbered amongst the Novgorodian possessions — and its prince was taken prisoner; but until 1505 native princes were left to reign there, and it was only in that year that Prince Vasili Kover was sent to Perm as



lieutenant. The continual incursions of the Voguls obliged Ivan to send troops to the Ugrian territory and Prince Kurbski even crossed the Ural. While leaving there native princes, Ivan nevertheless included the lands of Perm and Ugria in his title. With the Golden Horde Ivan did not begin war, although from the very beginning he did not pay tribute punctually. Ivan's enemy, the grand prince of Lithuania, incited the Tatars against Moscow, and in 1471 Casimir called upon Ahmud to rise against the grand prince of Moscow; Ahmud however took a whole year to assemble his troops, and meanwhile during the migration of the Tatars from Sarai, which took place every summer, the people of Viatka came and plundered it. In 1472 Ahmed at last assembled his troops and took Alexin, but on meeting the grand prince's brothers with a strong army at the river Oka, he decided not to go further.

After this, until 1480, the relations with the Golden Horde remained indefinite. Meanwhile intercourse was established with the Crimean horde. Azi Girai died in 1467, and his son Nordovlat succeeded him, but he was deposed by his brother Mengli Girai, and sought a refuge with Casimir. Ivan hastened to enter into relations with Mengli Girai through the intermediation of a Jew of Feodosia, named Kokos; Mengli Girai, without breaking with Casimir, hastened to affirm these relations, which, however, were not very profitable, on account of the disturbances in the Crimea: the overthrow of Mengli Girai, by Aidar, the taking of Feodosia by the Turks, and the consequent destruction of the power of the Genoese in the Crimea; the capture of Mengli Girai and his liberation on the condition of his becoming a Turkish tributary; the devastation of the Crimea by the son of Ahmed, and the rise of the czarévitch Zenebek to the supreme power. It was only in 1479 that Mengli Girai finally established himself in the Crimea and that his constant relations with Moscow commenced.<sup>1</sup>

In 1480 the khan of the Golden Horde, Ahmed, incited by Casimir of Lithuania, prepared to march against Russia. It is reported that about that time Ivan refused to pay tribute, and that Sophia persuaded Ivan not to go out to meet the Tatar envoys under the pretext of illness, and also by her cunning managed to destroy the hospice of the Tatars in the Kremlin; it is said that she wrote to the wife of the khan telling her that she had had a vision in which she had been commanded to build a church upon the very same site, and that the wife of the khan, who was bribed with presents, managed to arrange the matter, and when the envoys came there was no resting place to be found for them in Moscow. However this may be, it is certain that Ivan ceased to pay tribute. When he heard of Ahmed's coming Ivan took up his position on the banks of the Oka, where he remained encamped from July until September; Ahmed being informed that the passage was here occupied, passed through the territories of Lithuania and came to the Ugra, but here he also found the passages occupied. The two armies remained in this position until November, and in the camp of the grand prince councils were held as to what should be done, for two parties had arisen, the one proposing to offer a ransom, while the other was for fighting; the famous letter of Archbishop Vassain of Moscow was written in the latter spirit. The grand prince was sometimes at Kolomna and sometimes at Moscow to consult with the metropolitan. When the frosts set in, by which the Tatars greatly suffered, the grand prince commanded the Russians to fall back on Kremenets, and

<sup>1</sup> Mengli Girai's rivals: Adir, Nordovlat, and Zenebek, fled to Moscow and were detained by Ivan, who thus rendered Mengli Girai a service at the same time that he held out their liberation as a *tacit menace*.

[1494-1495 A.D.]

meanwhile the Tatars fled.<sup>1</sup> Soon after his return to Sarai, Ahmed was killed by Ivak, prince of the Nogaian Tatars; and Mengli Girai delivered Russia from the sons of Ahmed, with whom he was constantly at war.

The relations with the Crimea, which were of importance in the struggle against the Golden Horde, were also of importance in the conflict with Lithuania, and therefore Ivan constantly maintained them; but zealously looked after his own interests. Of course many presents had to be given to the Tatars of the Crimea, although Ivan was economical to such a degree that when sheep were given to the envoys he required the skins to be returned; but he spent his wealth all the more willingly for this object, because Lithuania on her side also endeavoured to bribe the horde, and a regular auction went on in the Crimea. The conquest of Feodosia by the Turks made it necessary for the Russians to enter into relations with them for commercial reasons.

#### AFFAIRS OF LITHUANIA

The friendship of Mengli Girai, which had been of value to Ivan in his conflicts with the Tatars, was of still greater importance in his dealings with Lithuania: Casimir, occupied with matters in the west, principally the establishment of his son on the throne of Bohemia, had incited both the inhabitants of Novgorod and the Golden Horde against Ivan, while Ivan on his side had instigated Mengli Girai against Lithuania and carried on relations with Casimir's enemy, the king of Hungary, Matthias (I) Corvinus. The quarrels of the border princes serving in the various armies, and their passing into the service of the Muscovite sovereign, served as the chief pretext for dissatisfaction. The grand prince of Moscow, taking advantage of the fact that in the treaty concluded between Vasilii Vasilievitch and Casimir, the subject of the princes had been treated very vaguely, began to receive those that passed into his service. Thus he received together with their domains Prince I. M. Vorotinski, Prince I. V. Bielski, and Prince D. Th. Vorotinski. The complaints at their desertions, the quarrels of the border princes, and in general, the frontier disagreements, were a continual subject of friction, which occasionally went as far as slight skirmishes. In 1492 Casimir died, and Lithuania chose as king his son Alexander, while Poland took as king his other son John. Ivan again roused Mengli Girai against Lithuania and sent detachments of his troops to lay waste the frontiers. Propositions of peace were sent from Lithuania and negotiations for a marriage with one of the daughters of Ivan were entered upon. In Moscow it was insisted that the negotiations for peace should precede those for marriage. Meanwhile more princes passed into the Russian service: two more princes Vorotinski, Prince Mezetski and Prince Viazemski; the frontier incursions also continued. Finally in 1494 Alexander sent his ambassadors to open negotiations both for peace and for the marriage. The treaty concluded by them recognised the passing of the princes into Ivan's service, and what was of even greater importance, Ivan was therein called sovereign of all Russia. Ivan then gave his consent to the marriage of his daughter Helen with the grand prince of Lithuania, Alexander, stipulating however that a promise in writing should be given that Helen would not be constrained to change her religion. When all this was concluded, in 1495 Ivan sent Helen to Lithuania, giving her detailed instructions. At the celebration of the marriage

<sup>1</sup> Soloviev <sup>2</sup> decisively confutes the story that the cause of Ahmed's retreat was the destruction of Sarai by Nordovlat.

ceremony the Russian ambassadors insisted that the ceremony should also be celebrated by an orthodox priest. But even from the very beginning it was manifest that seeds of discord lay hidden in this alliance. Alexander refused to build an orthodox church at his court, the boyars from Moscow who were with Helen were soon sent back, and finally Alexander ceased to give Ivan the title of sovereign of all Russia. The dissatisfaction grew, so that Ivan wrote to Mengli Girai: "If Alexander makes peace with you now, let us know if he does not, also let us know, and we are with you, our brother." More princes passed into the service of the grand prince of Moscow, amongst them Prince Simon Bielski, who asserted that persecutions against orthodoxy had commenced in Lithuania, and accused the bishop of Smolensk, Joseph, of co-operating with the Latins; Prince Simon Ivanovitch (son of Ivan of Mozhaïsk) with Tchernigov, and Prince Vasili Ivanovitch (a grandson of Shemiaka) with Novgorod Severski also came over (1499). Ivan sent Alexander a declaration of war; which began with incursions of the vassal princes, and on the 14th of July, 1500, Prince Daniel Kholmiski, who led the troops of Tver and Moscow, and the vassal Tatars and princes, met the Lithuanian hetman Prince Constantine, defeated him, and took him prisoner; on the other hand the grand prince's son, Prince Dmitri Ivanovitch, was unable to take Smolensk, and in general during four years warlike action proceeded very feebly. Diplomatic intrigue was however carried on with great activity; Moscow incited Mengli Girai against Lithuania, who sent his sons to devastate Lithuania and Poland, in spite of tempting offers from Alexander.

Stephen of Moldavia, however, hearing of the disgrace and abandonment into which his daughter Helen (widow of Ivan's son) had fallen at the court of Moscow, made peace with Alexander; his enmity however did not express itself in any important act. Far more important was the help given to Alexander by the Livonian grand master Plettenberg. Notwithstanding the truce which had been concluded, the continual collisions between the Livonians and the inhabitants of Pskov did not cease. To avenge one of these incursions, Ivan sent twenty thousand troops to Livonia who laid waste the land, captured towns, and carried away prisoners. A fresh truce was concluded (1482) which was extended in 1493, but the Germans burned a certain Russian in Reval, and in answer to Russian complaints they replied that they would have burned the grand prince himself. This, it is supposed, explains the order given in 1495 to expel the Hanseatic merchants and close their shops; but perhaps it is more probable that the true reason was the treaty concluded with the king of Denmark, the enemy of the Hansa, who had asked for help against the Swedes, promising in the event of success to cede a part of Finland to Russia. Ivan sent an army against Sweden; but when the Danish king took possession of Sweden he gave nothing to Russia. Such being the relations between Russia and Livonia, it was quite natural that the grand master Plettenberg should hasten to conclude an alliance with Lithuania (1501). He defeated the Russians near Izborsk, but did not take the town and turned back, while the Russians continued to ravage Livonia. Plettenberg again entered Russian territory, besieged Pskov, and a battle took place near Lake Smolin, but it was not decisive (1502). Meanwhile Alexander began negotiations for peace, partly through his brothers John (after whose death in 1502 he occupied the throne of Poland) and Vladislav, and partly through embassies. Finally, in 1503, a treaty was concluded by which Russia kept all her acquisitions and Ivan was granted the title of sovereign of all Russia. A truce was then concluded with Livonia.



[1505 A.D.]

Relations with the German Empire began under Ivan. They commenced with the visit of the knight Poppel to Moscow; his narratives revealed Russia to Germany and he came as ambassador in 1489. Negotiations were opened for the marriage of one of the grand prince's daughters with Maximilian, the son of the emperor Frederick; but nothing came of them. The hope that it might be possible to incite the emperor against the Polish king was also frustrated, for Maximilian, who had pretensions to the throne of Hungary, made peace with Vladislav.

#### LAST YEARS OF IVAN; INHERITANCE LEFT TO HIS SONS

The last years of Ivan's life were darkened by dissensions and intrigues in his family. In 1490 died Ivan the Younger, whom Ivan had proclaimed as his co-ruler. Two parties were then formed at the court; the boyars wished to see Dmitri, the son of Ivan the Younger, and Helen of Moldavia recognised as heir; and Sophia designed her son Vasili (born in 1479) to be heir. A plot was laid against Dmitri; the sovereign heard of it, ordered the conspirators to be executed, and was greatly angered with Sophia, because he had been told that she had called in sorcerers to her aid (1497). Ivan then had his grandson crowned as his successor (1498); but soon Sophia again triumphed: a conspiracy was discovered in which were involved the princes Patrikčiev and Riapolovski; Prince Simon Riapolovski was beheaded and the Patrikčievs were forced to take holy orders. It was supposed that the plot had been directed against Sophia. From the first Ivan did not "rejoice in his grandson," and proclaimed Vasili grand prince of Novgorod and Pskov, and in 1502 he had Dmitri placed under arrest and declared Vasili his successor. The ambassadors to the various courts were given orders to explain these occurrences.

Ivan died on the 27th of October, 1505, leaving a will and testament by which he bequeathed sixty-six of the most important towns to Vasili, and only thirty to his remaining sons (Iuri, Dmitri, Simon, and Andrew); Moscow was divided into parts, Vasili receiving two-thirds and the others one-third in all, but the elder was to have a share even in this third; the younger brothers were commanded to esteem the elder as a father and to leave him their inheritance in the event of their dying childless. Thus were changed the relations of the grand prince to the appanaged princes! In the treaty concluded between the brothers Vasili and Iuri during the lifetime of Ivan, Iuri calls his brother "lord," and binds himself to hold his principality "honourably and strictly."

#### APPRECIATIONS OF IVAN VASILIEVITCH

"He sits at home and sleeps, and his dominions augment, while I fight every day and yet can hardly defend my frontiers." Such were the words, it is said, with which Stephen of Moldavia frequently characterised his daughter's father-in-law, the grand prince Ivan Vasilievitch.

The observation is a remarkable one, for it represents the first and most salient feature in the policy of the famous Russian monarch, who in himself concludes one period of Russian history and opens another. Under him Russia passes out of its condition of exclusiveness; the west learns that besides that Russia which is subject to Lithuania, there is already another Russia, independent, powerful, and self-sufficing; it is even possible that at first this power was somewhat exaggerated, but it struck contemporaries

because it had, so to say, grown imperceptibly. It would seem that all around it, as if submitting to some fatal influence, hastened to yield to this new-born power, while Russia herself did not hasten to announce herself, but only manifested herself at the last moment when everything was already prepared for this manifestation, and when it only remained to gather the fully ripened fruits.

S. M. Soloviov<sup>h</sup> compares Ivan to the fortunate heir of a long line of careful merchants who, having amassed a considerable capital, provided their heir with the means for carrying on vast enterprises. N. I. Kostomarov's<sup>c</sup> judgment is still more severe; he denies any merit in Ivan, judges his activity by the requirements of other times and circumstances, and does not recognise in him and his descendants anything beyond their own ambitious and self-interested motives. Such views were probably called forth as a contradiction to Karamzin, who on his part, carried away by his dislike of the violence which — according to him — characterised the reform of Peter, placed Ivan above Peter. The question "Lithuania or Moscow" was raised with entire firmness and determination by Ivan, for by the defence of Helen's orthodoxy and by receiving into his service the Lithuanian princes who expatriated themselves because of the persecution of orthodoxy, he became the protector of the Greek church in Lithuania and thus strove to gain influence in its internal affairs. The secular policy of Russia was thus marked out; it was also marked out by his insistence on the recognition of his title grand prince of all Russia and by his demand for the restoration of Kiev; intercourse with the west also begins with him.<sup>b</sup>

In war Ivan showed a caution which his enemies called cowardice. As behooved a prince, he conducted everything of importance himself. He exacted strict obedience, and was indefatigable in studying the thoughts and private circumstances of all important men in his kingdom, and even in foreign lands. The whole court and people trembled before his spirit and will; shy women are said to have fainted before his angry and fiery look; seldom, if ever, did a petitioner dare to approach his throne, and none of the nobles at the princely table ventured to say a word to another, or to leave his place, if the ruler, overcome by eating or drinking, happened to fall asleep and remained so for many hours. All the guests sat there dumb until Ivan awoke and gave them further orders, either to amuse or to leave him.

He was by no means prodigal of the life of his warriors; in fact, he expected to gain more from the mistakes of his enemies than others do from battles; and he knew how to incite his enemies into committing mistakes, as well as to make use of them. He had the enlargement of his kingdom as much at heart as his absolute power. He boldly projected many far-seeing plans, and sought with indefatigable zeal to realise them. After he had broken the pride of Novgorod he considered nothing impossible, and regarded his own will as the supreme command. We find no trace of his having been accessible to the petitions of his subjects, or of his granting public audience days for the hearing of their requests and complaints.

Arbitrary power over the common people became stronger and prevailed, and officials abused their power unpunished, for complainants and helpers were wanting. To enlighten the minds of his people through the study of science was not a part of his plans, perhaps because he may have thought that it is easier for the tyrant to rule over rude slaves than over a free-thinking and enlightened people. He must not be denied the merit of having raised great edifices at Moscow by means of foreign, especially Italian, architects; but vanity and love of show probably had more to do with this

[1505 A.D.]

than artistic sense and taste. The wide and majestic walls of the venerable Kremlin with its battlements and towers, secret underground passages, and fortified gates, were to serve less as objects of beauty than as means of protection against domestic and foreign enemies. Amongst the useful arts he especially favoured those of the cannon founder and silversmith; with the former he desired to terrify his enemies, and with the latter to spread the renown of his power and glory. His greatest services to the Russian state include, besides the regulation of the law code, the increase of the state revenues, partly through the conquest of new provinces, and partly through a better system of taxation, so that the government could collect a treasure for unforeseen emergencies and would become less dependent upon chance.

Thus there can be no doubt that as a prince Ivan ranks high and belongs to the number of those regents who decide the fate of their people and land for many years, and are a blessed or a cursed remembrance to posterity: but neither can it be denied that his greatness and fame lose much when we come to consider him as a man, and see the harshness of his character, his unlimited pride, his contempt of all human rights, his wild and passionate nature, and his greed of power. That he was the founder of autocracy, as modern writers assert, is not altogether his own exclusive merit, although it cannot be denied that he contributed much towards it by his shrewdness and wise moderation. When in the early days of his youth he seized the reins of government, he found much that had been prepared towards the future greatness of Russia; but Russia was still in a chaotic condition, and its forces were scattered and sunk as it were in a lethargy; they required an awakening and regulating hand, and this was principally Ivan's work. Owing to the unfortunate system of appanages, which had been the ruin of Russia for many centuries, by destroying all unity in course of time, sowing the seeds of discord, and making the Russian state an easy prey to its enemies, the idea of a common fatherland had quite disappeared; and the internal dissensions among the princes, as well as the despotic pressure of the foreign barbarians, had so deranged and disjointed it, that the praiseworthy attempts of individual grand princes could meet with no brilliant success, and it seemed as if Russia were fated to play a deeply subordinate part in the hierarchy of states.

Nevertheless those attempts were not quite lost, and the prudent might surmise that the time would yet come when they would bear fruit, once the hydra of discord had been conquered and the scattered forces had been reunited. Ivan's proceedings in this respect were certainly of a *macchiavellian* nature. We have seen that for twenty-three years he patiently acknowledged the rights of other Russian princes and even their independence, and that by keeping his conquests to himself and not sharing them with his brothers and the other princes, and by taking his brother's inheritance and giving none to his other brothers, he first began to consider himself as autocrat and ruler of all Russia, and thus gradually prepared the princes for a recognition of his undivided sway and their own impotency and subordination.

We do not inquire as to whether the means he used for the attainment of his end deserve our approval; we will only remark that great conquerors and founders of new empires, or such as reorganise and rejuvenate old and decaying states, cannot be judged with the same standard by which wise regents are judged in regulated states. The resort to violent measures is often their highest duty, if they are to persist in their work and arrive at the aim they have imposed on themselves. From a political point of view, Ivan's harsh proceedings therefore deserve some exculpation, all the more so when



we consider that he lived at a time when revolutions of every kind were taking place in the states and their institutions, in the modes of thinking and in the religion of men, in the arts and sciences, the new forms often seeking to supplant the old in a violent manner; and when this change also began in Russia, where intellectual enlightenment was so rare, we should not be surprised to see the forces of brutality often gaining the upper hand over the forces of reason.

We now find ourselves at one of the most important turning points of Russian political history, when by a regulated system of succession and by the incorporation of the independent principalities with the grand principality, the Russian monarchy began to establish itself firmly and to extend its bounds; when the hitherto terrible defiance of over-powerful nobles and of princes who claimed equal rank with the grand prince submits to the restraints of a common obedience; when no more dangers threaten Russia from the side of Novgorod and the Tatars; when a regulated system of taxation, a treasury and an organised army protect the throne; and finally when science and art, the administration of justice, personal safety on the roads and in the towns, besides other blessings of peace and order, also begin to attract attention, protection, and cultivation in Russia.<sup>d</sup>

#### ACCESSION OF VASILI IVANOVITCH (1505 A.D.)

Vasili Ivanovitch succeeded his father, and continued his policy both in foreign and domestic affairs. He endeavoured to extend the frontiers of the Russian monarchy on the Lithuanian side, destroyed the independence of the last appanaged princes and the last republican township, Pskov, and strove to keep Kazan in subjection.

In his personal character Vasili resembled his father in his sterner aspect. He let his nephew, the unfortunate Dmitri, die "destitute" in prison; over his brothers he maintained a strict surveillance, not allowing his brother Andrew to marry until 1533, when he himself had already two children; with his boyars he was also stern, though there were but few executions and punishments during his reign. He preferred, in case of any suspected intention of departure on the part of a boyar, to take a written guarantee in which the security promised, in the event of departure, to pay a sum of money for those for whom he went bail. Vasili even forgave his brother Simon, who had the intention of going over to Lithuania, and only changed his counsellors. Stern on the occasion of his divorce from his first wife, Vasili was tender towards his second wife, and was very fond of his children. In general the characteristics of Vasili are most faithfully summed up by Karamzin in the following sentence: "He followed the path indicated by the wisdom of his father, without fear, without impulses of passion, moving forward with measured and prudent steps, and drew near to his aim, the aggrandisement of Russia, without leaving to his successor either the duty or the glory of repairing his faults." In the eyes of the historian this, of course, redeems the personally rather stern sides of his character, which were, however, quite comprehensible to contemporaries.<sup>1</sup>

#### WARS WITH LITHUANIA

From the very commencement of his reign Vasili found himself confronted with two questions: that of Kazan — for Muhammed Amin had risen even

<sup>1</sup> Thus the courtiers regarded it as a matter of course that he should take away from his envoys the gifts made to them by the sovereigns to whom they had been accredited.

[1506 A.D.]

during the reign of Ivan and had to be subdued — and that of Lithuania. From the ambassadors whom Alexander had sent to Ivan he learned that a new sovereign was now reigning in Moscow. Having given information of this in Livonia, so that in any case the grand master might be prepared, Alexander despatched an embassy to Moscow demanding the cession of the towns that had been conquered by Ivan. The ambassadors received a firm reply from the new sovereign to the effect that he only reigned over his legitimate possessions, which he intended to retain.

Alexander saw the necessity of delay before taking a decisive line of action, of which course he informed the grand master. Meanwhile the ambassadors who had come from Moscow to announce Vasili's accession to the throne required that Alexander should not constrain his wife to change her religion. But Alexander died in 1506, and when Vasili heard of his death he wrote to his sister that she should endeavour to persuade the Polish lords and landed gentry to serve the Russian sovereign, promising at the same time to protect the Catholic faith. In answer to this first attempt on the part of Moscow to unite with Lithuania, Helen replied that Sigismund, the son of Casimir, was being chosen to the throne of Lithuania. Sigismund also sent ambassadors with the demand to return the conquered towns, and received the same reply demanding that Helen should not be constrained to adopt the Catholic faith. At this time Sigismund found an unexpected ally in the Crimean khan Mengli Girai, who having met with support in Lithuania before the death of Alexander and being dissatisfied with the Muscovite sovereign because of his expedition against Kazan, sent an embassy to Lithuania with proposals for an alliance. Sigismund promised him tribute, and Mengli Girai gave him a *yarlik* for the Russian territories of Novgorod, Pskov, and Riazan. Sigismund informed the grand master of Livonia of the relations with the Crimea and with Kazan and called upon him to go to war, and measures for the commencement of war were taken in the diet; but this time his allies were of but little assistance to Sigismund; Kazan submitted, while the Crimea and Livonia did not move. On the other hand, Vasili found an important ally in Lithuania itself in the person of Prince Michael Vasilievitch Glinski.

Prince Michael Glinski, the descendant of a Tatar prince that had left the horde during the reign of Vitovt and been baptised, had enjoyed great distinction and influence under Alexander. Glinski was a skillful general and a highly educated man for those times; he had spent twelve years abroad and had learned the art of war in the armies of Albrecht of Saxony during the war in Friesland and of the emperor Maximilian in Italy; he also visited Spain. In these expeditions and in his continual intercourse with western kings and princes, Glinski had adopted all the German customs and had become penetrated with the civilisation of the west. When he returned to Lithuania, Glinski gained the favour and confidence of King Alexander, who raised him to the dignity of court marshal and so increased his possessions that, according to the hyperbolical expression of a Polish historian, he owned almost half of the entire Lithuanian principality and stood at the head of the numerous Russian party amongst the Lithuanian lords. It was for this reason that at the death of Alexander the Lithuanian party hastened to choose Sigismund, for they feared that Glinski might obtain the throne of the grand principality and transfer the centre from Lithuania to Russia.

When Sigismund came to the throne he showed an offensive coldness to Glinski, and paying no attention to his complaints against the lords who were at enmity with him, at the head of whom was Zaberezhsky, he left for Poland. Glinski thereupon decided to obtain satisfaction on his own account; he

made an incursion on the estates of Zaberezhsky, killed him, and raised a revolt against the king. To this end he entered into relations with Mengli Girai, and Vasili Ivanovitch, on his side, sent one of his secretaries to propose to him to become the subject of Russia, and promising to leave him the lands which he might occupy. Glinski however still wavered and tried to effect a reconciliation with the king; finally losing all hope of this, he joined the grand prince's voyevods, who had marched up to the frontiers of Lithuania. To Glinski and the foreign princes in the Russian service was confided the task of devastating Lithuania, but the voyevods did not move to their help, for in Moscow it was counted advantageous to let others do its work. Meanwhile Sigismund sent an embassy, complaining of Glinski's reception by Vasili and of the opening of hostilities. The letter was written in the name of Helen, and in his reply to her the grand prince directed her attention to the constraint put upon the orthodox in Lithuania and enjoined her to remain firm in her faith. Sigismund received no aid from Mengli Girai, but nevertheless he began warlike operations, which however were limited to insignificant skirmishes. Finally a treaty was concluded by which all Ivan's acquisitions remained to Russia, and all that had been taken by Glinski was given back (1508). Glinski came to Moscow, where Medin and Maloiaroslavetz were given to him but he remained dissatisfied.

The peace of 1508 could not however put an end to the inimical relations between the two principalities: Glinski could not remain quiet until he was avenged on his enemies, and Lithuania could not be quiet so long as Glinski lived; while on his side Vasili Ivanovitch demanded better treatment for his sister Helen. Thus the relations between the two neighbouring states were strained. In 1509 Sigismund demanded the surrender or execution of Glinski, accusing him of the death of Alexander; in the same year he announced his connection with the Danish king; it can also be easily understood that each reciprocal embassy complained of frontier quarrels, as is always the case in such circumstances. In 1512 Vasili informed Sigismund that it had come to his ears that the voyevods of Vilna and Trotski had seized Helen and held her captive — which does not appear at all improbable when the unruliness of the Lithuanian lords is borne in mind — Sigismund denied the fact. That Helen officially received various rights, for instance that of a tribute or tax from the town of Bielsk, also does not prove that her position was a very advantageous one, for this was worth nothing more than other official favours. In 1513 Helen died and the metropolitan of Kiev was sent for to officiate at her funeral; thus this victim of political calculations left the scene. Helen herself, as far as can be judged from her correspondence with her father and brother, was possessed of considerable tact and energy.

At last a reason for beginning war presented itself; it became known at Moscow that the incursions made by the Crimeans on the Russian frontier territories in 1512 were the result of a secret treaty that had been concluded between Sigismund and Mengli Girai, by which the king had promised to pay the khan a yearly sum of 15,000 ducats to attack his enemies. Having sent Sigismund a declaration of war, Vasili began his warlike preparations. The time was well chosen. In 1511 Albrecht of Brandenburg had been chosen as Prussian grand master, and although he was a nephew of the Polish king he refused to acknowledge himself as his vassal, which he was obliged to do by the Treaty of Thorn; the emperor and the estates of the empire declared themselves for the grand master. Advised by Glinski, Vasili had entered into relations with the emperor as early as 1508, but the treaty between them was only concluded in 1514.



[1514-1518 A.D.]

Without waiting for the termination of these negotiations, the grand prince assembled an army and in December, 1512, took the field. He marched against Smolensk and having besieged it unsuccessfully, returned in March, 1513. His second expedition, from June until November of the same year, was also unsuccessful, but in the third (June, 1514), Smolensk was at last captured. Vasili made a triumphal entry into the town, being received with an address of welcome by the bishop of Smolensk. He confirmed the rights that had been given to its inhabitants by the Lithuanian government; those in the Lithuanian service who did not desire to remain under him he sent back to Lithuania, and he appointed Prince V. V. Shuiski, governor of Smolensk. After the submission of Smolensk the prince of Mstislavl also submitted to the grand prince. Sigismund himself hastened to the deliverance of Smolensk. Glinski, probably dissatisfied because Smolensk had not been given to him, entered into secret intercourse with him. Learning of this treachery Vasili ordered Glinski to be brought in fetters to Moscow and sent a voyevod against the king; the king himself remained at Borissov and sent Constantine Ostrozhski to meet the Moscow troops.

The Russian voyevods, Teheliadin and Prince Michael Golitza met Ostrozhski at Orsha on the Dnieper and sustained a terrible defeat. The fidelity of the boyars of Smolensk and of the bishop himself wavered and they entered into communication with Sigismund; but the burghers informed Shuiski of this treachery, and it was only the terribly energetic measures taken by him that preserved Smolensk for Russia: he ordered all the traitors except the bishop to be hanged on the walls of the city, the presents that had been given them by the sovereign to be suspended round the neck of each one. The assault on Smolensk was unsuccessful, and the war was afterward carried on feebly, which is explained by the exhaustion of Moscow after the battle of Orsha and the probable reluctance of the Lithuanian nobility to take an active part in it. After this Sigismund instigated the Tatars against Russia, in particular those of the Crimea, where in 1515 Mengli Girai had been succeeded by Muhammed Girai, who, notwithstanding his relations with Moscow, made in 1517 an attack on Tula and was repulsed. On his side Vasili strengthened his relations with Albrecht who kept his vassal, the grand master of Livonia, in check. However while Albrecht hesitated and demanded money, Vasili required that he should begin to act. The emperor, instead of beginning the war, as had been at first supposed he would do, offered his mediation, and it was with this aim in view that in 1517 the famous baron Sigismund Herberstein came to Moscow. Polish ambassadors also came; but with the news of their coming, Moscow also learned of the attack on Opochka by the Lithuanian troops and their repulse, and when Vasili heard of its failure he allowed the ambassadors access to him. The negotiations however came to nothing. The Moscow sovereign demanded Kiev and other towns, and the Lithuanian king refused to give up Smolensk. The death of Maximilian (1519) put an end to the imperial mediation; anyhow the emperor had not wished to give any real assistance: "It is not well"—he wrote to the grand master Albrecht—"to drive out the king, and make the czar of all Russia great."

In 1518 Albrecht again asked for money; the grand prince agreed, and at the former's request sent a notification of his alliance with him to the French king, Francis I—the first instance of intercourse between Russia and France. In answer to a fresh embassy from Albrecht bringing information of an invitation from the pope to join an alliance against the Turks, which Albrecht would not enter into without the grand prince's consent, an ambas-

sador was sent to Koenigsberg from Moscow, who was received with the highest honours by the grand master. But Albrecht's help was not very efficacious; he was soon obliged to conclude a treaty with King Sigismund by which he acknowledged himself his vassal, in return for which he obtained Prussia as an hereditary possession, laid aside his title of grand master, and assumed a new title with his new faith, that of duke of Prussia.

The war at that time was limited to incursions, and Vasili Ivanovitch had even decided to seek peace; but the envoys that came would not make any concessions, only letting negotiations drag on in the hope of some event coming to their assistance; in this manner the war was prolonged until the Lent of 1521, when negotiations were to be again renewed; however they were not opened: in Kazan reigned Sahib Girai, the brother of Muhammed Girai, and they both threatened Moscow, indeed the former advanced as far as Moscow itself (1521). The devastations of the Tatars weakened Russia for a time and the negotiations with Lithuania were renewed; although a lasting peace was not concluded, a truce was continued for five years without the exchange of prisoners, and by this truce Smolensk remained to Russia. In 1526, through the medium of the emperor's envoys, negotiations for a definitive peace were again opened, but Smolensk was an obstacle, neither side consenting to give up the town which was regarded as the key to Kiev. Smolensk was treated in the same manner as the other territories annexed; the inhabitants were transferred to Moscow as had been done with the inhabitants of Pskov and Novgorod, and it was for this reason that Smolensk stood by Moscow in 1612.

#### WARS WITH THE TATARS

Besides the relations with Lithuania, the relations with the Tatars constituted the chief problem of the reign of Vasili Ivanovitch. At his accession his first enterprise was to send against Kazan an army, amongst the leaders of which was his brother Dmitri; the siege of Kazan (1506) was unsuccessful, nevertheless in 1507 Muhammed Amin sent a letter to the grand prince with proposals of peace. Intercourse with the Crimea originally bore the same character as in the time of Ivan; a difference was however soon observable; the Crimea had no longer anything to fear from the remnants of the Golden Horde, and the Crimeans were therefore ready to make friends with whatever state would give them most. "Intercourse between the Crimea and the states of Moscow and Lithuania" — justly remarks Soloviev — "assumed the character of a bribery of robbers."

Such being the condition of affairs, it is not surprising that in spite of the confirmation of the treaty concluded between Ivan and Mengli Girai, the Tatars should have begun their attacks. In 1507 they were defeated at the Oka, and in consequence of this, envoys were sent demanding presents, the liberation of Abdul Letiv, former czar of Kazan and stepson of Mengli Girai, and asking for assistance against Astrakhan. Vasili Ivanovitch liberated Abdul Letiv, gave him the town of Iuriev, and by an oath of alliance obliged him to promise faithfully to serve the czar, not to have relations with his enemies, not to permit his servants to plunder on the roads or insult the churches, to live at peace with the other princes, not to wage war against Kazan without permission, and not to leave the confines of the state of Moscow. In 1515 Mengli Girai died, and his son Muhammed Girai, who succeeded him, demanded from Vasili Ivanovitch not only the cession to the Polish king of Smolensk, at the acquisition of which without his knowledge he was

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much incensed, but also of those towns which had been taken by Ivan. After long delays and much trouble, many insults and, of course, presents, an oath of alliance was obtained of Muhammed Girai in 1519, but meanwhile the attacks of the Crimeans continued. The son of Muhammed Girai, the czarevitch Bogatir, laid waste the borderland of Riazan; and in 1517 the Tatars — notwithstanding the Russian offer of Koshira, bordering on the steppes, to Ahmed Girai, brother of the khan — penetrated as far as Tula, where they were repulsed.

The grand prince then proposed to the council (*douma*) the question whether relations with the Crimea should be maintained, and it was decided that they must be maintained in order to prevent the rupture from becoming an open one. Meanwhile in 1518 Muhammed Amin of Kazan died, and Abdul Letiv, who had previously been czar, died a month after him; at the request of the inhabitants of Kazan a czar was named from Moscow in 1519 — Shig Alei, a prince of Astrakhan, and descendant of the czars of the Golden Horde. The Crimean khan was greatly dissatisfied at this choice of one whose family was at an eternal enmity with his own. Shig Alei remained in Kazan until 1521 when the inhabitants, dissatisfied with him, formed a conspiracy and invited Sahib Girai, brother of Muhammed Girai, to come and rule over them. Having established his brother on the throne of Kazan, Muhammed Girai advanced towards Moscow. The grand prince, warned too late by his well-wishers at Azov, could not take the necessary measures, and left Moscow, confiding the defence of the city to the boyars and baptised Tatar prince, Peter; they entered into negotiations with the enemy and paid him a ransom. The heroic defence of Pereiaslavl in Riazan by Khabar Simski somewhat softened the mournful impression of this calamity, which was augmented by the fact that Sahib Girai had at the same time devastated the territories of Nijni-Novgorod and Vladimir. The khan was preparing to repeat his expedition, and the grand prince himself took the field in expectation of his coming, but he never came.

Another undertaking then occupied Muhammed Girai: in 1523 he joined the Nogaians and conquered Astrakhan. There the Nogaians quarreled with him and killed him; his place was taken by Saidat Girai, who sent the grand prince the following conditions for an alliance: To give him 60,000 altines (an ancient coin of the value of three kopecks) and to make peace with Sahib Girai; but Vasili seeing the devastation of the Crimea both by the Nogaians and the Cossacks of Dashkevitch, who had hitherto acted in concert with the Crimeans, rejected these proposals. To avenge himself on Sahib Girai, who had massacred the Russians in Kazan where blood flowed like water, Vasili himself came to the land of Kazan (1523), devastated it, and made the inhabitants prisoners; on his return he built the town of Vasilsursk. When in 1524 a great army was sent from Moscow to Kazan, Sahib Girai fled to the Crimea, and the inhabitants of Kazan proclaimed his young nephew Sava Girai as czar; the expedition from Moscow was however unsuccessful, although the people of Kazan, who had lost their artillery engineer, sued for peace.

#### THE GROWING POWER OF RUSSIA

Their dependence upon the grand prince was irksome to the inhabitants of Kazan; fresh disputes arose, Vasili brought on an intrigue, and Kazan soon asked for a new czar. Vasili named Shig Alei, who was at that time in Nijni, but when the people of Kazan entreated that his brother Jan Alei (Enalei), who then ruled over Kassimov, should be nominated in his stead,



Vasili consented. Jan Mei was established at Kazan and Shug Mei was given Koshura, but as he did not keep the peace, and entered on negotiations with Kazan, he was exiled to Belogero. Disturbances took place in the Crimea, Saadat Girai was overthrown by Sahib, but the relations between the Crimea and Moscow remained the same, the Tatars continued to make insignificant raids and obtained presents. Nevertheless the Tatar messengers began to be less respectfully treated at Moscow. "Our messengers," wrote Sahib Girai, "complain that thou dost not honour them as of old, and yet it is thy duty to honour them, whoever wishes to pay respect to the master, throws a bone to his dog." Of other diplomatic relations those with Sweden and Denmark bore the character of frontier disputes, the intercourse with the pope was entered upon through the desire of the latter to convert Russia to Catholicism and incite her to war against Turkey. The intercourse with the latter power had no particular results. It is curious to observe that at this period relations were entered into with India, the sultan Babur sent ambassadors (1553) with proposals of mutual commercial dealings.\*

Each day added to the importance of Russia in Europe. Vasili exchanged ambassadors with the eastern courts and wrote to Francis I the great king of the Gauls. He numbered among his correspondents Leo X., Clement VII., Maximilian, and Charles V., Gustavus Vasa, founder of a new dynasty, Sultan Selim, conqueror of Egypt and Seliman the Magnificent. The grand mogul of the Indies, Baber, descendant of Timur, sought his friendship. The autocracy affirmed itself each day more vigorously. Vasili governed without consulting his council of boyars. "*Moldit'sya, sverst'*" (Hold, clown!) said he to one of the nobles who dared to raise an objection. This growing power manifested itself in the splendour of the court, the receptions of the ambassadors displaying a luxury hitherto unprecedented. Strangers though not in large numbers, continued to come to Moscow, of whom the most illustrious was a monk from Mount Athos, Maxime the Greek.

#### MAXIME THE GREEK

In the early days of his reign, when Vasili was examining the treasures left to him by his father, he perceived a large number of Greek church books which had been partly collected by former grand princes and partly brought to Moscow by Sophia, and which now lay covered with dust in utter neglect. The young sovereign manifested the desire of having a person who would be capable of looking them over and of translating the best of them into the Slavonic language. Such a person was not to be found in Moscow, and letters were written to Constantinople. The patriarch, being desirous of pleasing the grand prince, made search for such a philosopher in Bulgaria, in Macedonia and in Thessalonica; but the Ottoman yoke had there crushed all the remains of ancient learning and darkness and ignorance reigned in the sultan's realms. Finally it was discovered that in the famous convent of the Annunciation on Mount Athos there were two monks, Sabba and Maxime, who were learned theologians and well versed in the Slavonic and Greek languages. The former on account of his great age was unable to undertake so long a journey, but the latter consented to the desire of the patriarch and of the grand prince.

It would indeed have been impossible to find a person better fitted for the projected work. Born in Greece, but educated in the enlightened west, Maxime had studied in Paris and Florence, had travelled much, was acquainted with various languages, and was possessed of unusual erudition, which he had

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acquired in the best universities and in conversation with men of enlightenment. Vasilii received him with marked favour. When he saw the library, Maxime, in a transport of enthusiasm and a touching outburst, exclaimed, "What! all Greece does not now possess such treasures, neither does Italy, where Latin fanaticism has reduced to ashes many of the works of our theologians which my compatriots had saved from the Mohammedan barbarians." The grand prince listened to him with the highest pleasure and confided the library to his care. The zealous Greek made a catalogue of the books, which had been until then unknown to the Slavonic people. By desire of the sovereign, and with the assistance of three Muscovites, Vasilii, Daniel and Michael Molozov, he translated the commentary of the psalter. Approved by the metropolitan Varlaam and all the ecclesiastical council, this important work made Maxime famous, and so endeared him to the grand prince, that he could not part with him, and daily conversed with him on matters of religion. The wise Greek was not, however, dazzled by these honours, and though grateful to Vasilii, he earnestly implored him to allow him to return to the quiet of his retreat at Mount Athos: "There," said he, "will I praise your name and tell my compatriots that in the world there still exists a Christian czar, mighty and great, who, if it pleases the Most High, may yet deliver us from the tyranny of the infidel." But Vasilii only replied by fresh signs of favour and kept him nine years in Moscow. This time was spent by Maxime in the translation of various works, in correcting errors in the ancient translation, and in composing works of piety of which more than a hundred are known to us.

Having free access to the grand prince, he sometimes interceded for the noblemen who had fallen in disgrace and obtained for them the sovereign's favour. This excited the dissatisfaction and envy of many persons, in particular of the clergy and of the worldly-minded monk of St. Joseph, who enjoyed the favour of Vasilii. The humble-minded metropolitan Varlaam had cared little for earthly matters, but his successor, the proud Daniel, soon declared himself the enemy of the foreigner. He began to be asked, "Who is this man who dares to delude our sacred church leaders and restore to favour the disgraced boyars?" Some tried to prove that he was a heretic, others represented him to the grand prince as an ungrateful calumniator who censured the acts of the sovereign behind his back. It was at this time that Vasilii was divorced from the unfortunate Clementia, and it is said that this pious ecclesiastic did really disapprove of it, because we find amongst his works a discourse against those who repudiate their wives without lawful cause. Always disposed to take the part of the oppressed, he secretly received them in his cell and sometimes heard injurious speeches directed against the sovereign and the metropolitan. Thus the unfortunate boyar Ivan Bellesmish complained to him of the intractability of Vasilii, and said that formerly the venerable pastors of the church had restrained the sovereign from indulging their passions and committing injustice, whereas now Moscow no longer had a metropolitan, for Daniel only bore the name and the mask of a pastor, without thinking that he ought to be the guide of conscience and the protector of the innocent; he also said that Maxime would never be allowed to leave Russia, because the grand prince and the metropolitan feared his indiscretions in other countries, where he might publish the tale of their faults and weaknesses. At last Maxime's enemies so irritated the grand prince against him, that he ordered him to be brought to judgment and Maxime was condemned to be confined in one of the monasteries of Izer, having been found guilty of falsely interpreting the Holy Scriptures and the dogmas of the church. According to the opinion of some contemporaries, the charge was a

calumny invented by Jonas, archimandrite of the Tchudov monastery, Vassian, bishop of Kolomna, and the metropolitan.<sup>f</sup>

#### PRIVATE LIFE OF VASILI IVANOVITCH ; HIS DEATH

There is one event in the private life of Vasili Ivanovitch which has great importance on the subsequent course of history, and throws a clearer light on the relations of men and parties at this epoch. This event is his divorce and second marriage. Vasili Ivanovitch had first contracted a marriage in the year of his father's death with Solomonina Sabourov; but they had no children and Solomonina vainly resorted to sorcery in order to have children and keep the love of her husband. The grand prince no longer loved her and decided to divorce her. He consulted his boyars, laying stress on the fact that he had no heir and that his brothers did not understand how to govern their own appanages; it is said that the boyars replied "The unfruitful fig-tree is cut down and cast out of the vineyard." The sovereign then turned with the same question to the spiritual powers: the metropolitan Daniel gave his entire consent, but the monk Vassian, known in the world as Prince Vasili Patrikeiev, who, together with his father, had been forced to become a monk during the reign of Ivan because he belonged to the party of Helen, but who was now greatly esteemed by Vasili, was against the divorce and was therefore banished from the monastery of Simon to that of Joseph. Maxine the Greek and Prince Simon Kurbski were also against the divorce, and suffered for their opinion; and the boyar Beklemishev, who was on friendly terms with Maxine, was executed. Solomonina was made to take the veil at the convent of Suzdal and Vasili married Helen Vasilievna Glinski, the niece of Michael Glinski who had been liberated from prison (1526). From this marriage Vasili had two sons; Ivan (born 1530) and Iuri (born 1533). Vasili's love for his second wife was so great that according to Herberstein he had his beard cut off to please her. Towards the end of 1533 Vasili fell ill and died on December 3rd, leaving as his heir his infant son Ivan.<sup>b</sup>

#### A FORECAST OF THE REIGN OF IVAN (IV) THE TERRIBLE

The rôle and the character of Ivan IV have been and still are very differently appreciated by Russian historians. Karamzin, who has never submitted his accounts and his documents to a sufficiently severe critic, sees in him a prince who, naturally vicious and cruel, gave, under restriction to two virtuous ministers, a few years of tranquillity to Russia; and who subsequently, abandoning himself to the fury of his passions, appalled Europe as well as the empire with what the historian designates "seven epochs of massacres." Kostomarov re-echoes the opinions of Karamzin.

Another school, represented by Soloviev and Zabielin, has manifested a greater defiance towards the prejudiced statements of Kurbski, chief of the oligarchical party; towards Guagnini, a courtier of the king of Poland; towards Tanbe and Kruse, traitors to the sovereign who had taken them into his service. Above all, they have taken into account the times and the society in whose midst Ivan the Terrible lived. They concern themselves less with his morals as an individual than with his rôle as instrument of the historical development of Russia. Did not the French historians during long years misinterpret the enormous services rendered by Louis XI in the great work of the unification of France and of the creation of the modern



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state? His justification was at length achieved after a more minute examination into documents and circumstances.

At the time when Ivan succeeded his father the struggle of the central power against the forces of the past had changed character. The old Russian states, which had held so long in check the new power of Moscow; the principalities of Tver, Riazan, Suzdal, Novgorod-Seversk; the republics of Novgorod, Pskov, Viatka had lost their independence. Their possessions had served to aggrandise those of Moscow. All northern and eastern Russia was thus united under the sceptre of the grand prince. To the ceaseless struggles constantly breaking out against Tver, Riazan, Novgorod, was to succeed the great foreign strife — the holy war against Lithuania, the Tatars, the Swedes.

Precisely because the work of the unification of Great Russia was accomplished, the resistance in the interior against the prince's authority was to become more active. The descendants of reigning families dispossessed by force of bribery or arms, the servitors of those old royal houses, had entered the service of the masters of Moscow. His court was composed of crownless princes — the Chouiski, the Kurbski, the Vorotinski; descendants of ancient appanaged princes, proud of the blood of Rurik which coursed through their veins. Others were descended from the Lithuanian Gedimine, or from the baptised Tatar *Monzas*.

All these princes, as well as the powerful boyars of Tver, Riazan, Novgorod, were become the boyars of the grand prince. There was for all only one court at which they could serve — that of Moscow. When Russia had been divided into sovereign states, the discontented boyars had been at liberty to change masters — to pass from the service of Tchernigov into that of Kiev, from that of Suzdal into that of Novgorod. Now, whither could they go? Outside of Moscow, there were only foreign rulers, enemies of Russia. To make use of the ancient right to change masters was to go over to the enemy — it was treason. "To change" and "to betray" were become synonymous: the Russian word *izmiyanit* (third person singular of "to change") was become the word *izmiyanik* ("traitor").

The Russian boyar could take refuge neither with the Germans, the Swedes, nor the Tatars; he could go only to the sovereign of Lithuania — but this was the worst possible species of change, the most pernicious form of treason. The prince of Moscow knew well that the war with Lithuania — that state which Polish in the west, by its Russian provinces, in the east exercised a dangerous attraction over subjects of Moscow — was a struggle for existence. Lithuania was not only a foreign enemy — it was a domestic enemy, with intercourse and sympathies in the very heart of the Russian state, even in the palace of the czar; her formidable hand was felt in all intrigues, in all conspiracies. The foreign war against Lithuania, the domestic war against the Russian oligarchy are but two different phases of the same war — the heaviest and most perilous of all those undertaken by the grand prince of Moscow. The dispossessed princes, the boyars of the old independent states had given up the struggle against him on the field of battle; they continued to struggle against him in his own court.

It was no longer war between state and state; it was intestine strife — that of the oligarchy against autocratic power. Resigned to the loss of their sovereignty, the new prince-boyars of Moscow were not yet resigned to their position as mere subjects. The struggle was thus limited to a narrower field, and was therefore the more desperate. The court at Moscow was a tilt-yard, whence none could emerge without a change of masters — the Lithuanian

for the Muscovite — without treason: hence the furious nature of the war of two principles under Ivan IV.<sup>e</sup>

#### THE MINORITY OF IVAN IV

On the death of his father, Ivan was only three years of age. Helena, his mother, a woman unfit for the toils of government, impure in her conduct, and without judgment, assumed the office of regent, which she shared with a paramour, whose elevation to such a height caused universal disgust, particularly among the princes of the blood and the nobility. The measures which had of late years been adopted towards the boyars were not forgotten by that

haughty class; and now that the infirm state of the throne gave them a fair pretext for complaint, they conspired against the regent, partly with a view to remove so unpopular and degraded a person from the imperial seat, but principally that they might take advantage of the minority of the czar, and seize upon the empire for their own ends. The circumstances in which the death of Vasili left the country were favourable to these designs. The licentiousness that prevailed at court, the absence of a strict and responsible head, and the confusion that generally took the place of the order that had previously prevailed, assisted the treacherous nobles in their treasonable projects. They had long panted for revenge and restitution, and the time seemed to be ripe for the execution of their plans.

Amongst the most prominent

members of this patrician league, were the three paternal uncles of the young prince. They made no scruple of exhibiting their feelings; and they at last grew so clamorous, that the regent, on the ground that they entertained designs upon the throne, condemned them to loathsome dungeons, where they died in lingering torments. Their followers and abettors suffered by torture and the worst kinds of ignominious punishment. These examples spread such consternation amongst the rest of the conspirators, that they fled to Lithuania and the Crimea, where they endeavoured to inspire a sympathy in their misfortunes. But the regent, whose time appears to have been solely dedicated to the worst description of pleasures, being unable to preserve herself without despotism, succeeded in overcoming the enemies whom her own conduct was so mainly instrumental in creating.

The reign of lascivious folly and wanton rigour was not, however, destined to survive the wrath of the nobles. For five years, intestine jealousies and thickening plots plunged the country into anarchy; and, at last, the regent died suddenly, having, it is believed, fallen by poison administered through the agency of the revengeful boyars. The spectacle of one criminal executing summary justice upon another, is not destitute of some moral utility; and in this case it might have had its beneficial influence, were it not that the



IVAN THE TERRIBLE  
(1530-1584)

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principal conspirators had no sooner taken off the regent than they violently seized upon the guardianship of the throne.

The foremost persons in this drama were the Shuiski — a family that had long been treated with suspicion by the czars, their insolent bearing having always exposed them to distrust. Prince Shuiski was appointed president of the council of the boyars, to whom the administration of affairs was confided, and although his malignant purposes were kept in check by the crowd of equally ambitious persons that surrounded him, he possessed sufficient opportunities to consummate a variety of wrongs upon the resources of the state and upon obnoxious individuals — thus revenging himself indiscriminately for the ancient injuries his race had suffered. During this iniquitous rule, which exhibited the extraordinary features of a government composed of persons with different interests, pressing forward to the same end, and making a common prey of the trust that was reposed in their hands, Russia was despoiled in every quarter. The Tatars, freed for a season from the watchful vigilance of the throne, roamed at large through the provinces, pillaging and slaying wherever they went: and this enormous guilt was crowned by the rapacious exactions and sanguinary proscriptions of the council. The young Ivan was subjected to the most brutal insults: his education was designedly neglected: he was kept in total ignorance of public affairs, that he might be rendered unqualified to assume the hereditary power; and Prince Shuiski, in the midst of these base intrigues against the future czar, was often seen to treat him in a contemptuous and degrading manner. On one occasion he stretched forth his legs, and pressed the weight of his feet on the body of the boy. Perhaps these unexampled provocations, and the privations to which he was condemned, produced the germs of a character which was afterwards developed in such terrible magnificence. The fiend that lived in the heart of Ivan might not have been born with him; it was probably generated by the cruelties and wrongs that were practised on his youth.

In vain the Belski, moderate and wise, and the primate, influenced by the purest motives, remonstrated against the ruinous proceedings of the council. The voice of admonition was lost in the hideous orgies of the boyars, until a sudden invasion by the Tatars awakened them to a sense of their peril. They rallied, order was restored, and Russia was preserved. But the danger was no sooner over than the Shuiski returned in all their former strength, seized upon Moscow in the dead of the night, penetrated to the couch of Ivan, and, dragging him out of his sleep, endeavoured to destroy his intellect by filling him with sudden terror. The primate, whose mild representations had displeased them, was ill-treated and deposed: and the prince Belski, who could not be prevailed upon to link his fortunes with their desperate courses, was murdered in the height of their frenzy. Even those members of their own body who, touched by some intermittent pity, ventured to expostulate, were beaten in the chamber of their deliberations, and cast out from amongst them.

Under such unpropitious auspices as these, the young Ivan, the inheritor of a consolidated empire, grew up to manhood. His disposition, naturally fierce, headstrong, and vindictive, was most insidiously cultivated into ferocity by the artful counsellors that surrounded him. His earliest amusements were the torture of wild animals, the ignoble feat of riding over old men and women, flinging stones from ambuscades upon the passers-by, and precipitating dogs and cats from the summit of his palace. Such entertainments as these, the sport of boyhood, gave unfortunately too correct a prognostic



of the fatal career that lay before him. By a curious retribution, the first exercise of this terrible temper in its application to humanity fell upon the Shuiski, who certainly, of all mankind, best merited its infliction. When Ivan was in his thirteenth year, he accompanied a hunting party at which Prince Gluiski — another factious lord — and the president of the council were present. Gluiski, himself a violent and remorseless man, envied the ascendancy of Shuiski, and prompted the young prince to address him in words of great heat and insult. Shuiski, astonished at the youth's boldness, replied in anger. This was sufficient provocation. Ivan gave way to his rage, and, on a concerted signal, Shuiski was dragged out into the public streets, and worried alive by dogs in the open daylight. The wretch expiated a life of guilt by the most horrible agonies.

Thus freed from one tyranny, Ivan was destined for another, which, however, accepted him as its nominal head, urging him onward to acts of blood which were but too congenial to his taste. The Gluiski having got rid of their formidable competitor in the race of crime, now assumed the direction of affairs. Under their administration, the prince was led to the commission of the most extravagant atrocities; and the doctrine was inculcated upon his mind, that the only way to assert authority was by manifesting the extremity of its wrath. He was taught to believe that power consisted in oppression. They applauded each fresh instance of vengeance; and initiated him into a short method of relieving himself from every person who troubled or offended him, by sacrificing the victim on the spot.

#### IVAN ASSUMES THE REINS OF GOVERNMENT

This terrible system continued for three years. The pupilage of the prince was an uninterrupted scene of horror; and he was crowned czar of all the Russias in his eighteenth year, after a minority of blood. The citizens, unsafe and trembling under a despotism which was so capricious in its enormities, were at length driven to desperation. They fired the city in several places one night, and Ivan awoke the next morning amidst flame and smoke, the tossing of brands, and the imprecations of the multitude. He had been accustomed to terrors, but this conflagration smote him to the heart. In the midst of the confusion, Sylvester, a monk belonging to that roving order of persons who then wandered through the country affecting to be inspired with a divine mission, suddenly appeared in the presence of the affrighted despot. With a Gospel in one hand, while the other was raised in an attitude of prophecy, he pointed to the ruins that surrounded him, and invoking the attention of the prince to the consequences of his infatuation, he dwelt upon certain appearances from heaven which prognosticated evil to the dynasty if these courses were not abandoned; and, working powerfully upon a mind already agonised with fear, he finally succeeded in gaining a complete ascendancy over the czar. The effect was sudden and extraordinary. The virtuous Alexis Adashev aided Sylvester in his efforts to reclaim Ivan; and these, assisted by the gentle persuasions of the beautiful Anastasia, Ivan's young consort whom he had but recently married, appeared to produce a strong impression upon his feelings.

The result was an entire change in the system of government. Able and upright men displaced the corrupt and audacious counsellors who had hitherto filled the empire with alarm; a new organisation of the army took place; a just assessment of the fiefs, the various services, and contingents, was established; proprietors of estates were obliged to contribute to the

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maintenance of the military strength according to their means; and by a bonus in the pay of the soldiery, which was now adopted, the available force of the country was raised to the number of three hundred thousand men. Thus strengthened, with prudent ministers and a powerful army, Ivan set himself to the worthy task of subduing the rebellious Tatars. His ardour even appears to have carried him into extremes, for in the depth of winter he marched at the head of the soldiery to the siege of Kazan, although his followers did not hesitate to declare that no good commander would think of conducting his troops in so rigorous a season into the quarters of the enemy. But such ebullitions of discontent were punished with so much severity, that the troops soon learned to be content with the severities which procured such victories as Ivan was fortunate enough to gain. The first measure of great utility which he accomplished, was the erection of forts on the frontier to repel the aggressions of the enemy; but apprehending that even these were not sufficient to deter the marauders, he advanced upon Kazan, and captured it by springing a mine — a process in the art of war which was quite novel to the Russians, and filled them with astonishment and admiration. Having taken the city, he turned the mosques of the Tatars into Christian temples, and caused the khan to be baptised; which proofs of his religious zeal were admirably calculated to ingratiate him in the regards of the people.

In one of those ecstatic moods which sometimes assail the better judgment of the old chroniclers, the Russian historian informs us that Ivan, upon entering Kazan, wept at the sight of the dead bodies with which the streets were strewn. We certainly cannot put in any evidence in disproof of this apocryphal assertion, but the picture of Nero fiddling while Rome was burning is even more probable.

In addition to his successes at Kazan, Ivan was triumphant in the kingdom of Astrakhan, which he afterwards annexed to the Russian empire. This acquisition was very valuable, as in that district the vine, and other rich productions of the soil, grew in remarkable luxuriance. Fortune seemed on all hands to favour the interval of grace that visited the czar. While he was pursuing his course of victory in other places, eighty thousand Turks, who had been despatched by Selim II against Astrakhan, perished in the desolate steppes by which it was surrounded. The wars were thus terminated in glorious and important achievements, which laid the foundations of that expanded commerce which afterwards rendered illustrious the era of one of the greatest monarchs the world ever produced.

#### THE DISCOVERY OF SIBERIA

But the most important event which distinguished this period of the reign of Ivan was the discovery of Siberia, an empire of extraordinary magnitude, producing the richest furs, and studded with inexhaustible mines of salt, copper and silver. The discovery was accidental, and caused at first so slight a degree of attention, that it was suffered to be forgotten until another accident, some years afterwards, recalled it to the consideration of the government. A body of men, who had been sent across the mountains of Ingermanland by the czar, penetrated as far as the banks of the Oley; but the discoveries they reported were either so imperfect, or so ill-described, that they were passed over in silence. It subsequently occurred, however, that a merchant of the name of Strogonov, who was the proprietor of some salt mines on the confines of Siberia, had his curiosity stimulated by several

persons who traded with him, and whose strange costume and foreign manners excited in him a desire to become acquainted with the interior of the country from whence they came. Accordingly he commissioned a few of his people to return with them into Siberia, and to collect such information respecting it as their opportunities might enable them to acquire. These people, having explored the unknown districts, which they found to be inhabited by a race of Tatars, who possessed a capital called Sibir, returned to their employer charged with a history of wonders, and a quantity of costly furs, which promised to open a new source of gain to the diligent merchant. Strogonov, however, resolved not to keep the knowledge he had thus attained exclusively to himself, and immediately communicated all he knew to the court. In the mean time, Iermak, a Don Cossack adventurer, who, at the head of a gang of those lawless robbers, infested the roads, plundering the inhabitants and travellers in that part of Russia, happened to come, accidentally, to the merchant's dwelling, on his flight from some Russian troops that had been sent in search of him. While he remained there, he learned by chance, from Strogonov, of the newly discovered land; and he and his band, being persons who had nothing to lose, and who subsisted solely by desperate predatory practices, resolved to enter the strange country, and seek in its unknown retreats a source of safety and support. The resistance this adventurer experienced from the Siberians greatly thinned the ranks of his daring troops, but the forlorn character of the expedition inspired them with reckless valour; and, after many exhausting conflicts, they finally over-ran the country, and made themselves master of the capital. Iermak now bethought him of what he should do with his perilous conquest; and seeing that he possessed no means of accumulating sovereign power, or even of possessing by tribute, or otherwise, so vast a territory, he threw himself at the feet of the czar, tendered to him the territory he had won, and solicited in return a full pardon for all the delinquencies he and his followers had committed. Ivan readily granted the pardon, and took possession of his new acquisition. The work of annexation went rapidly forward. Several commodious towns were built, strong forts were constructed, the mines were garrisoned, and that great expanse of desert and mountains, which was afterwards destined to become the convict settlement of Russia, was formally and permanently consolidated in the dominions of the autocrat.

#### THE RESTRAINING INFLUENCE OF ANASTASIA

The civil and social improvement of the empire kept pace with the armed progress. A number of celebrated artists were engaged from the dominions, and by the permission, of Charles V; the art of letterpress printing was introduced, and the first type that ever was seen in Russia was imported by Ivan; the northern parts were opened to a new mercantile intercourse; and Archangel was established. The laws were revised; and the fees of the governors of the provinces who administered justice, paying themselves by pecuniary mulcts on the suitors, were abolished, and in their place gratuitous justice was administered, and a general assessment levied, which was collected by officers appointed by government. The grasping demands of the clergy were restrained, their revenues placed upon a more equitable basis, and their morals improved by mild but decisive restrictions.

Such were the fruits of the influence of Anastasia, which procured a hearing for the wisdom of Alexis and Sylvester. While that amiable and enlightened lady lived, Ivan pursued a course of just and wise measures that reflected



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honour upon his name, and conferred extensive benefits upon his country. But the latent nature was not extinguished: it only slept, hushed into slumber by the sweet influences before which his savage dispositions were subdued. An old bishop, who had formerly been banished from the court on account of his crimes, and who was one day consulted by Ivan, replied to the czar in some memorable words which were ever afterwards cherished in his memory, and were not without their power over his subsequent life. "If you wish," exclaimed the bishop, "to be truly a sovereign, never seek a counsellor wiser than yourself; never receive advice from any man. Command, but never obey; and you will be a terror to the boyars. Remember that he who is permitted to begin advising, is certain to end by ruling, his sovereign. Ivan, kissing the old man's hand, is said to have answered, "My own father could not have spoken more wisely!" This remarkable advice — similar to that which is attributed to a celebrated cardinal of modern times, on his death-bed — seems to have governed the conduct of Ivan from the moment that the death of the princess Anastasia released him from the embarrassment of her counsels. She died in 1560.

#### IVAN'S ATROCITIES

The incarnate fiend, relieved from the oppressive presence of virtue, resumed at once his original nature. If the narrative of his crimes could be spared from the page of history, it would rescue us from a series of details, the very relation of which must sicken the least susceptible mind. But there was a passion so unearthly in this paragon of monsters — he was so elevated in atrocity, and reached so sublime a height in the perpetration of cruelties — that his life, incredible and disgusting as it is, fills too great a space in the annals of despotism to be passed over lightly. One of his historians charitably supposes him to have been a lunatic.

The first act of Ivan was to banish his prudent advisers, the men who had hitherto preserved him from the worst calamities. Those persons were replaced by others, who studiously laboured to destroy their predecessors by false stories of their treachery to the czarina, whose death was unequivocally laid to their charge. That weakness, or superstition, which is an inherent quality in all savage natures, led Ivan to believe, or to fancy, that he believed those absurd accusations; and he acted with promptitude upon the miserable excuse which they afforded him. He hunted the partisans of the late ministers wherever they could be detected: some he put to the most disgraceful deaths, others he imprisoned or banished, varying the monotony of their solitary lives by the infliction of exquisite tortures. One prince, who refused to join in the lascivious pleasures of the court, was poinarded at prayers in the church: and another was stabbed to the heart by the czar's own hand, because he had the presumption to remonstrate with one of the new favourites. The prince Andrew Kurbski, a noble who, both in the cabinet and the field, had rendered the most important services to the government and the country, received intimation that a similar fate awaited him: and, indignant at the prospect of such an unworthy return for his devotion to the throne of the czars, he retired into Lithuania, and united himself with Sigismund, the king of Poland, and, at that time, one of the most formidable enemies of Russia. This revolt maddened Ivan beyond control; and his exasperation was increased by the receipt of a letter from the prince, in which he boldly charged the czar with all the miseries that were entailed upon their common country, with having shed the blood of Israel's elders in the temples of the Lord; and wound up

by threatening him with the vengeance of that tribunal before which he must one day answer to the accusations of the spirits of the murdered. The messenger who was daring enough to present this epistle to the czar suffered for his temerity. Ivan, on learning from whence he came, struck him across the legs with an iron rod which he usually carried in his hand; and while the blood flowed copiously from the wounds, leaned unconcernedly upon his rod to read the rebellious letter. The correspondence that ensued upon this occasion, like all the correspondence of Ivan's which has come down to us, is remarkable for the most blasphemous presumption and arrogant hyperbole. He wrote all his letters with his own hand, and was proud of his literary attainments, which, had they been directed into worthier channels, might have rendered him a distinguished ornament of his age.

#### THE POLISH INVASION

The consequence of the disaffection of Kurbski was the enrolment of a Polish army with a view to a descent upon Russia, and an invasion of the southern provinces by the Tatars at the instigation of Sigismund. This demonstration increased the rage of the czar: he treated everybody around him as if they were the creatures of Kurbski: he distrusted everybody; and put numbers to the rack and to death on the bare suspicion of their guilt, and was overheard to lament that he could not find victims enough to satisfy his wrath. He charged the boyars indiscriminately with harbouring secret designs against the welfare and happiness of the state; he dispossessed many of them of their private fortunes; and in a letter which is still extant, he urged against them as crimes, all the benefits which the sane portion of his rule had conferred upon Russia. In this delirium of the fever of despotism, the clergy remonstrated with some firmness; and, in order to obtain a fresh excuse for making new victims, he adopted an expedient as unexpected as it was singular. He caused a report to be spread on a sudden, that he was about to leave Moscow; but the point of his destination, or the reason of his withdrawal were preserved as profound secrets. The mystery of this announcement created a panic at Moscow. The people knew not what was to come next, whether the tyrant was about to put some scheme of universal destruction into execution, or whether it was merely a prelude to some extravagant exhibition of superstitious credulity, which always assumed in their eyes the aspect of religious devotion. Agreeably to this vague announcement of the czar's design, one morning in December, at an early hour, the great square of the Kremlin was filled with travelling sledges, some of which contained gold and silver, others clothes, and not a few crosses, images, and the relics of saints. These preparations attracted crowds of astonished gazers, who looked on in stupid wonder at the extraordinary sight. In a few minutes the czar, followed by his family, was seen to descend from the palace, with the officers of his household, and a numerous retinue. From the palace he passed on to the church of the Assumption; and, having ordered the metropolitan to celebrate mass, he prayed with great devotion, and received the blessing of Athanasius. Returning from the church, he held out his hand to the assembled multitudes, that they might satisfy themselves with a farewell kiss; and then, having in silence, and with unusual solemnity, walked through the groups that beset his path, he mounted his sledge, and drove off accompanied by a regiment of horse. The inhabitants of Moscow, astonished and terror-struck by the scene, were lost in conjecture. The city was without a government. Ivan had so dexterously contrived to impress them with an idea that he derived his sovereignty

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from God, that he found no great difficulty ultimately in confounding to the imagination of an enslaved and uninstructed people the distinction between God and the sovereign; and in every crisis of disaster that occurred, the people fell back upon their fanaticism, and looked to the czar for that succour which could alone come from heaven. Deserted at this moment by Ivan, they began to believe that they were deserted by Omnipotence.

A month elapsed, and no tidings were received of the destination or proceedings of the czar. At length, at the end of that period, two letters were received from him; the one addressed to the metropolitan, the other to the people. The former epistle contained a recapitulation of the disorders that had prevailed during his minority, all of which he attributed to the clergy and the boyars; and he asserted that similar crimes against the majesty of the state were about to break out anew. He also complained that his attempts to secure the public tranquillity were constantly thwarted by the evil interference of Athanasius and the clergy; that, therefore, he had abandoned the helm of affairs, and had left Moscow to wander about the earth. In his letter to the people, he assured them of his good will, repeated that he had no cause of complaint against them, and concluded by bidding them farewell for ever. It appeared by his epistles that he had intrenched himself in Alexandrovski, a distant fortress that lay in the depths of a gloomy forest.

These communications spread dismay amongst the Muscovites. Ivan's severity towards the nobility and clergy had, even against the grain of reason, procured him no inconsiderable popularity with the bulk of the people; and on this occasion it broke forth in lamentations, which derived much of their force from the association of the ideas of the throne of the czar and the throne of heaven. Groups of disconsolate citizens assembled in the street to confer upon what was to be done; the shops were shut, the tribunals of justice and public offices were closed, and every kind of business was suspended. "The czar," they exclaimed, "has forsaken us, and we are lost. Who will now defend us against the enemy? what are sheep without the shepherd?" In this state of despair a deputation of the principal inhabitants waited upon the metropolitan, and besought of him to solicit Ivan to return to his faithful subjects. Frantic with desperate zeal, they cried, "Let him punish all those who deserve it; has he not the power of life and death? The state cannot remain without a head, and we will not acknowledge any other than the one God has given us." It was at last resolved that a numerous body of prelates and nobles should hasten to Alexandrovski, prostrate themselves in the dust before Ivan, and entreat of him to return to Moscow. This proceeding had the desired effect. They discovered Ivan in his retreat, struck the ground before him with their heads, and supplicated him for the sake of the souls of millions, which were now perishing in his absence as the head of the orthodox church, to resume his holy functions. This was what Ivan wanted: he affected to be much moved by their prayers, and with a show of reluctance consented to return, provided the clergy pledged themselves not to interfere whenever he found it necessary to punish those who engaged in conspiracies against the state, or against him or his family. This artful condition was immediately granted; and the magnanimity of a tyrant who thus entrapped the people into an admission of the necessity of his despotic proceedings, was extolled to the skies.

The restoration of the despot was received with acclamations; but the Muscovites were astonished by the great alteration which had taken place in his personal appearance during his absence. Only a month, say their



historians, had elapsed, yet they hardly knew him again. His powerful and muscular body, his expanded chest, and robust limbs, had shrunk to a skeleton; his head, once covered with luxuriant locks, was now bald; his rich and flowing beard was reduced to a few ragged stumps; his eyes were dull; and his features, stamped with a ravenous ferocity, were now deformed by apparent thought and anguish. Yet these sad changes, — the fearful effects of the incessant tortures of a mind bewildered by its own fury — excited the sympathies of the infatuated citizens who beheld them.

After his entry into Moscow he addressed the people, again expatiating on the crimes of the boyars and the necessity for exercising the dominant sovereign sway in its extreme development. To this succeeded a pious exhortation on the vanities of the world — one of the arguments by which he endeavoured to reconcile his victims to their miserable fate — which he concluded by a proposal to institute a new body-guard, to be composed of one thousand men of noble birth, chosen from the general body of the army, and to be called the *Opritsnina*, or select legion. The people, blind to the danger of conceding so great a power to the sovereign, willingly acceded to this proposal, the execution of which was but a new instrument for destroying their liberties. The select legion, better known in subsequent years by the name of the *Strelitz*, was the foundation of a regular standing army in Russia; for until the formation of that corps the military force of the empire was raised upon occasions, each nobleman contributing according to his ability to meet the exigencies of the demand.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE REIGN OF TERROR

This was the first step to the new reign of terror; and while the select legion was in course of formation, Ivan employed himself in the erection of a new palace outside the walls of the Kremlin; for it appears that his ambition or his fears produced in him a dislike for the ancient residence of the royal family. In order to build this unnecessary palace, he drove out all the inhabitants of the adjacent streets, and posted his satellites around the neighbourhood to keep it free from intrusion. Twelve thousand of the richest inhabitants were dispossessed of their estates to make room for his designs, and upon the creatures of his disgraceful bounty he bestowed the spoils of his plunder. The new palace was to all intents an impregnable fortress; yet such were the secret horrors engendered by his course of villanies, that Ivan, thinking that it was not sufficiently secure, retired again to Alexandrovski, which expanded from an humble village into a considerable town. It contained a celebrated church of our Lady, which was painted on the outside with the most gaudy colors, every brick containing the representation of a cross. Here the czar possessed a large palace surrounded by a ditch and ramparts: his civil and military functionaries had separate houses; and the legionaries and trades-people had distinct streets. One of the rules imposed by the tyrant was that no person should enter or leave the town without his express permission, and a patrol constantly occupied the neighbourhood to observe that this order was fulfilled. A new notion now possessed him. Buried in the forlorn solitudes of the deep forests, he converted his palace into a monastery, assumed the style and title of abbot, turned his favourites into monks, and called his body of select and depraved legionaries by the name of the *Brothers*. He provided them all with black vestments, under

[<sup>1</sup> The *Opritsnina*, composed at first, or supposed to be composed, of men of noble birth, was really filled by persons of the lowest class, who acted as spies, informers and assassins.

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which they wore splendid habits, embroidered with gold and fur; and he instituted a code of practice as austere as it was inconsistent. At three o'clock in the morning, the matin service began, which lasted until seven; at eight mass commenced again, and at ten the whole body, except Ivan, who stood reading aloud from some religious book, sat down to a sumptuous repast. The remnants of the table were afterwards distributed amongst the poor—for throughout the whole of Ivan's actions there was always an evident desire to win the favour of the multitude; the czar dined after the rest, and then descended to the dungeons to witness the infliction of tortures upon some of his victims, which gave him extraordinary delight. At eight o'clock vespers were read; and at ten Ivan retired to his chamber, where he was lulled to sleep by three blind men. To diversify this monotonous life, he sometimes visited the monasteries, or hunted wild beasts in the woods; but he was constantly employed in issuing his instructions upon public business, and even during prayers often gave his most cruel and sanguinary orders. Such was the life of the tyrant in his gloomy seclusion at Alexandrovski.

During this period, the select legion increased in number to six thousand men, embracing in their body all the abandoned and infamous wretches who could be procured for hire. As types of their office, they were ordered to suspend from the saddle-bow a dog's head and a broom—the former to signify that they worried the enemies of the czar, and the latter to indicate that they swept them off the face of the earth. They went from street to street armed with long daggers and hatchets in search of victims, who amounted daily to a score. They soon became the objects of fear and execration. The first victims were the prince Shvitski and his son. At the place of execution, the younger offered himself first to the axe; but the feelings of nature were so strong in the heart of the parent, that he could not endure to witness the death of his son, and he insisted on receiving his death first. When his head rolled off, his son embraced it in a passion of tears; and while the lips of the living yet clung to the quivering and agonised features of the dead, the executioner's axe descended upon the son's neck. On the same day four other princes were beheaded, and a fifth impaled. Several boyars were exiled, others forced to embrace the monastic vows, and a still greater number were beggared by confiscation. These horrors increased every day. The streets and squares were filled with dead bodies; and such was the universal terror, that the survivors did not dare to appear to give the rites of burial to the dead. It would appear that the murder of individuals ceased at length to satisfy the insatiate appetite of the monster: he longed for massacre on a more extended scale; his eyes grew tired of the slow process of execution in detail. Accordingly he sought for excuses to lay whole towns in blood. A few of the inhabitants of Tortchesk happening one day to quarrel with some of the legionaries, Ivan declared them all to be rebels, and instantly caused them *en masse* to be either tortured to death or drowned. The inhabitants of Kolomna were similarly disposed of, merely because they were the dependents of a nobleman who had outgrown his favour. He spared neither sex nor age. Many ladies were exposed in the streets, and then shot in the public sight.

#### THE MARCH AGAINST NOVGOROD

These atrocities, unparalleled in the annals of the world, form but the prelude to the enormous crimes of this infamous prince. His march of devasta-

tion to Novgorod may be considered as the grand act of his career of blood. The provocation which led to the sanguinary punishment of that city was a falsehood invented by a profligate fellow who wanted to escape justice, and to take revenge upon the authorities, who had found him guilty of the commission of some offences. This criminal, knowing that Ivan rewarded all those who came before him with charges of disaffection, wrote a letter in the name of the archbishop and inhabitants of Novgorod to the king of Poland, offering to put the city under that monarch's protection. This letter he carefully concealed behind an image of the Virgin in the church of St. Sophia, and then laid before the czar at Moscow a private revelation of the conspiracy which he had himself invented. Ivan despatched a trusty messenger to Novgorod, who discovered the letter in the spot to which the informer had referred, and, upon this evidence, the city was denounced to the vengeance of the select legion. But as it was likely that the sight of this dreadful deed would be more exciting than any he had hitherto witnessed, Ivan put himself at the head of his guards, and in December 1569, accompanied by his son, departed from Alexandrovski on his mission of destruction.

On his way he passed through the town of Klin, and exterminated the whole of the population. When he arrived at the city of Tver, he took up his quarters at a monastery outside the gates, and sent his soldiers into the city to massacre and plunder the inhabitants at will. The horrors of the scene reminded the unfortunate people of the terrible cruelties inflicted upon their ancestors by the khan Usbak in 1327. At some of the feats of death, Ivan himself assisted: and his confidential minister Skuratov secretly entered the cell of a monastery where the virtuous and deposed metropolitan was confined, and strangled him.

Proceeding onwards from Tver, Ivan depopulated all the towns on his route to the banks of the Ilmen: and on the 2d of January his advanced guard entered the devoted and miserable city of Novgorod. The preparations made upon this occasion to ensure the complete carnage meditated by the tyrant, are memorable proofs of the coolness with which the demons of the Opritshnina executed the will of their savage leader. They ordered the churches and convents to be closed, and demanded a temporary levy from the monks of twenty roubles per head; and such unfortunate ecclesiastics as were unable to comply with this exorbitant exaction were deliberately flogged from morning till night. The houses of the inhabitants were placed under seizure, and guarded at the entrances, and the owners thrown into chains. This was merely preliminary to the arrival of the monarch.

In four days afterwards Ivan and the remainder arrived, and rested within two versts of the city. On the following morning all the monks who had failed to pay the redemption tax were taken out, beaten to death with clubs, and their bodies sent to their respective monasteries for interment. On the next day, accompanied as before by his son, Ivan made his solemn entrance at the head of his troops into the city. The archbishop, with the clergy, carrying the miraculous images, met him on the bridge, and attempted to utter the accustomed benediction: but Ivan, interrupting the ceremony, addressed them in a long harrangue, which consisted of an elaborate curse against their order. Having satisfied his rage by the delivery of this anathema, he ordered the crucifix and images to be borne into the church of St. Sophia, where he heard mass, praying with great fervour, and then retired to the episcopal palace, where he sat down to dinner surrounded by his boyars. Suddenly, in the midst of the feast, he started up and raised a terrible cry. The signal was scarcely given when his satellites, as if by magic, appeared in a body before



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him, and seized the archbishop, and the officers and servants. The palace and the cloisters were then given up to plunder. The czar's confessor, assisted in the sacrilege by the master of the ceremonies, burst into the cathedral and carried off its sacred treasures, the rich vestments, the images, and the bells. The churches and monasteries were all pillaged, and not a fragment of the precious accumulations of the temples and religious houses escaped the impious hands of the spoliators.

Next came the massacre of the inhabitants, which was conducted with the utmost patience and regularity. Every day from five hundred to one thousand Novgorodians were brought before Ivan and his son, and immediately put to death either by torture or fire. Some were tied to sledges and dragged into the Volkhov; others flung over the bridge into the river — wives with their husbands, mothers with their tender infants; while soldiers armed with long sharp spears sailed on the water to pierce and hew those who attempted to escape by swimming. When the massacre had continued in this way for five weeks, Ivan drew off and visited the neighbouring monasteries, which he pillaged indiscriminately, levelling houses, destroying cattle, and burning the corn. He then returned to Novgorod, and inspected in person the remaining work of destruction. He passed through the streets while his myrmidons plundered the shops and houses, which were entered by the doors or windows indifferently: rich silks and furs were divided by the brutal soldiery, and all unavailable goods, such as hemp and wax and tallow, were either burnt or cast into the river. Detachments were then sent into the adjacent domains to plunder and murder without any respect of persons.

Having exhausted all his arts of ruin, Ivan now relaxed, and issued a general pardon to the few wretched persons who survived, and to whom death would have been an act of mercy. He summoned them to appear before him; and a ghastly assemblage of skeletons, motionless and in despair, stood in the presence of the murderer like ghosts invoked from the grave. Untouched by the appalling sight, he addressed them in the mildest language, desired to have their prayers that he might have a long and happy reign, and took his leave of them in the most gracious words. The miserable inhabitants were smote with delirium; they looked around them in vain for the friends that had been sacrificed, for the houses and the wealth that had been laid waste. Sixty thousand victims were stretched dead in the streets of the once proud and opulent republic: and to complete its melancholy doom, pestilence and a famine succeeded, sweeping off nearly all those who had survived the extermination of the less merciful czar. The city was now entirely depopulated, and presented the sepulchral aspect of a vast cemetery.

The monster passed on to the city of Pskov, where, however, he consented to forego his terrible schemes of destruction, satisfying himself with plundering the principal inhabitants. He then returned home to Moscow, loaded with plunder, and carrying in his train the archbishop of Novgorod, and other distinguished victims, whom he reserved for a public execution.

#### CARNAGE IN MOSCOW

He had no sooner arrived in Moscow than he caused several of his favourites to be arrested on the ground of suspicion, but really in order to increase the number of the wretches he designed to put to death; and thus, naming a day for a general execution of the whole, extensive preparations were made in the market place to carry his inhuman project into execution. Eighteen gibbets were erected, numberless instruments of torture were exhibited, and a great

fire was made in the centre, over which a huge copper cauldron was suspended. The inhabitants, seeing these dreadful preliminaries, believed that the czar's object was to set the city on fire, and consign the people to death; and, flying from the spot, they abandoned their shops and merchandise, leaving their property to the mercy of the select legion. In a few hours Moscow was utterly deserted, and not a living person was to be seen but a troop of the Opritszhina ranged in gloomy silence round the gibbets and blazing fire. Presently the beating of drums rose upon the air, and the czar was seen advancing on horseback, accompanied by his favourite son, and followed by his devoted guards. In the rear came the spectral troop of victims, in number about three hundred, wan and bloody, and hardly able to crawl upon the ground. On perceiving that the theatre of carnage was destitute of an audience, Ivan commanded his soldiers to collect the inhabitants; and, after a short pause, finding that they did not arrive with promptitude, he went in person to demand their presence at the treat he had prepared for them, assuring them at the same time of the good-will he entertained towards them. The wretched Muscovites dared not disobey him, and hurrying in terror from their hiding places, they crowded to the scene of execution, which was speedily filled with spectators even to the roofs of the houses. Then the dreadful rites began. The czar addressed the people with exclamations upon the righteousness of the punishments he was about to inflict, and the people, oppressed with horror, replied in terms of approbation. A crowd of one hundred and twenty victims, who were declared to be less guilty than the rest, were first separated from the others and pardoned. The condemned were called one by one, and some, after hearing the accusation in general terms from the lips of the czar, accompanied by occasional blows on the head from a whip which he held in his hand, were given over to the assassins, who hung them up by the feet, and then cut them to pieces, or plunged them half alive into the boiling cauldron. These executions, which are too horrible to be related in detail, lasted for about four hours; during which time nearly two hundred victims, innocent of the crimes with which they were charged, suffered deaths of the most exquisite and prolonged agony.

A despotism so sanguinary and so wanton was well calculated to endanger the safety of those institutions which the wisdom of others had established. Russia, distracted through all her provinces by the atrocities of Ivan, soon became a prey to those unwearied foes who never lost an opportunity of taking advantage of her domestic difficulties. The declaration of Ivan's supremacy to his unfortunate subjects was, "I am your god as God is mine; whose throne is surrounded by archangels, as is the throne of God." But this piece of blasphemy, which had the effect of making the Russians tremble, only increased the determination of his external enemies. Sweden had already wrested Esthonia from him; Kettler, the last grand-master of the Livonian knights, satisfied himself with Courland and Semigallia; while Battori of Poland, the successor of Sigismund Augustus, deprived him of Livonia, one of the most important points in his dominions. In 1566, Ivan laid before an assembly of the states-general, consisting of a convocation of ecclesiastics, nobles, citizens, and traders, a statement of his negotiations with Poland on the subject of Livonia; but as his real object was to assert his tyrannical power rather than to gain the political advantages he pointed out, the issue of the assembly was merely an admission from all the parties present that the will of the czar was indisputable, and that they had no right even to tender him their advice. The great advantage of recovering Livonia from Poland was obviously to secure it as an outlet upon the Baltic for Russian

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commerce, and as a means of opening a communication with Europe. To the ministry of Sylvester and Adashev belongs the credit of this admirable project; but a design which they would have accomplished with comparative facility, was suffered by Ivan to be wasted in fruitless contentions.

Battori terrified Ivan in the midst of his tyrannies; and the monster who could visit his people with such an example of cruelties, crouched before the king of Poland. His fear of Battori carried him to extremes. He not only supplicated terms at his hands, but suffered him to offer personal insults to the officers who represented the czar at his court. The grovelling measures and cowardice of Ivan disgusted his adversary; and in reply to some fresh instance of dastardly submission, Battori charged him with the grossest crimes — with having falsified the articles of treaties, and applied inhuman tortures to his peoples. The letter containing these strong, but just, animadversions, closed with a challenge to single combat, which the poverty of the czar's spirit met by renewed protestations of the most abject character.

#### THE STRUGGLE FOR LIVONIA

At length, urged by the clamour of his advisers, Ivan organised an army of three hundred thousand men; but, although he could instigate and assist at the most revolting punishments, he shrunk from a personal share in the numerous petty conflicts which took place between his forces and the Livonian knights. Instead of advancing boldly upon the enemy, who could not have maintained war against the superior numbers of the Russians, he suffered himself to be shielded by a jesuit, the pope's envoy, whose intercession with Battori he had procured by representing, with consummate audacity, that he hoped to be able to effect the conversion of the Russians to catholicism. Whenever he fell in with the Livonians, and the collision terminated in victory, he committed the wildest excesses: plundered the captives of their wealth, which he transmitted to his own private coffers, and then sentenced the prisoners to be flung into boiling cauldrons, spitted on lances, or roasted at fires which he amused himself by stirring — while the sacrificial murders were in progress. Wars so irregularly conducted, and terminating in such frightful revenge could not but entail calamities upon the empire. All that was gained by the long struggle for Livonia, was the occasional plunder which Ivan appropriated to himself.

To support the system of profligate expenditure to which the whole life of this extraordinary man inevitably led, he laid on the most exorbitant taxes, and lent himself to the most unjust monopolies. Nor was he satisfied with exceeding in this way the most arbitrary examples that had preceded him; but, with a recklessness of human life, and a disregard of the common decencies and obligations of the worst condition of society, he proceeded to rifle his subjects of their private means, sometimes upon slight pretences, but oftener without any pretence whatever. It would almost appear that his appetite for sights of destruction had palled with ordinary gratification; and that he had jaded his invention to discover new modes of cruelty. Having exhausted in all its varieties the mere art of slaughter, he proceeded to make his objects violate before his eyes the sacred feelings of nature. He demanded fratricide and parricide at their hands: one man was forced to kill his father, another his brother: eight hundred women were drowned, and, bursting into the houses of his victims, he compelled the survivors to point out the places where the remnant of their wealth was concealed. His excesses carried him beyond all law, human and divine. He assumed the place, and even usurped



the attributes of the Deity, and identified himself to a proverb with the Creator. Not content with indulging his insane passions in the frenzy of an undisciplined mind, he trampled the usages of Russia under foot, and married seven wives — which was held by the tenets of the Greek religion to be a crime of great magnitude.<sup>9</sup>

#### PROJECTS OF ALLIANCE WITH ENGLAND

The unfortunate issue of the war with Sweden did not however make Ivan the Terrible give up the idea of compensating himself for his losses; he continued to seek for alliances with European states. With this object Theodore Pissenski was sent to England in 1582 with instructions to endeavour to bring about a close alliance with Elizabeth against his enemy the king of Poland, and at the same time to enter into matrimonial negotiations for the czar with the queen's relative, Maria Hastings. The English would not entertain either project, but only sought to obtain an exemption from entry duties for their trade with Russia. In 1583 Jeremiah Bowes was sent to Moscow from England with the delicate mission of attaining this object. The negotiations dragged on a long time; first the czar sent away Bowes and then recalled him again, and in fact they had not come to an end before the death of Ivan the Terrible.<sup>b</sup>

#### DEATH OF IVAN THE TERRIBLE

We have already seen what was the life of Ivan: we shall now see its ending — which was equally astonishing — desirable indeed for mankind, but terrifying to the imagination; for the tyrant died as he had lived, that is, exterminating men, although in contemporary narratives there is no mention of his last victims.<sup>1</sup> Strong in bodily constitution, Ivan had hoped for a long life; but what bodily strength could withstand the furious rage of the passions that agitated the sombre existence of the tyrant? The continued outbursts of wrath and fear, the racking of the unrepentant conscience, the odious transports of abominable sensuality, the torments of shame, the impotent fury at the reverses of his arms, finally the horrible remembrance of the murder of his own son, had exhausted the measure of Ivan's strength. At times he experienced a painful languor, the precursory symptom of dissolution, but he struggled against it and did not noticeably weaken until the winter of the year 1584. At that time a comet appeared in the sky between the churches of Ivan the Great and of the Annunciation, which had the form of a cross. Curious to see it, Ivan went out on the red staircase, gazed at it long, grew pale, and said to those around him: "there is the portent of my death." Pursued by this idea, it is said that he caused astrologers and pretended magicians to be sought for throughout Russia and Lapland, brought together about sixty of them, assigned to them a house in Moscow, and daily sent his favourite Belski, to confer with them concerning the comet. Soon he fell dangerously ill. It is said that the astrologers predicted his death on the 18th of March. During February he was still able to occupy himself with affairs; but on the 10th of March a courier was despatched to delay the arrival of the Lithuanian ambassador who was on his way to Moscow, by reason of the illness of the czar. Ivan himself had given the order; he had still hopes of recovery, nevertheless he called together the boyars and com-

<sup>1</sup> Oderborn says that a few days before his death Ivan had six noblemen executed. In other narratives it is only said that he destroyed men up to the very end of his life.

[1584 A.D.]

manded that his will and testament should be written down. He declared the czarévitch Theodore heir to the throne and monarchy, and chose well-known men for councillors to watch over the prosperity of the state and lighten for Theodore (who was feeble both in mind and body) the burden of the cares of the state; these men were: Prince Ivan Petrovitch Shuiski (the famous defender of Pskov), Ivan Mstislavski, son of a niece of the grand prince Vasili, Nikita Romanovitch Iuriev (brother of Ivan's first wife, the virtuous Anastasia), Boris Godunov, and Belski. To the young Dmitri and his mother he assigned the town of Uglich as appanage, the boy's education to be exclusively confided to Belski. He declared his gratitude to all his boyars and voyevods, calling them his friends and companions in arms in the conquest of unbelieving kingdoms, in the victories gained over the knights of the Livonian order, the khan, and the sultan. He exhorted Theodore to rule piously, lovingly and mercifully, advising him and the five chief dignitaries of the state to avoid war with Christian powers. He spoke of the disastrous consequences of the wars with Lithuania and Sweden, deplored the exhaustion of Russia, enjoined a reduction of the taxes and the liberation of all captives, even of the Lithuanian and German prisoners.

The strength of the sick man presently left him; his thoughts were beclouded; stretched in unconsciousness upon his bed, Ivan called loudly for his murdered son, imagined he saw him and spoke to him tenderly. On the 17th of March he felt better from the effects of a warm bath, so that he commanded the Lithuanian ambassador to come without delay from Mozhaïsk to Moscow. The next day (if Horsey is to be believed) he said to Belski, "Go and tell those liars, the astrologers, that they shall die: according to their fables I am to die now, but I feel a great deal better." But, answered the astrologers, the day has not yet passed. A bath was again prepared for the czar, in which he remained about three hours, then he lay down on his bed and rested. Soon he asked for a chessboard, and sitting up in bed in his dressing-gown, he himself set up the chessmen and wanted to play with Belski.<sup>1</sup> Suddenly he fell back and closed his eyes for all eternity. The doctors rubbed him with strengthening fluids, while the metropolitan — probably fulfilling the will of Ivan that had been long known to him — read the prayers for the taking of orders over the dying man, giving him the monastic names of Jona. During these moments a deep silence reigned throughout the palace and the capital; people waited in expectancy, but nobody dared to ask. Ivan lay already dead, yet he appeared still terrible to the surrounding courtiers, who for a long time could not believe their eyes and did not announce his death. On the third day magnificent obsequies took place in the church of St. Michael.

## KARAMZIN'S ESTIMATE OF IVAN

Amidst the various and heavy trials imposed by destiny on Russia, besides the miseries of the feudal or appanage system, besides the Mongolian yoke, Russia had also to bear the ferocity of the autocrat-tormentor: yet she preserved her love for autocracy, believing that plagues, earthquakes and tyrants are sent by God. Instead of breaking the iron sceptre in the hands of Ivan, she bore for twenty-four years with the destroyer, arming herself solely with prayer and patience in order that in happier times she might have a Peter the Great, a Catherine II (history does not like to name

<sup>1</sup> The historian Kostomarov relates that Ivan could not set the king in its place and fell back dead as he endeavoured to do so.

the living<sup>1</sup>). Magnanimously submissive, the martyrs died on the scaffold like the Greeks at Thermopylæ, for their country, their faith and fealty, without thought of rebellion or riot. In order to excuse Ivan's cruelties some foreign historians have spoken of plots and conspiracies against which they were directed; but such plots only existed in the troubled mind of the czar, as all our chronicles and state papers bear witness. The clergy, the boyars, the prominent citizens would not have called forth the wild beast from his lair of Alexandrovski, if they had had thoughts of the treachery imputed to them with as much absurdity as witchcraft. No, the tiger gorged himself with the blood of the lambs, and his victims, casting a last glance on the distressful earth, demanded from their contemporaries and from posterity both justice and compassionate remembrance.

In spite of all speculative explanations, the character of Ivan, a virtuous hero in his youth, and an insatiable, bloody tyrant in the years of his manhood and old age, remains an enigma, and we should doubt the truth of the most trustworthy narratives concerning him, if the history of other nations did not show us equally astonishing examples; if for instance Caligula, at first a model for sovereigns and afterwards a monster of cruelty — if Nero, the pupil of the wise Seneca, an object of love and an object of loathing, had not reigned at Rome.

Thus Ivan possessed a superior intellect, he was not uneducated, and his knowledge was united to an uncommon gift of speech, yet he was the shameless slave of the most abominable vices. He had an unusually fine memory, he knew the Bible by heart, he was also well acquainted with Greek and Roman history, besides the history of his own country, and only used his knowledge in order to give the most absurd interpretations in favour of tyranny. He boasted of his firmness and self control, because he could laugh loudly in the hour of fear and of inward uneasiness. He boasted of his clemency and generosity, because he enriched his favourites with the possessions of the boyars and citizens who had fallen into disgrace. He boasted of his justice, and punished with equal satisfaction the meritorious and the criminal. He boasted of his sovereign spirit and of knowing how to maintain the sovereign dignity, ordering that an elephant which had been sent to him from Persia should be cut to pieces because the animal would not kneel before him, and cruelly punishing the unfortunate courtiers who dared to play at cards or chess better than his majesty. Finally he prided himself on his deep statecraft in exterminating systematically, at certain fixed epochs, with cold blooded calculation, some of the most illustrious families under the pretext of their being dangerous to the royal power; raising to their rank new and mean families; touching with his destroying hand even the future, for like a swarm of famine-bringing insects, the band of informers, of calumniators, of "*opritchniki*"<sup>2</sup> that he had formed, left, as they disappeared, the seed of evil among the people, and if the yoke of Bati had lowered the spirit of the Russians, there is no doubt that the reign of Ivan did nothing to raise it.

But justice must be rendered even to a tyrant: even in the extremity of evil, Ivan at times seems the phantom, as it were, of a great monarch, zealous, unwearying, often showing proofs of great penetration in state matters. For valour he liked to compare himself to Alexander of Macedonia, although there was not a shadow of courage in his soul: yet he was a conqueror; in his outward policy he followed unswervingly the great schemes

[<sup>1</sup> A compliment to Alexander I, the author's patron.]

<sup>2</sup> The life guards of Ivan the Terrible.



[1584 A.D.]

of his grandfather. He wanted justice to be observed in the tribunals, and not frequently himself examined the lawsuits, listened to complaints, read every paper laid before him, and was prompt in his decisions. He punished the oppressors of the people, unscrupulous functionaries, and extortioners, both corporally and by putting them to shame (he had them clothed in sumptuous attire, seated in carts and driven by the hangmen through the streets). He forbade all drunken excesses and only allowed the people to divert themselves in the public houses during the Easter holidays and at Christmastide; at every other time drunken people were sent to prison. Although he did not like daring reproaches, yet at times Ivan detested coarse flattery; of the latter we will give an instance: The voyevods, the princes Shtcherbati and Iri Boriatinski, who had been ransomed by the czar from captivity in Lithuania, were honoured with his favour, were given presents, and had the distinction of dining with him. He questioned them about Lithuania. Shtcherbati spoke the truth, but Boriatinski lied shamelessly, averring that the king had neither troops nor fortresses and trembled at the name of Ivan. "Poor king!" said Ivan quietly, shaking his head: "how I pity thee!" and suddenly seizing his staff he broke it to splinters over Boriatinski's back, saying: "Take that, you shameless fellow, for your flagrant lying!"



CATHEDRAL OF ST. BASIL, MOSCOW

(Built by Ivan the Terrible, who considered it so beautiful that he had the architect's eyes put out that he might not build another)

Ivan was distinguished by a wise tolerance in matters of religion (excepting that of the Jews); but although he at first allowed the Lutherans and the Calvinists to have churches in Moscow, five years later he ordered their churches to be burned. It is possible, however, that he had heard of the people's dissatisfaction and was afraid of some scandal; in any case he did not hinder their meeting for worship in the houses of their pastors. He was fond of disputing with learned Germans upon matters of faith and was not angry at contradiction: thus in the year 1570 he had a solemn discussion in the palace of the Kremlin with the Lutheran theologian Rotsita, whom he accused of heresy: Rotsita was seated before him on a raised platform covered with rich carpets; he spoke boldly in defence of the dogmas of the Augsburg Confession, and was honoured with tokens of the czar's favour.

Ivan evinced esteem for the arts and sciences, showing marks of favour to educated foreigners. Although he did not found academies, yet he con-

tributed to popular education by increasing the number of ecclesiastical schools where the laity also could study reading, writing, religion, and even history, and in particular prepare to become clerks in the chanceries; to the shame of the boyars, many of whom were not yet able to write. Finally Ivan is famous in Russian history as a lawgiver and organiser of the state.<sup>f</sup>

#### IVAN THE TERRIBLE COMPARED WITH PETER THE GREAT

Deeply tragic were the life and destiny of Ivan the Terrible! As we penetrate into the full signification of his work, we are involuntarily drawn to the comparison which suggests itself between him and the hero czar of the eighteenth century. It was not without reason that, according to tradition, Peter looked upon Ivan as his precursor: they had both entertained the same projects. Even in the circumstances of their childhood and early youth there were points of resemblance; but Ivan had not a tender, loving mother at his side, and this difference was an essential one. There is also another very essential difference: by nature Ivan was a man of more abstract character, less capable of and less inclined to practical activity; for this reason he at times confided in others, then suddenly became suspicious, but never acted himself. It appeared to him that the duty of a czar was only to direct the activity of others. Although this is a true view in ordinary times, it may sometimes become a false one, and Peter served Russia as much with the carpenter's hatchet as he did with the sword of Pultowa. The practical Peter believed in his people, and if at times he overstrained the bow, yet it was as if he felt that matters would adjust themselves. Ivan lost faith in everything and everyone; it may also be added that Peter thought less of himself and in this respect he was larger minded than his terrible predecessor. The painful impression produced on the historian by Ivan's trying to secure a refuge in England, has no parallel in the life of Peter. Also, however terrible were the executions and punishments in the time of Peter, and although at times there may be observed in them signs of personal irritation, yet the impression produced by the narrative of the devastations in Novgorod is still more distressing. Practical statesmen never go to such lengths as abstract theorists: Peter never entered into theoretical controversies, which were foreign to his nature. For the same reason Peter, however well disposed he might be towards foreigners, always counted himself a Russian, while Ivan took pleasure in tracing the descent of his race from Cæsar Augustus. It was also for this reason that Peter could not entirely abase himself in sensual delights; he had too much work on his hands; his was a practical, not a contemplative nature. And this is one of the principal causes of Peter's success and Ivan's failure; another and more important reason lies in the fact that Russia was weaker in the time of the Terrible czar than in the time of Peter the Great.<sup>g</sup>



## CHAPTER V

### THE CENTURY AFTER IVAN THE TERRIBLE

[1584-1682 A.D.]

IVAN left two sons, Feodor and Dmitri, the first of whom, at twenty-two years of age, succeeded him. The second, born in 1581, was sprung from a seventh marriage, contracted by Ivan in contempt of the canons of the Greek church, which recognises no union as legitimate after the fourth widowhood. Notwithstanding this circumstance, the right of Dmitri to the title of czarevitch was not disputed, and he was even regarded as the presumptive heir to the crown, as the feeble health of Feodor rendered it extremely probable that he would die without issue.

The character of the new czar contrasted strangely with that of his father. Gentle and timid as a child, and devout even to superstition, Feodor spent his days in prayer, or in listening to and commenting upon pious legends. He was constantly to be seen in the churches, and he frequently took delight in ringing the bells himself, to call the faithful to divine service. "He is a sacristan," said Ivan the Terrible, "not a czarevitch." When not engaged in devotional exercises, Feodor used to shut himself up with his buffoons; or else, from a balcony, he would watch his huntsmen combating with bears. To a mind so weak, the cares of government were insupportable; and he therefore lost no time in transferring them to one of his own favourites, the boyard Boris Godunov, his brother-in-law. He first bestowed upon him the office of master of the horse, and attached to that title many important duties and immense power. Shortly afterwards, by a public confession of his own incapacity, he appointed him *pravitel*, or regent of the empire.<sup>s</sup>



## CHARACTER OF BORIS GODUNOV

From that time on, for eighteen years, the destiny of the Russian monarchy and people was bound up with the personality of Boris Godunov. His family traced its origin from the Tatar prince (*mourza*) Tchét, who in the fourteenth century had been baptised in the horde by the metropolitan Peter and had settled in Russia under the name of Zacharias. The Ipatski monastery, erected by him near Kostroma, was a monument of the piety of the newly baptised Tatar; it became the holy place of his descendants, who provided for it by their offerings and were buried there. The grandson of Zacharias, Ivan Godum, was the forefather of that branch of the family of Prince Tchét which from the appellation of Godum received the name of Godunov. The posterity of Godum flourished remarkably; the Godunovs owned estates, but they did not play an important rôle in Russian history until the time when one of the great-grandsons of the first Godunov had the honour of becoming the father-in-law of the czarevitch Feodor Ivanovitch. Then there appeared at the court of Ivan the Terrible the brother of Feodor's wife, Boris, who was married to a daughter of the czar's favourite, Maluta Skuratov. Ivan liked him. The exaltation of persons and families through relationship with the czaritsas was a very ordinary occurrence in the history of Moscow, but such exaltation was often precarious. The relatives of Ivan's wives were destroyed as freely as the other victims of his bloodthirstiness. Boris himself, by his nearness to the czar, was in imminent peril, and it is reported that Ivan wounded him badly with his staff when Boris interceded for the czarevitch Ivan, murdered by his father. But the czar himself lamented his son and afterwards showed Boris even greater favour for his boldness, which nevertheless cost him some months' illness. But towards the end of his life Ivan, under the influence of other favourites, began to look askance at Boris, and perhaps things might have gone badly with Godunov had not Ivan died suddenly.

After Ivan's death Boris found himself in a position such as had never before been occupied by a subject in the empire of Moscow. The feeble-minded Feodor had become czar, and as he could not in any case have ruled himself, he was obliged to give up his power to that one among his immediate entourage who proved himself the most capable and crafty. Such a one in the court circles of that time was Boris. At the time of Ivan's death he was thirty-two years of age; of a handsome presence, distinguished for his remarkable gift of speech, intelligent, prudent, but egotistical to a high degree. All his activity was directed to the serving of his own interests, to his enrichment, to the increase of his power, to the exaltation of his family. He understood how to wait, to take advantage of propitious moments, to remain in the shade or advance to the front when either manœuvre seemed opportune, to put on the mask of piety and of every virtue, to show kindness and mercy, and where it was necessary severity and harshness. Ever deliberate, he never gave way to enthusiastic impulses and always acted with reflection. Like all such characters, he was ready to do good if good did not stand in the way of his personal interests; neither did he stop at any wickedness or crime if he considered it necessary for the furtherance of his personal advantages, and least of all when it was a question of personal safety.

There was nothing creative in his nature. He was incapable of becoming the propagator of any idea or the guide of men into new pathways; egotistical natures are not fitted for such tasks. As regent of the state he was not far-seeing, but only apprehended proximate circumstances, and could only

[1590 A.D.]

take advantage of them for close and pre-eminently self-centered aims. The lack of a good education still further narrowed the horizon of his vision, although his strong common sense enabled him to understand the profitability of acquaintance with the west for the furtherance of his power. All the good of which his mind was capable was frustrated by his narrow egotism and the extraordinary mendacity that penetrated his whole being and was reflected in all his actions. This last quality, however, had become a distinguishing characteristic of the people of Moscow at that period. The seeds of this vice had long existed, but they were in a very great measure fostered and developed by the reign of Ivan the Terrible, who was himself falsehood personified. By creating the *opritchniki* Ivan had armed the Russians against one another, and taught them to look for favour or safety in the ruin of their neighbours; by punishments and executions for imaginary crimes, he had taught them to give false information; and by perpetrating the most inhuman villanies for pure diversion, he had educated those around him in heartlessness and cruelty. Respect for right and morality vanished after the czar, who according to the national ideal should be the guardian of both, had organised before the eyes of his subjects such spectacles as the baiting of innocent persons by bears or the public torture of naked girls, while at the same time he observed the strictest rules of monastic piety. In moments of personal danger everyone naturally thinks only of himself; but when such moments were prolonged for Russians into decades, it is comprehensible that a generation of self-seeking and hard-hearted egotists must have arisen, whose whole thought and aspiration were directed to the preservation of their own safety—a generation for whom, in spite of the outward observance of the customary forms of piety, lawfulness, and morality, there remained no inward righteousness. He who was clever beyond the average, was bound to become a model of falsity; it was an epoch when the mind, rivetted in the narrow fetters of the self-interested motives inherent in the whole contemporary sphere of existence, could only show its activity in the attainment of its personal aims by means of deceit. Desperate diseases of human society, like physical illnesses, are not quickly cured when the general conditions of life contribute not to the cessation but rather to the prolongation of the unhealthy state; the terrible phenomena of the “troubled times” can be explained only as the outbreaking of the hidden corruptions accumulated during the awful period of the tyranny of Ivan the Terrible.

The mendacity which constituted a feature of the period is powerfully reflected in the contemporary Russian sources of information, and it would be easy to fall into error and inaccurate inferences if we were to trust to them and accept their guidance; fortunately the evident contradictions and absurdities into which they fall sufficiently testify to their untruthfulness.<sup>c</sup>

## WAR WITH SWEDEN

Russia boasted of her power, having in reality the largest army in Europe, yet a part of old Russia was in Sweden's power. The peace concluded with King John expired at the beginning of the year 1590. The second interview with the ambassadors on the borders of the Plusa was fruitless, the Swedes having refused to restore their conquests. Under such circumstances no understanding could be arrived at. Sweden proposed a mere exchange, giving up Koporie for Sumersk on the banks of the Neva. John complained that the Russians annoyed Finland by incursions, ravaging the land like tigers. Feodor reproached the voyevods for their brigandage in the Zaonega, Olonetz,

Ladoga, and Dvina countries. During the summer of 1589 they came from Caïanie to pillage the lands belonging to the convents of Sklovetz, Petchensk, Kola, Kereta, and Kovda, seizing as booty more than half a million of silver roubles in cash. In engaging the king to make concessions, the czar spoke to him of his great allies, the emperor and the shah. But John answered ironically: "I am delighted to see you now know your weakness and wait for help from others. We shall see what kind of aid our relation Rudolph will give you. As for ourselves, we do not need allies to finish you off." Notwithstanding this insolence, John asked for a third interview with the ambassadors. But Feodor declared to him that neither peace nor a truce was wanted unless the Swedes would yield, besides the lands belonging to Novgorod which they had invaded, Revel and all Esthonia. In short, Russia declared war.



ESTHONIAN GIRL

Up to that time, Godunov had only shone by his genius in interior and exterior politics. Always prudent and inclined to peace, not warlike nor aspiring to glory through arms, he yet wished to prove that his love of peace did not arise from cowardice on this occasion when, without being ashamed or failing in the sacred use of power, bloodshed could not be avoided. To fulfil this duty he employed every means necessary to ensure success. He put on the field (if one can credit official documents of the time) nearly three hundred thousand fighters, infantry and cavalry, with three hundred pieces of artillery. All the boyars, all the czarevitches (Muhammed, Koul of Siberia, Rouslanei son of Kaiboula, and Ouraze Magmet of the Kirghiz), the voyevods of countries near and far,

towns and hamlets where they lived in quiet, were obliged to be at a certain time under the royal flag; for the pacific Feodor, having left — not without regret — his religious occupations, himself headed his army. This was just what Godunov needed to animate the troops and hinder senseless disputes among the principal dignitaries concerning ancient lineage and precedence.

Prince Feodor Mstislavski commanded the grand army; the advance guard was under Prince Dmitri Khvorostinin, a voyevod distinguished for talent and courage. Godunov and Feodor Romanov-Turiev (descended from the illustrious Philarete), the czar's second cousin, were combined with him under the title court voyevods. The czarina Irene followed her husband from Moscow as far as Novgorod, where the monarch assigned the destination of the troops. He ordered some to march to Flanders beyond the Neva; others



[1590 A.D.]

to Esthonia as far as the coast; he himself at the head of the principal army set out on the 18th of January, 1590, against Narva. It was a hard campaign on account of the severe cold, but distinguished by the zeal of the troops. The Russians marched to retake what was theirs, and, on the 27th of January, seized Jama. Twenty thousand Swedes, as many cavalry as infantry, commanded by Gustav Banér, met Prince Dmitri Khvorostinin near Narva, but were defeated and driven back into the town, which was full of people but destitute of provisions. That was why Banér, having left the necessary number of soldiers in the fortress, fled during the night and went to Vesenberg, pursued by the Russian Asiatic cavalry, and left all his baggage and artillery. Among the prisoners were several Swedes of distinction.

On the 4th of February the Russians besieged Narva, and having managed by a vigorous bombardment to make three breaches demanded a submission. The commander, Charles Horn, called them on to the assault and valiantly repulsed the enemy. The voyevods Saburov and Prince Ivan Tokmakov, as well as certain boyar children, Strelitz, and Mondiren, and Tchereless women and soldiers perished in the breach. Nevertheless, this affair, however brilliant for the Swedes, could not save the town: the cannonade did not cease; walls were tottering and the Russian troops prepared for a new assault on the 21st of February. Even at this epoch the Russians ravaged Esthonia without opposition as far as Revel, and in Finland as far as the Abo, for King John had more pride than forces. Then negotiations were opened. Russia demanded Narva and all Esthonia in return for peace from the Swedes; but the czar, "yielding to the Christian insistence of Godunov," as it is said in official documents, contented himself with re-establishing the former frontier.

On the 22nd of February Horn, in the king's name, concluded a peace for one year, yielding the czar Jama, Ivangorod, and Koporie, with all stores and war ammunition. It was agreed to fix the fate of Esthonia at a nearby meeting of Russians and Swedes, by promising to yield to Russia even Karelia, Narva, and other Esthonian towns. Russia gained in glory by her moderation. Feodor, after leaving the voyevods in the three fortresses taken, hastened to return to Novgorod and his wife, and go thence with her to Moscow to celebrate a victory over those same European powers with which his father, doubtful of his military skill, had warned him not to engage. The clergy, headed by the cross, came to meet the sovereign outside the town; and the metropolitan, Job, in a pompous discourse compared him to Constantine the Great and Vladimir, according him thanks in the name of country and church for having driven the infidels from the heart of Holy Russia, also for having re-established the altars of the true God in the town of Ivan III and in the old Slav possessions of Ilmen.

Soon Swedish perfidy gave new and important success to the arms of the pacific Feodor. King John, accusing Horn of cowardice, declared that the convention signed by him was incriminating. He reinforced his troops in Esthonia, and sent two seigneurs, lieutenants from Upsala and Vestergöt, to the mouths of the Plusa, there to have an interview with Prince Feodor Mstislavski and a member of the Pissemiski council, not to give Esthonia to Russia, but to exact that Jama, Ivangorod, and Koporie should be returned. At this news not only Feodor's ambassadors but even the Swiss soldiers showed their discontent. Ranged on the other side of the Plusa they called on the Russians, but Russia desired no more slaughter, and they forced their plenipotentiaries to forego their pretensions, so that nothing but peace was

sought and they ended by consenting to yield all Karelia to Russia. But she insisted on having Narva, and the ambassadors separated.

That same night the Swiss general, Joran Boyé, treacherously besieged Ivangorod whilst the terms of the Narva convention had not yet expired. But the intrepid voyevod Ivan Saburov completely defeated by a vigorous sortie not only General Boyé but the duke of Sudermania joined with him. The principal Moscow army was at Novgorod but was not in time to help. They found the fortress already delivered and saw only from a distance the enemy fleeing.<sup>d</sup>

#### SERFDOM

It was Boris Godunov, to whom his contemporaries give the title Lieutenant of the Empire, who in reality introduced into it the attachment of serfs to the soil. Up till then the peasants, using and abusing the faculty of passing from one estate to another, had changed masters on every occasion; and many were the inconveniences which resulted, notably this that they accustomed themselves to no given situation with its climate, men, and accessories, were not attached to the ground, and remained strangers to the locality they inhabited. Boris was besieged with the landowners' complaints on this subject, and saw, besides, that the cultivators themselves, frequently deceived in their hope of finding a better landlord, would then abandon themselves to discouragement; and this engendered poverty, increased the number of vagabonds and the lowest classes, and caused numerous habitations, well suited to shelter field-labourers, to be deserted, become dilapidated, and fall into ruin. Boris had favoured agriculture by releasing the peasants on the czar's estates, and perhaps those on his own, from the tax. His intentions were doubtless benevolent: his aim was to unite the labourers and the landlords as by a family tie, and to augment the well-being of both, by establishing between them an indissoluble community of interest to their mutual advantage. It was in this hope that he instituted the law of 1592 or 1593, by which the peasant's undisputed right to liberty of removal (*vykhod*) was suppressed.

We may, however, believe that Boris had still another motive. In a country of the extent of Russia and administered as she was, the government had some difficulty in keeping up direct relations with the peasants who were bound to pay it the tax and to provide for the recruiting of the army, which had recently been transformed like the rest. The government was then very glad to avail itself of the nobles as intermediaries and enlightened executors of its orders. Consequently it made them its delegates for the administration and police, an arrangement which simplified the machinery; and the nobles, acting in their own most apparent interests, must have afterwards pushed matters to extremes. However that may be, the peasants were now inscribed in review books and forbidden to go away from their commune except by the authority of their lord. In spite of the discontent which this measure produced, it was further strengthened by the ukase of the 21st of November, 1597, relative to fugitive peasants, of which there were a great number in consequence of these legal prescriptions, so evidently contrary to the temperament and genius of the nations. Those who had hired themselves out for a certain time were forbidden to redeem themselves from the effects of this new *régime*, even by reimbursing the sum stipulated as the price of hire. What was more, these peasants who had disposed of their persons by contract were not the only ones affected by these laws of oppres-

[1590 A.D.]

sion: they touched even the freemen who, without having signed any engagement, happened to be in the service of the landlords. If they had been there for more than three months, they were obliged to remain permanently, and where their time of service was not so long all they gained was the power of choosing between the last lord and another, but always renouncing the right of being their own masters. A new ukase ordained that all boyars, princes, nobles, the military and legal classes, etc., should present, on account of the individuals in their service, present or in the course of flight, their letters of serfdom, in order to have them inscribed in the registers of the chamber for the regulation of serfs.

The measure once taken, Godunov, who wished to be agreeable to the mass of the rural proprietors, gave it all the extension possible; still, at the same time he declared the emancipated to be free forever, as well as their wives and their children; this last, however, was a very feeble amelioration of an evidently iniquitous law, which did not fail to produce extreme indignation in the whole rural population. In various places the peasants protested by flight against the tyranny exercised over them by a power whose despotism had never gone so far. Want was doubtless not long in bringing the greater part back to their abandoned homes, or they were constrained to return by armed force; but St. George's day, the date when this law of enslavement was put into execution, was graven in their memories as a day of ill-omen; the people have never pardoned it for its disgrace and will perhaps continue to curse it, although the day of reparation is come at last. But the peasant was not the only one to suffer; the great number of men in flight gave occasion to a thousand ruinous suits between landowners; they accused each other of offering an asylum to the fugitives and of keeping them in concealment. The evil was so great, says the historian upon whose narratives ours is based, that Boris, though unwilling to abolish a law passed from good motives, decided at least to declare that it should be only temporary, and, by an ukase of the 21st of November, 1601, he authorised the peasants of boyars' children, and of other nobles of the secondary classes, to return, within a fixed period, from one proprietor to another of the same rank; not more than two at a time, however, and exception being made of the Moscow district. On the other hand, he ordered the peasants belonging to the boyars and other great nobles, and those of the crown, the bishoprics, and the convents, not to stir during this same year 1601, but to remain in their respective habitations. Karamzin adds that the sensation produced by all this was such that Boris was personally affected by it. It is asserted, he says, that the abolition of the old *régime* and the uncertainty of the new, a source of discontent to so many, exercised a great influence over the fate of the unfortunate Godunov. In the end he seems to have left the matter in suspense, and it was Prince Chuïski who, raised to the throne under the name of Vasili (V) Ivanovitch, consummated the social revolution we are speaking of, by his ukase of the 9th of March, 1607, confirming that of 1593 and, in addition, laying down the penalties to be inflicted on whoever should give asylum to the fugitives. The lot was cast—the peasant had lapsed into a serf attached to the soil.<sup>e</sup>

## DEATH OF DMITRI (1591 A.D.)

Boris desired above all things to be feared, but he did not disdain a certain amount of popularity for his family; and he left no means untried to render his sister Irene dear to the Russian people. All rigorous measures were executed in the name of the czar, and by order of the regent; but acts



of clemency and favours of every kind were ascribed to the intercession of the czarina Irene, who, indeed, was always a docile instrument in the hands of her brother. She acted and thought only in obedience to his inspirations, blending with great simplicity of heart her respect and admiration of Boris with the passionate love which she felt for Feodor.

The intimidated boyars were reduced to silence. Dmitri, still a child, could cause no apprehension; but his mother, the czarina-dowager, Maria Féodorovna, and his three uncles, Michael, Gregory, and Andrew Nagoi, might perhaps attempt to avail themselves of their alliance with the reigning family. Boris therefore banished them to the town of Uglitch, which had been assigned as an appanage to young Dmitri by the will of Ivan; and, under the pretext of intrusting them with the education of the czarevitch, he kept them there in a kind of exile.

At Uglitch, in 1591, Dmitri, at ten years of age, had his little court — his *jiltsy* (children brought up with the young princes), and his great officers, among whom the regent had doubtless introduced many a spy. The pensions of the young prince and his family were paid and controlled by a *desk*, or secretary of chancery, named Michael Bitiagovski, a creature of Boris; and between this functionary and the Nagoi there naturally arose frequent discussions, which increased in bitterness from day to day. Strong in the authority with which the regent had invested him, the secretary delighted to cavil at all the pretensions of the family of the czarevitch. It seemed his constant aim, by the incessant renewal of petty vexations, to make them feel that their fortune had greatly declined since the death of Ivan the Terrible. To the complaints which they laid before the czar, Bitiagovski replied by denouncing any imprudent expressions that might have escaped from the Nagoi during their exile. If we may believe the report of the secretary of chancery, the czarevitch already exhibited the ferocious instincts and cruel tastes of his father. He took pleasure in nothing, it was said, but in seeing animals beaten, or else in mutilating them with a refinement of barbarity. It is related that, one winter's day, when playing with some children of his own age, he constructed several figures of men out of the snow in the courtyard of his palace. To each of these he gave the name of one of the great functionaries of the empire; and the largest of all he called Boris. Then seizing a wooden sabre, he knocked off either their arms or their heads. "When I am a man," said the child, "that is how I will treat them." These and similar anecdotes were carefully collected and commented upon at Moscow. Perhaps they may have been invented by the agents of Boris, in order to render the Nagoi odious to the Russian nobility; or perhaps, educated as he was by servants and courtiers in disgrace, the young prince repeated only too faithfully the lessons which he was taught.

The hopes and fears occasioned by his education were, however, speedily dissipated by the sudden death of Dmitri. His end was strange, and it is difficult to say whether it was the result of an accident or of a crime. On the 15th of May, 1591, the czarevitch, whom his mother had just left for a moment, was amusing himself with four children, his pages or *jiltsy*, in the courtyard of his palace — a spacious enclosure which contained several separate dwelling houses, built irregularly in various parts. He was still attended by Vasilissa Volokhov his governess, his nurse, and a chambermaid. It is probable that they may have lost sight of him for a moment. According to the unanimous testimony of the three women and of the pages, he was holding a knife, which he was amusing himself by sticking into the ground, or with which he was cutting a piece of wood. On a sudden, the nurse looked

[1591 A.D.]

around, and saw him weltering in his blood. He had a large wound in his throat, and he expired without uttering a word. On hearing the cries of the nurse, the czarina ran up, and in the first transports of her despair exclaimed that her son had been assassinated. She flew upon the governess, whose duty it was to take care of him, and beat her furiously with a heavy stick, accusing her of having admitted the murderers who had just slain her son. At the same time, as her thoughts doubtless turned to her recent quarrels with Bitiagovski, she invoked upon that man the vengeance of her brothers and of the servants of her household.

Michael Nagoi now came up, having just left the dinner table, in a state of intoxication, according to the testimony of several witnesses: in his turn he began to beat the poor governess, and ordered that the alarm bell should be rung at the church of the Saviour, which stood near the palace. In an instant the courtyard was filled with inhabitants of Uglitch and domestics, who ran up with pitchforks and hatchets, believing that the palace of the czarevitch was on fire. With them arrived Bitiagovski, accompanied by his son and by the gentlemen employed in his chancery. He endeavoured to speak, to appease the tumult, and cried out at once that the child had killed himself by falling on his knife in an epileptic fit, from which it was well known that he frequently suffered. "Behold the murderer!" exclaimed the czarina. A hundred arms were immediately raised to strike him. He fled into one of the houses in the enclosure, and barricaded the door; but it was soon burst open, and he was cut to pieces. His son was slain at the same time. Whoever raised his voice in his defence, whoever was known to be connected with him, was immediately struck down and put to death. The governess Vasilissa, covered with blood and half-killed by the blows she had received, lay on the ground near the czarina, bareheaded, and with dishevelled hair; for the servants of the Nagoi had taken off her cap—which was considered by the Russians, at this period, a more infamous outrage even than blows. One of her serfs, compassionating her disgrace, picked up her cap, and replaced it on her head; he was instantly massacred. The furious crowd, still pursuing and murdering those who were pointed out to its vengeance, carried the bleeding body of the czarevitch into the church. Thither they dragged Daniel Volokhov, the son of the governess, who was known to be intimate with Bitiagovski. This was enough to procure his condemnation as an accomplice in the crime; and he was immediately put to death before the eyes of his mother, in front of the body of the young prince. It was with great difficulty that the priests of the church of the Saviour rescued Vasilissa and the daughters of Bitiagovski from the hands of the multitude. All these women, however, were shut up in one of the buildings adjoining the cathedral; and guards were placed at all the approaches.<sup>b</sup>

Public opinion denounced Boris, and in order to quiet the people he ordered an investigation. His emissaries had the audacity to declare that the young prince, in an access of folly, had cut his own throat, and that the Nagoi and the people of Uglitch had killed, as murderers, men who were innocent. The result of this policy was the extermination of the Nagoi and the depopulation of Uglitch.

Seven years afterward the pious Feodor died: in the person of this pale and virtuous sovereign ended the violent and sanguinary race of men of prey who had made Russia. The dynasty, issue of André Bogoliubski, had accomplished its mission—it had founded a united Russia. The task of bringing into the heart of Europe this semi-Asiatic country was to devolve on another dynasty.<sup>f</sup>

## THE REIGN OF BORIS (1598-1605 A.D.)

In 1598 Boris Godunov, by the voice of the electors and through the intrigues of his friends, ascended the throne of Russia. A crown obtained by indirect and fraudulent measures could not be preserved without tyranny. Boris, conscious of the jealousies which his elevation engendered in the minds of the nobles, and especially in the family of the Romanovs, who were allied to the race of Rurik but not to the Moscow line, was constantly haunted by apprehensions, and sought to lose them in the revel, and to propitiate them by the sacrifice of all persons whom he suspected. Had he been a legitimate sovereign he would have conferred lasting benefits upon his country, because he was a wise and paternal ruler in all matters apart from his personal affairs. He bestowed considerable pains on many laudable measures of improvement; but these were so sullied by acts of merciless revenge, to which he was moved by the danger in which he was placed by his usurpation, that it is difficult to separate his merits from his crimes.

The Tatars of the Crimea, immediately after Boris was proclaimed czar, exhibited a disposition to renew their old hostilities; but Boris promptly turned his attention to that part of the empire, and, assembling a numerous army, availed himself of the opportunity of ingratiating himself with the troops. The descent of the Tatars was merely an idle threat; but the occasion was one which contributed considerably to enlarge the popularity of Boris. He exceeded all his predecessors in the splendour and hospitality of his entertainments, in the frequency of the amusements which he provided for the soldiery and the citizens, and the general amenity and condescension of his bearing in public. It seems to have been the policy of the tyrants of Russia to conciliate the lower orders, in order that they might, with the greater facility, crush the aristocracy, from whom they chiefly dreaded opposition; and Boris was eminently successful in his attempts to ensnare the affections of the multitude, although he had actually deprived them of the only fragment of liberty they possessed.

In the commencement of his reign he evinced a strong desire to cultivate the friendship of the different powers of Europe, from whom severally he received ambassadors at his court; to extend to all his subjects in common the means of procuring cheap and rapid justice, in the fulfilment of which he gave audiences for the purpose of receiving and redressing complaints; and to diffuse abroad a taste for European knowledge and instruction in those arts and sciences which had hitherto been neglected and despised. In some of these wise projects he met great resistance from the clergy, who, released from the presence of a sovereign who ruled them by a mission from heaven, began to exhibit uneasiness and impatience of control. Thus constantly thrown back upon the uncertain tenure of his power, and reminded that he was not a legitimate master, Boris was forced to exert arbitrary and unjust means to maintain his authority. The current of the official and privileged classes was running against him, and he was compelled to erect such defences as the necessities of the occasion required. But even out of this difficulty he contrived to extract some benefits for the country.

For three years a famine fell upon Russia, paralysing the efforts of industry, and spreading misery and distress over the whole empire. Throughout the whole of this calamitous period, Boris incessantly employed himself in devising modes of relief, and levying from the surplus funds of the rich a treasury of alms to alleviate the wants of the poor. Out of his own abundant coffers he daily distributed several thousand rubles, and he forced the nobility





BORIS GODUNOV, IN RETIREMENT AT THE MONASTERY, INTREATED TO  
ACCEPT HIS ELECTION AS CZAR

(Painted for the HISTORIANS' HISTORY OF THE WORLD by Thure de Thulstrup)



[1598 A.D.]

and the clergy, who, with a grasping avariciousness, kept aloof from the miseries that surrounded them, to open their granaries, and to sell him their stores of corn at half price, that he might distribute it gratuitously amongst the impoverished people. These exactions depressed the wealthy, and won the gratitude of the needy; but still they were insufficient to meet the whole demand of poverty. Great numbers died, and Boris, unable to provide sustenance for them while living, caused them to be buried with respect, furnishing to each corpse a suit of linen grave-clothes.

These benevolent exertions of Boris were viewed with distrust and malice by the nobility, who clearly enough discerned the policy that lay at the bottom. Their murmurs arose in private, and gradually assumed a sterner expression in public. At the feasts, and even in the court itself, the signs and words of disaffection could not be misunderstood. The insecurity of his position urged Boris to protect himself by a machinery of terror. Into a small space of time he crowded a number of executions, and consigned several of the discontented grandees to imprisonment and exile. His alarm magnified his danger, and supplied him with expedients of cruelty. At his own banquets he did not hesitate to rise up and denounce particular individuals, who were immediately seized upon by his adherents, and either put to death or cast into dungeons, or banished, and their properties confiscated to the state. Despotism penetrated to all classes; the peasantry, bound to the soil, were further oppressed by penal laws.

Amongst other sanguinary provisions, it was enacted that all the individuals of a family were held to be involved in the punishment of a single member. It was also declared that every Russian who passed beyond the frontiers was a rebel to his country and a heretic. A father was invested with all the powers of a despot in his hut, and allowed to inflict summary punishment upon his wife and children, the latter of whom he was permitted to sell four times; and this regulation was annulled only by the bondage to the fief, which substituted a worse tyranny for the domestic slavery. The merciless rule of Boris may be regarded as the consequence of his situation, which exposed him to hazards from which he could not escape except by some such decisive and terrible measures. The iron sway pressed down the expiring spirit of licentious freedom. The wandering minstrels who had hitherto travelled through the country, perpetuating in their songs the historical glories of Russia, and inspiring the people with proud sentiments of national emulation, disappeared. The metrical chronicles perished in the general dismay. The immediate result of this struggle to preserve the object of his guilty ambition was an extensive emigration of the peasantry, who fled from the scene of misery to embrace the wild freedom of the Cossacks or seek protection from the king of Poland; and an atrocious *jacquerie* succeeded, which was, for a short time, triumphant.

Never had the government of Boris met with fewer obstacles; never had the authority of a czar appeared more firmly established. At peace with foreign powers, and quietly watching the conflicts of his neighbours, he applied himself to the task of civilising his people, of encouraging commerce, and of establishing an exact system of police in all the provinces of his empire. Every one of his acts was received with submission and executed with alacrity; but, nevertheless, all minds were agitated by a secret disquietude. The czar could not conceal from himself the aversion with which he was regarded by the Russians; all classes, nobles and serfs, alike detested him. He saw all his intentions, all his decrees interpreted as violations of the laws of the country. At this period of benighted ignorance the Russians, even of the



higher classes, regarded foreigners with a kind of superstitious horror. They made no difference between a foreigner and an infidel, and applied the name of "pagan" indiscriminately to the idolatrous Tcheremiss, the Mussulman Tatar, and the Lutheran or Catholic German. Love of their country, or, to speak more correctly, of their native soil, was confounded by them with their attachment to their national religion. They called themselves the "orthodox people," and their country Holy Russia. Elsewhere than in that privileged land it was impossible, they believed, to obtain salvation. The early troubles of the Reformation in Germany had brought into Russia a large number

of poor adventurers, who had sought to turn their superior knowledge to account. The people were not slow to perceive the pre-eminence of these foreigners in the arts and industry, but they only detested them the more on this account. The Germans were continually charged by the vulgar herd with a desire to corrupt the national faith, and to appropriate to themselves the wealth of the country. Boris, indeed, flattered them and invited them into his dominions, feeling that he had need of them to guide his subjects towards a higher stage of civilisation. But the commercial privileges and facilities which he granted to Livonian and German merchants only served as a pretext to the most terrible accusation which could be brought against a sovereign—that of betraying his country and his religion. He sent eighteen young gentlemen to study in Germany, France, and England; their families lamented them as doomed victims. On either side of the frontier all contact with foreigners was deemed a pollution.<sup>b</sup>



A FEMALE OSTIAK

### *The False Dmitri Appears*

Suddenly, a surprising rumour was brought from the frontiers of Lithuania, and spread with incredible rapidity through all the provinces of the empire. The czarevitch Dmitri, who was believed to have been assassinated at Uglitch, was still living in Poland. Having been favourably received by a palatine, he had made himself known to the principal nobles of the republic, and was preparing to reclaim his hereditary throne. It was related that he had wandered for some time in Russia, concealed beneath the frock of a monk. The archimandrite of the convent of the Saviour at Novgorod Seversk had given him a lodging without recognising him. The prince had proceeded thence to Kiev, leaving in his cell a note, in which he declared that he was Dmitri, the son of Ivan the Terrible, and that he would one day recompense the hospitality of the archimandrite. On the other hand it was stated that the persons worthy of belief had seen the czarevitch among the Zaparogian Cossacks, taking part in their military expeditions and distin-

[1603 A.D.]

guishing himself by his courage and address in all warlike exercises. The name of the ataman under whose orders he had enrolled himself was also given. Other authorities declared that they had seen the same person at the same time studying Latin at Huszcza, a small town in Volhynia. Though reports were contradictory as to details, they all agreed on this one point—that Dmitri was still living, and that he intended to call the usurper to account for all his crimes.<sup>b</sup>

Who was the personage whom the Russian historians have called the "false Dmitri." Was he really the son of Ivan the Terrible, saved by the foresight of the Nogai from the assassins' knife and replaced in the coffin, as he related, by the son of a pope (Russian parish priest)? Was he, as the czar and the patriarch proclaimed him, a certain Gregori Otrepiev, a vagabond monk who was for a time secretary to the patriarch Job and was thus enabled to surprise state secrets—who in his nomadic life afterwards appeared amongst the Zaparogians, where he is said to have become an accomplished rider and an intrepid Cossack? To all these questions, in the present state of our information, no absolutely certain answer can be given. Kostomarov compared the handwriting of the pretender with that of the monk Otrepiev and affirms that they do not resemble each other. Captain Margeret knew people who conversed with Otrepiev after the pretender's death. Not to prejudge the solution we will give this last not the name of Dmitri but that of Demetrius, with which he signed his letters to the pope.

About the year 1603 a young man entered the service of the Polish *pan*, Adam Vichnevetski. He fell or feigned to fall ill, sent for a Catholic priest, and under the seal of professional secrecy revealed to him that he was the czarevitch Dmitri, who had escaped from the assassins of Uglitch. He showed, suspended from his neck, a cross enriched with precious stones, which he asserted that he had received from Prince Mstislavski, the godfather of Dmitri. The priest dared not keep such a secret to himself. Demetrius was recognised by his master Vichnevetski as the legitimate heir of Ivan the Terrible. Mniszek, palatine of Sandomir, promised him his help. Demetrius had already fallen in love with Marina, the eldest daughter of Mniszek, and swore to make her czarina of Moscow; the father and the young girl accepted the proposal of marriage.

Meantime the strange tidings of the resuscitation of Dmitri spread through the whole kingdom of Poland. Mniszek and Vichnevetski conducted Demetrius to Cracow and presented him to the king. The papal nuncio interested himself in his behalf; the Jesuits and Franciscans worked in concert for his conversion; in secret he abjured orthodoxy and promised to bring Moscow within the pale of the Roman church. He corresponded with Clement VIII whose least servant, *infimus cliens*, he declared himself to be. Thus he was recognised by the king, the nuncio, the Jesuits, and the pope. Did they really believe in his legitimacy? It is probable that they saw in him a formidable instrument of disturbance; the king flattered himself that he would be able to turn it against Russia and the Jesuits—that they might use it against orthodoxy. Sigismund dared not take upon himself to break the truce concluded with Boris and expose himself to Muscovite vengeance. He treated Demetrius as czarevitch, but only in private; he refused to place the royal troops at his disposal, but authorised the nobles who were touched by the misfortunes of the young prince to aid him as they might desire.

The *pans* had no need of a royal authorisation; many of them, with the light-heartedness and love of adventure which characterised the Polish nobility, took arms.

No revolution, be it the wisest and most necessary, is accomplished without setting in motion the dregs of society, without coming into collision with many interests and creating a multitude of outcasts. The transformation then being accomplished in Russia for the creation of the modern unitary state had awakened formidable elements of disorder. The peasant, whom the laws of Boris had just attached to the glebe, was everywhere covertly hostile. The petty nobility, to whose profit this innovation had been made, could only with great difficulty live by their estates: the czar's service had become ruinous; many were inclined to make up for the inadequacy of their revenues by brigandage. The boyars and the higher nobility were profoundly demoralised and were ready for any treason. The military republics of the Cossacks of the Don and Dnieper, the bands of serfs or fugitive peasants which infested the country districts, were only waiting an opportunity to devastate Moscow. The ignorance of the masses was profound, their minds greedy of marvels and of change: no nation has allowed itself to be so often captured by the same fable—the sudden reappearance of a prince believed to be dead. The archives of the secret chancery show us that there were in Russia, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, hundreds of impostors, of false Dmitris, false Alexises, false Peters II, false Peters III. It might be thought that the Russian people, the most Asiatic of European peoples, had not renounced the oriental dogma of reincarnations and *avatars*.

So long as power was in the hands of the skilful and energetic Godunov, he succeeded in maintaining order, in restraining the fomenters of disturbance, and in discouraging Demetrius. The patriarch Job, and Vasili Shuiski, who had directed the inquiry at Uglitch, made proclamations to the people and affirmed that Dmitri was indeed dead and that the pretender was no other than Otrepiev. Messengers were despatched bearing the same affirmations to the king and the diet of Poland. Finally troops were set on foot and a cordon was established along the western frontier. But already the towns of Severia were agitated by the approach of the czarevitch; the boyars ventured to say publicly that it was "difficult to bear arms against a legitimate sovereign"; at Moscow the health of the czar Dmitri was drunk at festive gatherings. In October, 1604, Demetrius crossed the frontier with a host of Poles, and banished Russians, German mercenaries, and Zaparogians. Severia immediately broke out into insurrection, but Novgorod Seversk resisted. After Severia, the towns of Ukraine joined in defection. Prince Mstislavski tried to arrest Demetrius by giving battle; but his soldiers were seized with the idea that the man against whom they were fighting was the real Dmitri. "They had no arms to strike with," says Margeret. Twelve thousand Little-Russian Cossacks hastened to join the pretender's standard. Vasili Shuiski, the successor of Mstislavski, did his best to restore their *morale*; this time Demetrius was vanquished at Dobrinitchi. Boris fancied that the war was ended: it was only beginning. Four thousand Don Cossacks came to join the brigand. The inaction of the Muscovite voyevods announced that the spirit of treason was gaining the higher nobility.

In 1605 Boris died, after recommending his innocent son to Basmanov, the boyars, the patriarch, and the people of Moscow. All took the oath to Feodor Borissovitch. But Basmanov had no sooner taken command of the army of Severia than he was in a position to convince himself that neither the soldiers nor their leaders intended to fight for a Godunov. Rather than be the victim of an act of treason he preferred to be its perpetrator; the man in whom the dying Boris had placed all his confidence joined Galitzin and Soltikov, the secret partisans of Demetrius. He solemnly announced to the



[1605 A.D.]

troops that the latter was indeed the son of Ivan the Terrible and the legitimate master of Russia; he was the first to throw himself at the feet of the pretender, who was immediately proclaimed by the troops. Demetrius marched on Moscow. At his approach his partisans rose: the son and the wife of Godunov were massacred. Such was the sanguinary end of the dynasty which Boris had thought to found in the blood of a czarevitch.

Let us bear in mind that in 1586 had appeared the narrative of Jean Sauvage, sailor and merchant of Dieppe, who had come to reconnoitre the harbours of the White Sea and prepare the way for French traffic. The same year the czar Feodor Ivanovitch sent to Henry III a Frenchman of Moscow, Pierre Ragon, to notify him of his accession; at Moscow appeared the first ambassador sent there by France, François de Carle. In 1587 a company of Parisian merchants obtained a commercial charter from the same czar. Henry IV was in correspondence with the czars Feodor Ivanovitch and Boris.

## CAREER AND MURDER OF DEMETRIUS (1606 A.D.)

What was now taking place in Russia is one of the most extraordinary events of which the annals of the world make mention. An unknown man was making his triumphal entry into Moscow and the Kremlin (June 20th–30th). All the people wept for joy, thinking they beheld the scion of so many princes. One man alone dared to affirm that he had seen Dmitri murdered and that the new czar was an impostor; this was Vasili Shuiski, one of those who had superintended the inquiry of Uglicht and who, at the battle of Dobrinitchi, had defeated the pretender. Denounced by Basmanov, he was condemned to death by an assembly of the three orders. His head was already on the block, when the czar sent an express bearing his pardon.

The son of the terrible czar was not recognisable in this act of mercy. Later on Demetrius was to repent of it. Job, the creature of Godunov, was replaced in the patriarchate by a creature of the new prince, the Greek Ignatius. The czar had an interview with his pretended mother, Marie Nagoi, the widow of Ivan IV: whether because she wished to complete the work of an avenger, or because she was glad to recover all her honours, Marie recognised Demetrius as her son and publicly embraced him. He heaped favours on the Nagoi as his maternal relatives: the Romanovs also were recalled from exile and Philaret was made metropolitan of Rostov.

The czar presided regularly at the *douina*; the boyars admired the correctness of his judgment and the variety of his knowledge. Demetrius was a man of learning, brave and skilful in all bodily exercises. He was fond of foreigners and spoke of sending the Russian nobles to study in the west. This taste for foreigners was not unaccompanied by a certain contempt for the national ignorance and rudeness. He offended the boyars by his mockeries; he alienated the people and the clergy by his contempt for Russian religious rites and usages. He ate veal, did not sleep after dinner, did not frequent the baths, borrowed money from the convents, turned the monks into ridicule, opposed the hunting with bears, paid familiar visits to foreign jewellers and artisans, took no heed of the strict etiquette of the palace, himself pointed cannon, organised sham fights between the national and foreign troops, took pleasure in seeing the Russians beaten by the Germans, surrounded himself with a European guard at the head of which were found men like Margeret, Knutzen, Van Dennen. A conflict having broken out between the clergy and the pope's legate on the occasion of his entry into Moscow, two

bishops were exiled. No one thanked him for resisting the pope and the king of Poland, refusing to the one to occupy himself in the cause of the reunion of the two churches, declaring to the other that he would not yield an inch of Russian territory. The arrival of his wife, the Catholic Marina, with a suite of Polish noblemen, who affected insolence towards the Russians, completed the irritation of the Muscovites. Less than a year after the entry of Demetrius [or as we may henceforth call him, Dmitri] into the Kremlin, men's minds were ripe for a revolution.

### *The False Dmitri; Marriage and Death*

It is difficult to understand why, though as unscrupulous as most adventurers, Demetrius persisted in his determination to espouse a Catholic Pole, although he was well aware that such a union would be highly distasteful to his people. When compelled to solicit the assistance of the palatines of Lithuania by all means in his power, it was not surprising that he eagerly sought to ally himself with Mniszek: but now that he was seated upon the throne of the czars, such an alliance could not be otherwise than prejudicial to his interests. Yet he was the first to remember his promise, and as soon as he had been crowned at Moscow he sent to invite Marina to share his throne. When he signed the promise of marriage in Poland, he was, doubtless, under the influence of Marina's charms, but at Moscow we cannot ascribe his impatience to conclude the projected union to the eagerness of love. For whilst Vlassiev, bearing magnificent presents for the bride and all her family, was on his way to Cracow to hasten their departure for Russia, the czar had an acknowledged mistress, who resided with him in the Kremlin, and this mistress was no other than the daughter of Boris.

"Xenia," writes a contemporary author, "was a girl of the greatest intelligence; her complexion was pink and white, and her black eyes sparkled with vivacity. When grief caused her to shed tears, they shone with a still greater radiance. Her eyebrows joined; her body was formed with perfect symmetry, and was so white that it seemed to have been moulded with cream. She was an accomplished person, speaking more elegantly than a book. Her voice was melodious, and it was a real pleasure to hear her sing songs."

This beauty was fatal to Xenia. After witnessing the death of her mother and brother, she took refuge first of all in a convent, or, according to some annalists, she found an asylum in the house of Prince Mstislavski. Soon afterwards she entered the palace of the enemy of her family, and for some months she was the favourite mistress of the czar. It was probably to her influence that several of the Godunovs were indebted for their lives, and even for some degree of favour. Whether she yielded to seduction or to violence, as some modern authors have asserted, it is impossible to discover at the present day. It is no less impossible to decide whether Dmitri allowed himself to be subdued by the charms of his captive, or whether, like a pitiless conqueror, he sacrificed her to his arrogant vanity, and desired, with a refinement of vengeance, to inflict the greatest dishonour on the enemy's family. At all events, it appears certain that for some time Xenia exercised such marked influence over him that Mniszek grew alarmed, and seriously remonstrated with the czar. It was only when Marina was actually on her way to Moscow that Dmitri dismissed his captive. He sent her into a monastery, according to the usage of the time. She took the vows in the convent of St. Sergius, at Moscow, under the name of Olga, and died there in 1622.

These singular amours, this fidelity to his engagements in the midst of



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RUSSIAN WEDDING FEAST OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

(From the painting by C. Makovski)





[1606 A.D.]

inconstancy and even of debauchery, this boldness in attempting a desperate enterprise, this imperturbable coolness in maintaining an audacious imposture, this gracefulness in acting the part of a legitimate monarch, so many brilliant qualities united with puerile vanity and the most imprudent levity --- such are the contrasts presented by the character of Dmitri, which are perhaps explicable by his extreme youth and his adventurer's education. Nothing, however, is more rare than a character all the parts of which are in perfect harmony. Contradiction is the characteristic of most men, and there are very few whose lives correspond to the projects which they have formed or to the hopes to which they have given rise. Who can say that the pleasure of exhibiting himself in all the splendour of his high fortune before the eyes of those who had witnessed his poverty had not the greatest share in the resolutions of Dmitri? Muiszek and Marina were probably the first persons whose esteem appeared precious to him. To obtain the approbation of a few Polish palatines, he risked his crown; but does not every man believe that the world's opinion is that of the little circle in which he is accustomed to move?<sup>b</sup>

The security of the pretender was, however, but seeming. Vasili Shuiski, whom Dmitri had pardoned, presently organised a plot for his destruction. The czar's extreme confidence was his ruin. One night the boyars assailed the Kremlin where no guard was kept. Demetrius was flung from a window and slaughtered in the courtyard of the palace. Basmanov, who had tried to defend him, was killed at his side. The corpse of Demetrius was taken up, a fool's mask was placed on the face, and the body exposed in the place of executions between a bagpipe and a flute. The father-in-law and the widow of Dmitri, the envoys of the Polish king and the Poles who had come to attend the imperial nuptials were spared but retained as prisoners by the boyars. The corpse of the "sorcerer" was burned; a cannon, turned in the direction of Poland, was charged with the ashes and scattered them to the winds (May, 1606).<sup>f</sup>

## VASILI IVANOVITCH SHUISKI (1606-1610 A.D.)

Immediately after the death of Demetrius, the boyars concerted measures for convoking deputies from all the towns and proceeding to the election of a new sovereign; but they were not allowed to accomplish their design. The throne had been but four days vacant when Shuiski directed his partisans to proclaim himself. They led him forth into the public place, named him czar by acclamation, and immediately escorted him to the cathedral. There, in order to ingratiate himself with his new subjects and make them forget the illegality of his election, he took a solemn oath not to punish anyone without the advice and consent of the boyars; not to visit the offences of the fathers on the children; and that he would never revenge himself in any way on those who had offended him in the time of Boris. Since Novgorod lost its privileges, this was the first time that a sovereign of Russia had pledged himself to any convention with his subjects; but Shuiski's oath was no guarantee for its fulfilment.

Having good reason to dread the resentment of the Polish nation, Shuiski sent Prince Volkonski on an embassy to them, to represent the late czar as an impostor, who had deluded both Poland and Russia; but the ambassador was not even listened to. Sigismund and his subjects were resolved to be revenged on the Russians, and to profit by the disturbances which they foresaw would soon break out among them. Shuiski was not liked by the Russian nobles, many of whom might have competed with him for the throne had the choice

of the nation been free; and his conduct after his elevation augmented the number of his enemies. In spite of his oath he could not forget any of his old grudges; and he ventured to indulge them just enough to exasperate their objects without depriving them of the power of retaliation. Moscow was the only city in the empire on the allegiance of which he could rely; but even there the people had imbibed from their late excesses an alarming propensity to disorder and mutiny. To meet all the dangers thickening round him Shuiski had neither an army nor money; for Dmitri's profusions and the pillage of the Kremlin had exhausted the imperial treasury. His chief strength lay in his renown for orthodoxy, which insured him the favour of the clergy. The more to strengthen his interests in that direction, he made it his first business to depose and send to a monastery the heretic patriarch Ignatius, who had been appointed by Dmitri, and to nominate in his stead Hermogenes, bishop of Kasan, an aged prelate whose simplicity rendered him a useful tool in the hands of the crafty czar.

Rumours began to be rife in the provinces, and even in Moscow, that Dmitri was not dead. Many of those who had seen his mangled body exposed denied its identity, and believed that one of the czar's officers had been massacred instead of him. Four swift horses were missing from the imperial stables; and it was surmised that by means of them Dmitri had escaped in the midst of the tumult. Three strangers in Russian costume, but speaking Polish, crossed the Oka in a boat, and one of them gave the ferryman six ducats, saying, "You have ferried the czar; when he comes back to Moscow with a Polish army he will not forget this service." The same party held similar language in a German inn a little farther on. It was afterwards known that one of them was Prince Shakhovskoi, who, immediately upon the death of Dmitri, had, with singular promptitude, conceived the idea of finding a new impostor to personate the dead one.

To put an end to the alarming rumours, Shuiski sent to Uglitch for the body of the real czarevitch, that with the help of the patriarch he might make a saint of him. When the grave was opened the body of the young prince was found in a perfect state of preservation, with the fresh hue of life upon it, and still holding in his hands some nuts as miraculously preserved as itself. It is curious that Shuiski should have forgotten that nothing was said of these nuts in the report of the inquest at Uglitch signed by himself. That document only stated that at the moment of his death the czarevitch was amusing himself with sticking his knife in the ground. Notwithstanding this oversight, the act of canonisation was good policy; for if the czarevitch became an object of veneration for the people, if it was notorious that his body worked miracles on earth, and consequently that his soul was in heaven, then anyone assuming his name could be nothing but an impostor. The czar took pains to make known far and wide what prodigies were effected by the relics of the blessed martyr. But the credit of the new saint was of short duration: Shuiski himself damaged it by a gross blunder in permitting the pompous removal to the monastery of Troitsa of the remains of Boris Godunov, whom but a few days before he had named as the murderer of the sainted Dmitri. No doubt he hoped in this way to conciliate the partisans of a still powerful family; but his enemies immediately accused him of blasphemous wickedness, alleging that he had substituted the body of a newly murdered boy for the decomposed corpse of the real Dmitri.

The public retractations of the dowager czaritza obtained no more credit than the miracles imputed to her son. In a letter signed by her, and immediately published by Vasili, she declared that the impostor Grishka Otrepiev



[1606 A.D.]

had threatened her with death to herself and all her family if she did not recognise him as her son. But who could believe in her sincerity after so many contradictory avowals and disavowals? Her declaration that she had been compelled by fear to yield to the threats of a man whose aversion to cruelty was notorious, suggested to everybody the idea that she acted at that moment under the coercion of threats and fear.

Civil war began. Prince Shakhovskoi had raised the inhabitants of Putivle, and in a few days assembled a great number of Cossacks and peasants, who routed the forces sent against them. The insurrection spread rapidly; but still the prince, twice miraculously saved, did not make his expected appearance. Instead of him there came from Poland a general with a commission bearing the imperial seal of Dmitri. This was an adventurer named Ivan Bolotnikov, originally a serf to Prince Teliatvski. He had been a prisoner among the Turks, and having escaped to Venice had probably acquired some military experience in the service of the republic. His commission was recognised at Putivle; he took the command of the insurgents, defeated Shuiski's forces in two engagements, and pursued them to within seven versts of the capital. But the inexplicable absence of the prince for whom they fought damped the ardour of Bolotnikov's men; for they could not believe that if Dmitri was alive he would delay to put himself at their head. The ataman of the Cossacks, too, was mortified at being supplanted in the command by an adventurer, and suffered himself to be corrupted by Shuiski. Deserted by a part of his army, Bolotnikov was defeated by Skopin Shuiski, the czar's nephew, and forced to shelter himself in the fortress of Kaluga.

It is probable that all this while Shakhovskoi and the Poles were looking about for a fit person to play the part of Dmitri; but it required time to find him, and to put him through training. In this conjuncture the false Peter Feodorovitch, who had made a brief appearance in the former reign, repaired to Putivle, and offered himself to Shakhovskoi and the people as regent in the absence of his uncle. The rebel cause stood in need of the prestige of a royal name, and the czarevitch Peter was eagerly welcomed. Presently, the czar having marched against him in person, the impostor and Shakhovskoi shut themselves up in the strongly fortified town of Tula, where they were joined by Bolotnikov. Vasili laid siege to the town with an army of a hundred thousand men; but the besieged, who had no mercy to expect if taken, fought more earnestly for their own lives than did Shuiski's soldiers for the rights of a master to whom they were but little attached. Seeing the light progress he made, the czar began to doubt the success of an enterprise to fail in which would be ruin.

While he was in this anxious state, an obscure ecclesiastic, named Kravkov, presented himself before the czar and his council, and undertook, if his directions were followed, to drown all the people of Tula. They laughed at him at first as an idle braggart, but he reiterated his assertion with such confidence that the czar at last desired him to explain his plan. Tula is situated in a valley, and the little river Upa flows through the town. Kravkov proposed to dam the stream below the town, and engaged to answer for it with his head if in a few hours after the execution of that work the whole town was not laid under water. All the millers in the army, men accustomed to such operations, were immediately put under his orders, and the rest of the soldiers were employed in carrying sacks of earth to the spot chosen for the dam. The water soon rose in the town, inundated the streets, and destroyed a great number of houses; but the garrison still fought for several months with unabated courage, though decimated by famine, and afterwards by a terrible

epidemic. All the efforts both of the besiegers and the besieged were concentrated about the dam, the former labouring to raise and maintain it, the latter to break it down. The inhabitants of Tula were persuaded that magic must have had some share in raising so prodigious a work with such rapidity, and magic was not neglected among the means by which they sought to destroy it. A monk, who boasted his proficiency in that art, offered to effect the desired object for a reward of a hundred roubles. His terms being accepted by Bolotnikov, he stripped, plunged into the river, and disappeared. An hour afterwards, when everyone had given him up for dead, he rose to the surface, with his body covered with scratches. "I have just had to do," he said, "with the twelve thousand devils at work on Shuiski's dam. I have settled six thousand of them, but the other six thousand are the worst of all, and will not give in."

For a long time the inhabitants of Tula continued to fight against men and devils, encouraged by letters they received in Dmitri's name, with promises of success which never came. Shakhovskoi, the chief instigator of the rebellion, was the first to propose a capitulation, and was thrust into a dungeon by the Cossacks. At last, when the besieged had eaten their horses, dogs, and all other carrion, and had not so much as an oxhide left to gnaw, Bolotnikov and Peter offered to capitulate on condition of amnesty for their heroic garrison. They asked nothing for themselves, but declared that unless their soldiers obtained honourable conditions they were resolved to die with arms in their hands, and even to eat each other, rather than surrender at discretion. Vasilii accepted these terms, and the gates were opened to him (October, 1607). Bolotnikov advanced before the czar with undaunted mien, and presenting his sword, with the edge laid against his neck, offered himself as a victim, saying, "I have kept the oath I swore to him who, rightfully or wrongfully, calls himself Dmitri. Deserted by him, I am in thy power. Cut off my head if thou wilt; or if thou wilt spare my life, I will serve thee as I served him." Shuiski, who did not pique himself on generosity, sent Bolotnikov to Kargopol, where he soon after had him drowned. The false Peter Feodorovitch was hanged; but Shakhovskoi, the most guilty of the three, was more fortunate. The victor found him in chains when he entered Tula, and Shakhovskoi made a merit of his sufferings at the hands of the obstinate rebels whom he had urged to submit to their sovereign. He obtained his liberty; but the first use he made of it was to rekindle the flames of insurrection.

Before Shuiski had terminated the siege of Tula, and whilst the issue of his conflict with one pretender was still dubious, another, assuming the name of Dmitri, appeared in the frontier town of Starodub, where he was hailed with enthusiasm. Bolotnikov sent an officer to him from Tula, to acquaint him with the desperate condition of the town. This envoy was a Polish adventurer, named Zarucki, who had become one of the *atanans* of the Don Cossacks, had fought bravely for the first Demetrius, and been distinguished by his favour. Although the first glance must have satisfied Zarucki that the new pretender was an imposter, he affected without the least hesitation to recognise him as his former master. Another false witness of this identity was the Pane Miechaviecki, a Pole, who was well known for the eminent position he had held at the court of the first Demetrius, and who was now the secret instructor of his successor in what we may call the histrionic details belonging to his assumed character.

The pupil profited but badly by the lessons he received; for in everything but profusion he was the reverse of his prototype, and the least attentive observer could see that he was a coarse, ignorant, vulgar knave, qualified

[1608 A.D.]

only by his impudence for the part he had undertaken. The Cossacks were not such fastidious critics as to be shocked by his uncourtly manners; but the Poles, whilst treating him as a sovereign for their own ends, were by no means the dupes of his gross imposture. Baer states that he was originally a schoolmaster of Sokol, in White Russia; but, according to the Polish writers, who had better opportunities of learning the truth, he was a Lithuanian Jew, named Michael Moltchanov.

The adherents of Dmitri, as we may continue to call him, increased so rapidly in numbers that he was able to defeat a detachment of Vasili's army sent against him from Tula, and to make himself master of the town of Kozelsk on the road to the capital. When the fall of Tula had left the czar at liberty to act against him with all his forces, Dmitri retreated to Novgorod Seversk. There he was joined by unexpected reinforcements led by Rozynkil Sapieha, Tiszkievich, Lissovski, and others, the flower of the Polish and Lithuanian chivalry. Prince Adam Viszimoviecki, the patron of the first false Dmitri, came in person to the aid of his successor at the head of two thousand horse. The Don Cossacks brought in chains to him another schemer, who had tried to put himself at their head. All that is known of the man is that he called himself Feodor Feodorovitch, and pretended to be the son of the czar Feodor. His more prosperous rival in imposture condemned him to death.

Dmitri's army, commanded by the veteran prince Roman Rozinski, defeated that of the czar with great havoc near Volkhov, on the 24th of April 1608. All the vanquished who escaped the lances of the Poles and Cossacks fled in disorder to Moscow, and had the victors pressed their advantage, the capital would have fallen into their hands. Possibly the Polish leaders were in secret unwilling to let their *protégé* triumph too soon or too completely, or to give up Moscow to pillage, which is always more profitable to the soldier than to the general; but, whatever was the reason, they halted at the village of Tushino, twelve versts from Moscow, which the impostor made his headquarters, and there he held his court for seventeen months.

With a view to prevail on Sigismund to recall the Polish volunteers in Dmitri's service, Vasili resolved to liberate the ambassadors, the palatine of Sendomir and his daughter, and the other Poles whom he had kept in captivity since the massacre of Moscow. With their liberty he bestowed on them indemnifications for their losses, and only exacted from them a pledge that they would not bear arms against Russia, or in any way favour the new pretender. Thus, after having made sport of the most solemn oaths, Vasili expected to find in men, so deeply provoked, scruples of conscience which he had never known himself. He sent Mniszek and his daughter away under charge of an escort; but they were intercepted by a detachment of Poles, and carried to Dmitri's camp.

They had been prepared for this event by a letter previously received by the palatine from his pretended son-in-law, which contained this remarkable phrase: "Come both of you to me, instead of going to hide yourselves in Poland from the world's scorn." He could hardly have dropped a hint more adapted to move a woman of Marina's character. Rather than go back to encounter ridicule at Sendomir, she was willing to share the bed of a bandit who might bestow a crown upon her. It is said, however, that in their first interview with Dmitri neither she nor her father testified all the emotion befitting so touching an occasion, nor could quite conceal their surprise at the sight of a man not at all like him whose name he bore. But after a few days the scene of meeting was played over again with more success, and the whole camp was witness of Marina's demonstrations of tenderness for her husband.



In apology for her previous coldness it was said that, having so long believed her Dmitri was dead, she durst not yield to the delight of seeing him alive again until she had received the most certain proofs that it was not a delusion. This clumsy excuse was admitted; Marina's recognition of the impostor brought over to him numbers who had doubted till then; and, the news being soon spread abroad, almost all Russia declared for him, except Moscow, Novgorod, and Smolensk.

This was the culminating point of his fortunes: their decline was rapid. The mutual jealousy of the Polish commanders rose to such a pitch that it became necessary to divide the army; and Sapieha quitted the camp of Tushino, with thirty thousand men and sixty cannon, to lay siege to the famous monastery of the Trinity, near Moscow, which was at the same time a powerful fortress and the most revered sanctuary of Russian orthodoxy. The support which Shuiski received from the monks was worth more to him than an army; for besides large subsidies he derived from them a moral force which still kept many of his subjects true to their allegiance. The loss of such auxiliaries would have consummated his ruin; therefore the capture of the monastery was of extreme importance to the impostor. But in spite of the most strenuous efforts, continued for six weeks, Sapieha was unable to obtain the least advantage over a garrison whose courage was exalted by religious enthusiasm; and meanwhile the Poles had to sustain a harassing and murderous guerilla warfare, waged against them by the plundered peasants, whom they had made desperate. These partisan bands were about to be supported by a more formidable army, led by Skopin Skuiski and by James de la Gardie, who brought five thousand Swedish auxiliaries to Vasili's aid.

Early in 1609 these two generals began a brilliant campaign in the north; the Poles and the partisans of the impostor were beaten in several encounters, and in a few months the whole aspect of the war was changed. Finally, Sapieha himself was defeated in an obstinate engagement, forced ignominiously to raise the siege of the monastery, and shut himself up with the remnant of his force in Dmitrov. Skopin entered Moscow in triumph; but Vasili's jealousy kept him there inactive for two months until he died suddenly, in his twenty-fourth year. Vasili, to whose cause the young hero's death was fatal, was accused by public rumour of having effected it by poison.

For some months before this time there had been a new champion in the field, whose appearance was equally to be dreaded by Shuiski and Dmitri. About the end of September, 1609, Sigismund, king of Poland, laid siege to Smolensk, with an army of twelve thousand men, and immediately summoned to his standard the Poles who served under Dmitri. The greater part of them complied, and the impostor fled to Kaluga. In the spring of 1610 Russia presented a most deplorable spectacle, being devastated by three great armies, all opposed to one another. In the west, Sigismund was pressing the siege of Smolensk; in the south, Dmitri was in possession of Kaluga, Tula, and some other towns. Some of the Poles who had quitted the impostor's service had established themselves on the banks of the Ugra, in a fertile country, which had not yet experienced the sufferings of war; and there, under the command of their new leader, John Sapieha, they offered their services simultaneously to Sigismund and the false Dmitri, being ready to join whichever of them bid highest. Nor was this all: one of the Russian princes, Procope Liapunov, took advantage of the general confusion to raise a new banner. He proclaimed himself the defender of the faith, and, at the head of a considerable force, waged a war of extermination against the Poles and the Russians who recognised either Dmitri or Vasili. A chronicler applies

[1610 A.D.]

to him the phrase which had served to characterise Attila — "No grass grew where his horse's hoof had been. And, as if all these armies were not enough for the desolation of the land, the Tatars of the Crimea had crossed the Oka, under pretence of succouring Vasili, their ally, but in reality to plunder the villages, and make multitudes of captives, whom they carried off into slavery.

Such was the condition of Russia at the moment of Skopin's death. Vasili still derived some hope from the division of his enemies, and turned his whole attention against the most formidable among them. He despatched to the relief of Smolensk an army of nearly sixty thousand men, consisting partly of foreign mercenaries, under James de la Gardie; but he gave the chief command to his brother, Dmitri Shuiski, who was neither liked nor respected by the soldiers. Chiefly in consequence of this fatal appointment the whole army was defeated at Klushino, by a force of only three thousand horse and two hundred infantry, led by the veteran Zolkiewski, and was forced to lay down its arms. But for the enormous blunders subsequently committed by Sigismund, the battle of Kiushino might have determined forever the preponderance of Poland in the north.

The defeat of Klushino was immediately followed by an insurrection at Moscow. Vasili Shuiski was deposed, and forced to become a monk; and being soon after delivered up to Sigismund, he ended his days in a Polish prison. The same event was equally disastrous to the false Dmitri. Deserted by Sapieha and his Poles, he lost all hope of ascending the throne of Moscow; he lived as a robber in Kaluga, at the head of his ferocious gangs of Cossacks and Tatars, until he was murdered by the latter in December, 1610, in revenge for the death of one of their countrymen whom he had drowned. Marina was far advanced in pregnancy when she lost her second husband. She was delivered of a son, who received the name of Ivan, and to whom the little court of Kaluga swore fealty. Zarucki declared himself the protector of the mother and the child, and put himself at the head of the still numerous remnant of the faction that remained obstinately attached to the name of Dmitri. But the cause was hopeless; for Zarucki was neither a general nor a statesman — his talents were those only of a bold leader of Cossack marauders.

Russia was without a sovereign, and the capital was in the hands of the Polish marshal. Zolkiewski used his advantages with wise moderation, and easily prevailed on the weary and afflicted Muscovites to resign themselves to the foreign yoke, and agree to offer the throne to Wiadislav, the son of Sigismund. One word from the latter's lips might have reversed the subsequent fortunes of Russia and Poland; but in his selfish vanity he preferred



A WOMAN OF TSCHUTSKI

the appearance of power to its reality, and claimed the crown of the czars, not for his son but for himself. Philaret, bishop of Rostov, and other ambassadors, were sent to him at his camp before Smolensk, to make known the resolution of the Russians in favour of Wladislaw. Sigismund insisted that they should at once put him in possession of Smolensk, which he had been besieging for a year; and, this being refused, he seized the ambassadors, and afterwards carried them away to Poland, where they remained nine years in captivity.

Zolkiewski, foreseeing the consequences of his master's folly, against which he had remonstrated in vain, retired from the government of Moscow, leaving Gonsiewski as his successor. The Polish troops seized the principal towns, proclaimed Sigismund, and observed none of that discretion by which the great marshal had won the confidence and esteem of the vanquished. National feeling awoke again among the Russians; eagerly responding to the call of their revered patriarch, Hermogenes, they took up arms in all parts of the empire, and war was renewed with more fury than ever.

Smolensk fell after an obstinate resistance of eighteen months; but at the moment of the last assault the explosion of a powder magazine set fire to the city, and Sigismund found himself master only of a heap of ruins. The Poles in Moscow, assailed by the Russians, secured themselves in the Kremlin, after burning down the greater part of the city, and massacring a hundred thousand of the inhabitants. They were besieged by an immense levy from the provinces, consisting of three armies; but these seemed more disposed to fight with each other than to force the Poles in their intrenchments. One of them consisted chiefly of vagabonds escaped from the camp at Tushino, and was commanded by Prince Trubetskoi. Zarucki led another in the name of Marina's son; the third army, and the only one, perhaps, whose commander sincerely desired the independence of his country, was that of Prince Procope Liapunov; but that brave leader was assassinated, and the besiegers, disheartened by his death, immediately dispersed. About the same time the patriarch Hermogenes, the soul of the national insurrection, died in his prison in the Kremlin, to which he had been consigned by the Poles.

Anarchy was rampant in Russia; every town usurped the right to act in the name of the whole empire, and set up chiefs whom they deposed a few days afterwards. Kazan and Viatka proclaimed the son of Marina; Novgorod, rather than open its gates to the Poles, called in the Swedes, and tendered the crown to Charles Philip, second son of the reigning king of Sweden, and brother of Gustavus Adolphus. Another imposter assumed the name of Dmitri, and kept his state for awhile at Pskov; but being at last identified as one Isidore, a fugitive monk, he was hanged. When all seemed lost in irretrievable disorder, the country was saved by an obscure citizen of Nijni-Novgorod. He was a butcher, named Kozma Minin, distinguished by nothing but the possession of a sound head and a brave, honest unselfish heart. Roused by his words and his example, his fellow-citizens took up arms, and resolved to devote all their wealth to the last fraction to the maintenance of an army for the deliverance of their country. From Nijni-Novgorod the same spirit spread to other towns, and Prince Pojarski who had been lieutenant to the brave Liapunov, was soon able to take the field at the head of a considerable force, whilst Minin, whom the popular voice styled the elect of the whole Russian Empire, ably seconded him in an administrative capacity.

Pojarski drove the Poles before him from town to town; and having at length arrived under the walls of the Kremlin, in August, 1612, he sustained



[1612-1613 A.D.]

for three days a hot contest against Chodkiewicz, the successor of Gonsiewski, defeated him, and put him to flight. Part of the Polish troops, under the command of Colonel Nicholas Struss, returned to the citadel and defended it for some weeks longer. At the end of that time, being pressed by famine, they capitulated; and on the 22nd of October, 1612, the princes Pojarski and Dmitri Trubetzkoï entered together into that inclosure which is the heart of the country, and sacred in the eyes of all true Russians. The assistance of Sigismund came too late to arrest the flight of the Poles.

Upon the first successes obtained by Prince Pojarski the phantom of Dmitri, and all the subaltern pretenders, disappeared as if by magic. Zarucki, feeling that an irresistible power was about to overwhelm him, was anxious only to secure himself a refuge. Carrying Marina and her son with him, he made ineffectual efforts to raise the Don Cossacks. After suffering a defeat near Voroneje, he reached the Volga, and took possession of Astrakhan, with the intention of fortifying himself there; but the generals of Michael Romanov, the newly elected czar, did not allow him time. Driven from that city, and pursued by superior forces, he was preparing to reach the eastern shore of the Caspian, when he was surprised, in the beginning of July, 1614, on the banks of the Iaik, and delivered up to the Muscovite generals, along with Marina and the son of the second Dmitri. They were immediately taken to Moscow, where Zarucki was impaled; Ivan, who was but three years old, was hanged; and Marina was shut up in prison, where she ended her days.

## ACCESSION OF THE HOUSE OF ROMANOV (1613 A.D.)

The deliverance of Moscow had alone been awaited in order to fill the vacant throne by a free election. This could not properly take place except in that revered sanctuary of the imperial power, the Kremlin, where the sovereigns were crowned at their accession, and where their ashes reposed after their death. Delivered now from all foreign influence, the boyars of the council, in November, 1612, despatched letters or mandates to every town in the empire, commanding the clergy, nobility, and citizens to send deputies immediately to Moscow, endowed with full power to meet in the national council (*zemskii soveth*), and proceed to the election of a new czar. At the same time, to invoke the blessing of God upon this important act, a fast of three days was commanded. These orders were received with great enthusiasm throughout the whole country: the fast was so rigorously observed, according to contemporary records, that no person took the least nourishment during that interval, and mothers even refused the breast to their infants.

The election day came: it was in Lent, in the year 1613. The debates were long and stormy. The princes Mstislavski and Pojarski, it appears, refused the crown; the election of Prince Dmitri Trubetskoï failed, and the other candidates were set aside for various reasons. After much hesitation the name of Michael Romanov was put forward; a young man sixteen years of age, personally unknown, but recommended by the virtues of his father, Philaret, and in whose behalf the boyars had been canvassed by the patriarch Hermogenes, the holy martyr to the national cause. The Romanovs were connected through the female branch with this ancient dynasty. The ancestors of Michael had filled the highest offices in the state. He fulfilled, moreover, the required conditions. "There were but three surviving members in his family," says Strahlenberg; "he had not been implicated in the preceding troubles; his father was an ecclesiastic, and in consequence naturally

more disposed to secure peace and union than to mix himself up in turbulent projects."

The name of the new candidate, supported by the metropolitan of Moscow,<sup>1</sup> was hailed with acclamation, and after some discussion he was elected. The unanimous voice of the assembly raised Michael Feodorovitch to the throne. Before he ascended he was required to swear to the following conditions: that he would protect religion; that he would pardon and forget all that had been done to his father; that he would make no new laws, nor alter the old, unless circumstances imperatively required it; and that, in important causes, he would decide nothing by himself, but that the existing laws and the usual forms of trial should remain in force; that he would not at his own pleasure make either war or peace with his neighbours; and that, to avoid all suits with individuals, he would resign his estates to his family, or incorporate them with the crown domains. Strahlenberg adds that Alexis, on his accession, swore to observe the same conditions.

These forms, however futile they may have been, are remarkable: not because they render sacred a right which stands in no need of them, but because they recall it to mind; and also because they prove that, even on the soil most favourable to despotism, a charter which should give absolute power to a monarch would appear such a gross absurdity that we know not that an instance of the kind ever existed.

Nothing could be more critical than the state of the empire at the moment when its destinies were confided to a youth of seventeen. Disorder and anarchy everywhere prevailed. Ustrialov gives us the following picture: "The strongholds on the frontier which should have served to defend his dominions were in the hands of external or internal enemies. The Swedes possessed Kexholm, Oresheck, Koporie, and even Novgorod. The Poles ruled in Smolensk, Dorogobuje, Putivle, and Tchernigov; the country around Pskov was in the power of Lisovski; Raisin, Kashira, and Tula struggled feebly against the Tatars of the Crimea and the Nogai; Sarutzki (Zarucki) was established in Astrakhan; Kazan was in revolt. At home bands of Cossacks from the Don, and the Zaporogians, and whole divisions of Poles and Tatars ravaged the villages and the convents that were still entire, when there were hopes of finding booty. The country was wasted, soldiers were dying of hunger, the land-tax was no longer collected, and not a kopeck was in the treasury. The state jewels, crowns of great price, sceptres, precious stones, vases — all had been plundered and carried into Poland.

"The young prince was surrounded by courtiers belonging to twenty different factions. There were to be found the friends of Godunov, the defenders of Shuiski, the companions of Wladislaw, and even partisans of the brigand of Tushino — in a word, men professing the most various opinions and aims, but all equally ambitious, and incapable of yielding the smallest point as regarded precedence. The lower class, irritated by ten years of misery, had become habituated to anarchy, and it was not without difficulty and resistance on their part that they were reduced to obedience." Such, then, was the situation of the country; but Michael found means to redeem it.

Notwithstanding the desperate state of his finances, the insubordination of his troops, the ill-will of the diets, and the confederations continually springing up against him, Sigismund did not abandon his attempts upon Russia; but the negotiations which ensued in consequence, upon various occasions, produced no result. Wladislaw, at the head of an army, once more crossed the

<sup>1</sup> There was no patriarch at that time.

[1617-1627 A.D.]

frontiers, and appeared for the second time, in 1617, under the walls of Moscow, which he assaulted and whence he was repulsed. Deceived in the expectation which the intelligence he kept up with various chiefs had induced him to form, harassed by his troops, who were clamorous for pay, he consented to renounce the title of czar, which he had up to that period assumed, and concluded, on the 1st of December, 1618, an armistice for fourteen years. The Peace of Stolbovna, January 26th, 1617, had terminated the preceding year the war with Sweden, and was purchased by the surrender of Ingria, Karelia, and the whole country between Ingria and Novgorod; besides the formal renunciation of Livonia and Esthonia, and the payment of a sum of money.

The captivity of Philarete had now lasted nine years; from Warsaw he had been removed to the castle of Marienburg, and it was from that place, as it is asserted, that he found means to communicate with the council of the boyars, and use his influence in the election of the czar, never dreaming that it would fall upon his son. The cessation of hostilities restored him to freedom. He returned to Moscow on the 14th of June, 1619, and was immediately elevated to the patriarchal chair, which had remained vacant from the death of Hermogenes, in 1613. His son made him co-regent, and the ukases of that date are all headed "Michael Feodorovitch, sovereign, czar, and grand prince of all the Russias, and his father Philarete, mighty lord and most holy patriarch of all the Russias, order," etc. There exist, moreover, ukases issued in the sole name of the patriarch, thus called out of his usual sphere of action, and placed in one in which absolute power was granted him. He took part in all political affairs; all foreign ambassadors were presented to him, as well as to the czar: and at those solemn audiences, as well as at table, he occupied the right of the sovereign. He held his own court, composed of stolnieks and other officers; in a word, he shared with his son all the prerogatives of supreme power. From this period dates the splendour of the patriarchate, which at a later epoch excited the jealousy of the czar Peter the Great, who was induced to suppress it in 1721.

Philarete always gave wise advice to his son, and the influence he exercised over him was always happily directed. A general census, of which he originated the idea, produced great improvement in the revenue; but, perhaps without intending it, he contributed by this measure to give fixity to the system of bondage to the soil. In the performance of his duty as head pastor, he directed all his efforts to re-establish a press at Moscow,<sup>1</sup> which had been abandoned during the troubles of the interregnum; and he had the satisfaction of seeing, after 1624, many copies of the Liturgy issue from it.<sup>h</sup>

#### THE COSSACKS

In the year 1627 the Cossacks of the Don, in one of their periodical uprisings, conquered Azov, which they offered to the czar, but which he did not accept. As we shall meet the Cossacks again from time to time, it is worth while to interrupt our main narrative to make inquiry as to the antecedents of this peculiar people.<sup>a</sup>

Soloviev gives the following definition of the term "cossacks": "At the end of the first half of the fifteenth century we encounter for the first time the name of Cossack, principally the Cossacks of Riazan. Our ancestors understood by this name, in general, men without homes, celibates obliged to earn their bread by working for others. In this way the name "cossack" took the

<sup>1</sup> Established in 1560. The first book printed in Moscow, *The Evangelist*, appeared in the month of March, 1564.



meaning of day-labourer. They formed a class altogether opposed to land owners; that is, the villagers. The steppes, so agreeable to live on, not lacking fertility, watered by rivers filled with fish, attracted in these countries the more hardy, namely the Cossacks; the people who could not stay in villages, those who were pursued for some crime, fugitive serfs, united with each other; it is this group of individuals who formed the population of the frontiers and were known under the name of Cossacks. The Cossacks were therefore of great importance; being an enterprising people they were the first to lead the way to the great solitudes which they peopled. It was not difficult for a Russian to become a Cossack; in going to the steppes he did not enter a strange country, nor did he cease to be a Russian; there among the Cossacks he felt at home. The Cossacks who remained near the frontier recognised the right of the Russian government over them in all things, but obeyed it only when it would prove useful to them. They depended somewhat on the government, while those who lived far away were more independent."

Polish authors have acquainted western Europe with the name and the fact of the existence of the Cossacks. This name (in Russian *kazak*) has passed into other languages, by the writings of the seventeenth century, with the Polish pronunciation. The etymology of this word long exercised the sagacity of northern savants. Some derive it from the Slavonic *koza* "goat" — the Cossacks, they argued, wandered about like goats. Others believe it comes from *kossa*, which signifies "tress of hair," "scythe," "body of land projecting into a river." Justifications are not wanting for these different acceptations, since (1) the Cossacks were formerly in the habit of wearing long braids; (2) they used scythes to make hay, as well as in battle; (3) their first colonies were on the river banks, which abounded in promontories. In these days, when etymological study has made such great progress, the word *cossack* is generally accepted as derived from the Turkish. In that language *cazak* signifies marauder, plunderer, soldier of fortune. Such were in effect the first Cossacks established on the banks of the Dnieper and its tributaries, between the Polish, the Tatar, and the Muscovite territories. Their customs greatly resembled those of the inhabitants on the Border, or Scottish frontier; and the name of the country where they first appeared, *Ukraina* (*Pokraina*) signifies border, frontier, in the Slavonic dialects.

The Cossacks have never formed a distinct nationality, but their manners and institutions separate them from the rest of the Russian people. The *Cossackry* — to translate by a single word all that the Russians understand by *Kazatchestvo* — is the species of society, government, political organisation which the Russian peasant understands by instinct, so to speak, to which he conforms most easily and which he probably regards as the best. The different fractions of the Cossacks were designated as armies according to the provinces which they occupied. There was the army of the Dnieper, the army of the Don, that of the *Iaik* (Ural), etc. Each of these armies was divided into small camps or villages, called *stanitsas*. The ground round the *stanitsa*, the flocks which grazed on its meadows, formed the undivided property of the commune. At regular intervals equal partitions took place for cultivation; but each gathered the fruit of his own labour and could increase his share in the common fund by his private industry. Every man was a soldier and bound to take up arms at the word of the chief whom the public suffrage had designated. There was one of these for each expedition and he bore the name of "errant captain," *ataman kotchévôï*, which was distinct from the *ataman* or political chief for life of the whole army. This captain had under his orders an adjutant or lieutenant, *iéssaoul*, then centurions, commanders of fifties,

[1627 A.D.]

and commanders of tens. During peace the administration of each stanitsa belonged to the elders, *starchini*; but every resolution of any importance had to be submitted to a discussion in which all the men of the community could take part and vote. The political or administrative assembly was called the circle, *kroug*. There were no written laws, the circle being the living law, preserving and adding to the traditions. It left, moreover, complete liberty to the individual, so long as this was not harmful to the community. As to the foreigner, anything, or almost anything, was permitted. Such institutions find fanatics amongst men in appearance the most rebellious against all discipline. The filibusters at the end of the seventeenth century had similar ones.

We are ignorant of the period of the first organisation of the Cossacks: it appears, however, very probable that it is contemporary with the Tatar conquest. The little republic of the Zaporogians in the islands and on the banks of the Dnieper seems to be the model on which the other Cossack governments were formed; for their dialect, the Little Russian, has left traces amongst the Cossacks most remote from Ukraine. There is no doubt that the first soldiers who established themselves in the islands of the Dnieper were animated by patriotic and religious sentiments. Their first exploits against the Tatars and Turks were a protest of the conquered Christians against their Mussulman oppressors. In consequence of having fought for their faith they loved war for its own sake and pillage became the principal object of their expeditions. In default of Tatars their Russian or Polish neighbours were mercilessly despoiled.



MICHAEL ROMANOV

Formerly the Cossacks had been recruited by volunteers arriving on the borders of the Dnieper — some from Great Russia, others from Lithuania or Poland. The association spread. It colonised the banks of the Don and there instituted the rule of the stanitsas and the circle. The czars of Muscovy, while they sometimes suffered from the violence of the newcomers, beheld, with pleasure the formation on their frontiers of an army which fought for them, cost them nothing, and founded cities of soldiers in desolate steppes.

From the Don the Cossacks carried colonies along the Volga, to the Terek, to the Ural; they conquered Siberia. In 1865 descendants of these same men were encamped at the mouths of the Amur and fringed the Chinese frontier. The Don Cossacks, conquerors of a country subdued by the Tatars, submitted to Russia in 1549, but they enjoyed a real independence. It is true that in war-time they furnished a body of troops to the czar; but war was their trade and a means of acquiring fortune. They appointed their own atamans, governed themselves according to their own customs, and scarcely permitted the Moscow government to interfere at all in their affairs. They even claimed the right to make war without command of the czar, and in spite of his injunctions devoted themselves to piracy on the Black Sea and even on the Caspian Sea. In 1593, when Boris Godunov instituted serfdom in Russia, by a ukase which forbade the peasants to change their lord or their

domicile, the Cossacks received immense additions to their numbers. All those who wished to live in freedom took refuge in a stanitsa, where they were sure of finding an asylum. In their ideas of honour, the atamans considered it their first duty to protect fugitives. Consequently the most usual subject of disputes between the government of Moscow and the hordes of the Don was the restoration of serfs. At times exacted by the czars, when they had no foreign enemy to fear, it was evaded by the atamans; at times it was in some sort forgotten, whenever the services of the Cossacks became necessary. Practically it was considered impossible to get back a serf once he had procured his adoption into a stanitsa.

There were always two parties among the Cossacks, which might be called the aristocratic party and the democratic faction, although there was no nobility amongst them. The old-established Cossacks, possessing a fortune acquired either by raids or industry, did not look with a friendly eye on the newcomers, who were strangers to the country. The first preached in the circle respect of treaties and obedience to the czar; the others, on the contrary, declared themselves in favour of every violent course, supported those bold spirits who were meditating some hazardous expedition, and troubled themselves little concerning the danger of compromising the privileges of the army of the Don by abusing them. The old Cossacks in contempt called the newcomers *gole* (nakedness, trash), and this name, like that of *gueux* in Flanders, had ended by being borne proudly by the opposite faction.

The class of poor Cossacks, which was unceasingly recruited from fugitives, hated the Russian government and obtained the sympathy of the serfs who dared not break their chain. The condition of the latter was deplorable; at a time when the life of a freeman was held of small account, a slave was less than a beast of burden and certainly more miserable. The savagery of manners, the harshness of the masters, was equalled only by the ferocity of the laws. One example will be enough to show what the legislation of this epoch was like. The serf was responsible for his master's debts. If the lord did not pay his creditors the serf was put in prison and daily beaten before the courts of justice until the debtor had paid or the creditors had abandoned their claims. In their wretchedness the serfs were witnesses of the liberty of the Cossacks, who spoke the same language as themselves and who had the same origin. We need not be astonished if, in their despair, they were disposed to accept as their liberators the Cossacks who came to pillage their masters. A slave rarely dares to conceive the idea of conquering his liberty; but he is always ready to aid the freeman who declares himself his protector. Thus it is to be noted that all the great insurrections of serfs which broke out in Russia were organised by Cossacks. The False Dmitri, Stenka Radzín, and Pugatchev furnish the proof of this.<sup>b</sup>

#### LAST YEARS OF MICHAEL

The peace with Poland being only for a stated term of years, Michael endeavoured, before its expiration, to have his troops placed in such a condition by foreign officers that he might be able to reconquer the countries ceded to the Poles. Nay, on the death of Sigismund, ere the armistice had expired, he began the attempt to recover these territories, under the idle pretext that he had concluded a peace with Sigismund and not with his successor. But the Russian commander, Michael Schein, the very same who had valiantly defended Smolensk with a small number of troops against the Poles, now lay two whole years indolently before that town, with an army of fifty thousand



[1645 A.D.]

men and provided with good artillery, and at length retreated on capitulation, a retreat for which he and his friends were brought to answer with their heads. The Russian nation were so dissatisfied with this campaign, and the king of Sweden, whom Michael wanted to engage in an alliance with him against the Poles, showed so little inclination to comply, that the czar was fain to return to the former amicable relation with Poland. Peace was therefore again agreed on, and matters remained as they were before.

During his reign, which continued till 1645, Michael had employment enough in endeavouring to heal the wounds which the spirit of faction had inflicted on his country; to compose the disorders that had arisen; to restore the administration which had been so often disjointed and relaxed; to give new vigour and activity to the laws, disobeyed and inefficient during the general confusions; and to communicate fresh life to expiring commerce. It redounds greatly to his honour that he proceeded in all these respects with prudence and moderation, and brought the disorganised machine of government again into play. More than this, the restoration of the old order of things, was not to be expected of him. Much that he was unable to effect was accomplished by his son and successor, Alexis.

## ALEXIS (1645-1676 A.D.)

The administration, however, of the boyar Boris Morosov, to whom Michael at his death committed the education of Alexis, then in his sixteenth year, well-nigh destroyed the tranquillity which had so lately been restored. Morosov trod in the footsteps of Boris Godunov, put himself, as that favourite of the czar had done, into the highest posts, and thus acquired the most extensive authority in the state, turned out all that stood in his way, distributed offices and dignities as they fell vacant among his friends and creatures, and even became, like Boris, a near relation of the czar Alexis, by marrying a sister of the czaritza. Like his prototype, indeed, Morosov effected much good, particularly by making the army a main object of his concern, by strengthening the frontiers against Poland and Sweden, erecting manufactories for arms, taking a number of foreigners into pay for the better disciplining of the army, and diligently exercising the troops himself.

But these important services to the state could not render the people insensible to the numerous acts of injustice and oppression which were practised with impunity by the party protected by this minion of the czar. The most flagrant enormities were committed, more particularly in the administration of justice. The sentence of the judge was warped to either side by presents; witnesses were to be bought; several of the magistrates, however incredible it may seem, kept a number of scoundrels in readiness to corroborate or to oppugn, for a sum of money, whatever they were required to confirm or to deny. Such profligates were particularly employed in order to get rich persons into custody on charges of any species of delinquency sworn against them by false witnesses, to condemn them to death, and then to seize upon their property, as the accumulation of wealth seemed to be the general object of all men in office. From the same corrupt fountain flowed a multitude of monopolies and excessive taxes on the prime necessities of life. The consequence of all this was the oppression of the people by privileged extortioners and murmurs against injustice and the exorbitance of imposts. In addition to this, those grandees who had now the reins of government in their hands assumed a haughty, austere behaviour towards the subjects, whereas

Michael and his father had been friendly and indulgent, and their gentleness communicated itself to all who at that time took part in the administration.

From these several causes arose discontents in the nation; such great men as were neglected and disappointed contributed what they could to fan these discontents, and to bring them to overt act. Moscow, the seat of the principal magistrate, who, himself in the highest degree unjust, connived at the iniquities of his subordinate judges, was the place where the people first applied for redress. They began by presenting petitions to the czar, implored the removal of these disorders, and exposed to him in plain

terms the abuses committed by the favourite and his adherents. But these petitions were of no avail, as none of the courtiers would venture to put them into the hand of the czar, for fear of Morosov's long arm. The populace therefore, once stopped the czar, as he was returning from church to his palace, calling aloud for righteous judges. Alexis promised them to make strict inquiry into their grievances, and to inflict punishment on the guilty; the people, however, had not patience to wait this tardy process, but proceeded to plunder the houses of such of the great as were most obnoxious to them. At length they were pacified only on condition that the authors of their oppressions should be brought to condign punishment. Not however, till they had killed the principal magistrate, and other obnoxious persons, and forced from the czar the abolition of some of the new taxes and the death of another nefarious judge, could they be induced to spare the life of Morosov, though the czar himself entreated for him with tears. Thenceforth Morosov ceased to be the sole adviser of his sovereign, though he continued to enjoy his favour and affection.



TATAR GIRL OF THE TELEUT TRIBE

Some time after these events, disturbances not less violent occurred in Pleskov and Novgorod, and were not quelled until much mischief had been done. The pacification of Novgorod was mainly due to the wisdom and intrepidity of the celebrated Nikon, who was afterwards patriarch.

While the nation was in this restless and angry mood, another false Dmitri thought to avail himself of an opportunity apparently so favourable to gather a party. He was the son of a draper in the Ukraine, and was prompted to his imposture by a Polish nobleman, named Danilovski. One day, when the young man was bathing, marks were observed on his back which were thought to resemble letters of some unknown tongue. Danilovski, hearing of this freak of nature, determined to build a plot upon it. He sent for the young man, and had the marks examined by a Greek pope whom he had suborned. The pope cried out, "A miracle!" and declared that the letters were Russian, and formed distinctly these words: Dmitri, son of the czar Dmitri. The public murder of Marina's infant son was notorious; but that difficulty was met by the common device of an alleged change of children, and the Poles were invited to lend their aid to the true prince thus

[1658-1662 A.D.]

miraculously identified. They were willing enough to do so; but the trick was too stale to impose on the Russians. The impostor found no adherents among them; and after a wretched life of vagrancy and crime, he fell into the hands of Alexis, and was quartered alive.

Alexis soon had an opportunity to repay in a more substantial manner the ill will borne to him by the Poles, who had further offended him by rejecting him as a candidate for their throne, and electing John Casimir. The cruel oppressions exercised by the Poles upon the Cossacks of the Ukraine had roused the latter to revolt, and a furious war ensued, in which the enraged Cossacks avenged their wrongs in the most ruthless and indiscriminate manner. At last, after many vicissitudes, being deserted by their Tatar allies, the Cossacks appealed for aid to Alexis, offering to acknowledge him as their suzerain. With such auxiliaries the czar could now renew with better prospects the attempt made by his father to recover the territories wrested from Russia by her inveterate foe. He declared war against Poland; his conquests were rapid and numerous, and would probably have terminated in the complete subjugation of Poland, had he not been compelled to pause before the march of a still more successful invader of that country, Charles Gustavus, king of Sweden.

Inensed at seeing his prey thus snatched from him when he had nearly hunted it down, Alexis fell upon the king of Sweden's own dominions during his absence; but from this enterprise he reaped neither advantage nor credit; and he was glad to conclude, in 1658, a three years' truce with Sweden, and subsequently a peace, which was an exact renewal of the Treaty of Stolbova in 1617. The war in Poland ended more honourably for Russia. An armistice for thirteen years, agreed upon at Andnissov, in Lithuania, and afterwards prolonged from time to time, was the forerunner of a complete pacification, which was brought to effect in 1686, and restored to the empire Smolensk, Severia, Tchernigov, and Kiev, that primeval principality of the Russian sovereigns. The king of Poland likewise relinquished to the czar the supremacy he had till then asserted over the Cossacks of the Ukraine.

Russia had as much need as Poland of repose; for the empire was suffering under an accumulation of evils—an exhausted treasury, commercial distress, pestilence and famine, all aggravated by the unwise means adopted to relieve them. To supply the place of the silver money, which had disappeared, copper of the same nominal value was coined and put in circulation. At first these tokens were received with confidence, and no inconvenience was experienced; but ere long the court itself destroyed that confidence by its audacious efforts to secure to itself all the sterling money, and leave only the new coin for the use of commerce. The cupidity displayed in transactions of this kind, especially by Ilia Miloslavski, the czar's father-in-law, taught the public to dislike the copper coinage; it became immensely depreciated, and extreme general distress ensued. A rebellion broke out in consequence in Moscow (1662), and though it was speedily put down it was punished in the most atrocious manner in the persons of thousands of wretches whose misery had driven them to crime; whilst the authors of their woe escaped with impunity. The prisoners were hanged by hundreds, tortured, burned, mutilated, or thrown by night, with their hands bound, into the river. The number who suffered death in consequence of this arbitrary alteration of the currency was estimated at more than seven thousand; the tortured and maimed, at upwards of fifteen thousand.

The conduct of the Don Cossacks was soon such as to make it questionable whether the acquisition of these new subjects was not rather a loss than a



gain to the empire. At the end of the campaign of 1665 the Cossacks were refused permission to disband as usual and to return to their homes. They mutinied; and several of them were punished with death. Among those who were executed was an officer, whose brother, Stenka Radzin, had no difficulty in rousing his countrymen to revenge this violation of their privileges, and at the same time to gratify their insatiable appetite for havoc and plunder.

He began his depredations on the Volga by seizing a fleet of boats belonging to the czar, which was on its way to Astrakhan, massacring part of the crews, and pressing all the rest into his service. Having devastated the whole country of the Volga, he descended into the Caspian, and having swept its shores, returned to the Volga laden with booty. For three years this flagitious ruffian continued his murderous career, repeatedly defeating the forces sent against him. At last, having lost a great number of men in his piratical incursions into Persia, he was hemmed in by the troops of the governor of Astrakhan, and forced to sue for pardon. The imperial commander thought it more prudent to accept Radzin's voluntary submission than to risk an engagement with desperate wretches whose numbers were still formidable. Radzin was taken to Astrakhan, and the voyevod went to Moscow, to learn the czar's pleasure respecting him. Alexis honourably confirmed the promise made by his general in his name, and accepted Radzin's oath of allegiance; but instead of dispersing the pardoned rebels over regions where they would have been useful to the empire, he had the imprudence to send them all back to the country of the Don, without despoiling them of their ill-gotten wealth, or taking any other security for their good behaviour.

The brigand was soon at his old work again on the Volga, murdering and torturing with more wanton ferocity than ever. To give to his enormities the colour of a war on behalf of an oppressed class, he proclaimed himself the enemy of the nobles and the restorer of the liberty of the people. As many of the Russians still adhered to the patriarch Nikon, who had been deposed and sent to a monastery, he spread it abroad that Nikon was with him; that the czar's second son (who had died at Moscow, January 16th, 1670) was not dead, but had put himself under his protection; and that he had even been requested by the czar himself to come to Moscow, and rid him of those unpatriotic grandees by whom he was unhappily surrounded.

These artifices, together with the unlimited license to plunder which Radzin granted to everyone who joined his standard, operated so strongly that the rebel found himself, at length, at the head of two hundred thousand men. The czar's soldiers murdered their officers, and went over to him; Astrakhan betrayed its governor, and received him; he was master of the whole country of the lower Volga; and on the upper course of the river, from Nijni-Novgorod to Kazan, the peasants rose to a man and murdered their lords. Had Stenka Radzin been anything better than a vulgar robber and cut-throat, he might have revolutionised Russia; but he was utterly without the qualities most requisite for success in such an enterprise. Disasters overtook him in the autumn of 1670: a division of his army was cut to pieces; twelve thousand of his followers were gibbeted on the highroad, and he himself was taken in the beginning of the following year, carried to Moscow, and executed.

The Turks had by this time made war on Poland, and Alexis was bound by the Treaty of Andrissov, as well as by regard for the safety of his own dominions, to support the latter power. In 1671 the Turks made themselves masters of the important town of Kaminitz, and the Cossacks of the Ukraine, ever averse to subjection, could not tell whether they belonged to Turkey,



THE ANSWER OF ZAPOROGIAN COSSACKS TO SULTAN MUHAMMED IV

*(From the painting by Elias Repin)*





[1676 A.D.]

Poland, or Russia. Sultan Muhammed IV, who had subdued and lately imposed a tribute on the Poles, insisted, with all the insolence of an Ottoman and of a conqueror, that the czar should evacuate his several possessions in the Ukraine, but received as haughty a denial. The sultan in his letter treated the sovereign of the Russias only as a Christian *gospodin* (hospodar), and entitled himself Most Glorious Majesty, King of the World. The czar made answer that he was above submitting to a Mohammedan dog, but that his sabre was as good as the grand seignior's scimitar.

Alexis sent ambassadors to the pope, and to almost all the great sovereigns in Europe, except France, which was allied to the Turks, in order to establish a league against the Porte. His ambassadors had no other success at Rome than not being obliged to kiss the pope's toe; everywhere else they met with nothing but good wishes, the Christian princes being generally prevented by their quarrels and jarring interests from uniting against the common enemy of their religion. Alexis did not live to see the termination of the war with Turkey. His death happened in 1676, in his forty-eighth year, after a reign of thirty-one years.

## FEODOR (1676-1682 A.D.)

Alexis was succeeded by his eldest son, Feodor, a youth in his nineteenth year, and of very feeble temperament. The most pressing task that devolved on him was the prosecution of the war with Turkey, which, as far as Russia was interested, had regard chiefly to the question whether the country of the Zaporogian Cossacks should be under the sovereignty of the czar or of the sultan. The contest was terminated, three years after Feodor's accession, by a treaty which established his right over the disputed territory. Only one other memorable event distinguished his brief reign.

Nothing could equal the care with which the noble families kept the books of their pedigrees, in which were set down not only every one of their ancestors but also the posts and offices which each had held at court, in the army, or in the civil department. Had these genealogies and registers of descent been confined to the purpose of determining the ancestry and relationship of families no objection could be alleged against them. But these books of record were carried to the most absurd abuse, attended with a host of pernicious consequences. If a nobleman were appointed to a post in the army, or at court, or to some civil station, and it appeared that the person to whom he was now subordinate numbered fewer ancestors than he, it was with the utmost difficulty that he could be brought to accept of the office to which he was called. Nay, this folly was carried to still greater lengths: a man would even refuse to take upon him an employ, if thereby he would be subordinate to one whose ancestors had formerly stood in that position towards his own.

It is easy to imagine that a prejudice of this kind must have been productive of the most disagreeable effects, and that discontents, murmurs at slights and trifling neglects, disputes, quarrels, and disorders in the service must have been its natural attendants. It was, therefore, become indispensably necessary that a particular office should be instituted at court in which exact copies of the genealogical tables and service-registers of the noble families were deposited; and this office was incessantly employed in settling the numberless disputes that arose from this inveterate prejudice. Feodor, observing the pernicious effects of this fond conceit — that the father's capacity must necessarily devolve on the son, and that consequently he ought to inherit his posts — wished to put a stop to it; and with the advice of his

sagacious minister, Prince Vasili Galitzin, fell upon the following method. He caused it to be proclaimed that all the families should deliver into court faithful copies of their service-rolls, in order that they might be cleared of a number of errors that had crept into them. This delivery being made, he convoked the great men and the superior clergy before him. In the midst of these heads of the nobles, the patriarch concluded an animated harangue by inveighing against their prerogatives. "They are," said he, "a bitter source of every kind of evil; they render abortive the most useful enterprises, in like manner as the tares stifle the good grain; they have introduced, even into the heart of families, dissensions, confusion, and hatred; but the pontiff comprehends the grand design of his czar. God alone can have inspired it!"

At these words, and by anticipation, all the grandees blindly hastened to express their approval; and, suddenly, Feodor, whom this generous unanimity seemed to enrapture, arose and proclaimed, in a simulated burst of holy enthusiasm, the abolition of all their hereditary pretensions — "To extinguish even the recollection of them," said he, "let all the papers relative to those titles be instantly consumed!" And as the fire was ready, he ordered them to be thrown into the flames before the dismayed eyes of the nobles, who strove to conceal their anguish by dastardly acclamations. By way of conclusion to this singular ceremony, the patriarch pronounced an anathema against everyone who should presume to contravene this ordinance of the czar; and the justice of the sentence was ratified by the assembly in a general shout of "Amen!" It was by no means Feodor's intention to efface nobility; and, accordingly, he ordered new books to be made, in which the noble families were inscribed; but thus was abolished that extremely pernicious custom which made it a disgrace to be under the orders of another if his ancestry did not reach so high, or even — in case of equal pedigree — if a forefather of the commander had once been subordinate in the service to the progenitor of him who was now to acknowledge him for his superior. Feodor died in February, 1682, after a reign of five years and a half, leaving no issue.<sup>b</sup>





## CHAPTER VI

### PETER THE GREAT

[1684-1725 A.D.]

When, towards the beginning of the eighteenth century, Peter the Great laid the foundation of Petersburg, or rather of his empire, no one predicted success. Had anyone at that time imagined that a sovereign of Russia could send victorious fleets to the Dardanelles, subjugate the Crimea, drive out the Turks from four great provinces, dominate the Black Sea, establish the most brilliant court of Europe, and make all the arts flourish in the midst of war—if anyone had said that he would merely have been taken for a visionary.—VOLTAIRE.<sup>b</sup>

THE question of the succession was now again thrown open to discussion, and the family feuds were revived. Ivan, the next in succession, was nearly blind, and, according to some historians, nearly dumb, and inferior in mind and body; and shortly before his death Feodor expressed his wish that his half-brother, Peter, then between nine and ten years of age, should be nominated to the throne; a nomination of which Ivan had just sense enough to approve. The imbecility of Ivan was so great that, had it not been for the influence of the family to which he belonged, and the bold and ambitious spirit of his sister Sophia, he must have been set aside at once, and Peter without further difficulty raised to the sovereignty. The Miloslavskoi, however, were resolved to preserve the right of succession in their own blood; and Sophia, a princess of singular beauty and high mental endowments, in the meridian of youth and possessed of indomitable courage, set the example of contesting the throne, first in the name of her idiot brother and next in her own name: for when her plans were ripe she did not scruple to declare that she aspired to the sceptre in the default of the rightful heir. But as all her machinations were carefully conducted with a colour of justice on behalf of Ivan, she escaped from the charge of interested motives, which, in the early part of the plot, would have defeated her grand object.



While Sophia was employed in devising her plans, the Narishkins urged with unabating activity the claims of Peter. Friends arose in different quarters for both parties, and the city was thrown into consternation. But the Miloslavskoi had the advantage of possession: the keys of power were in their hands: the officers of the state were in their immediate confidence, and the bands of the strelitz, the janissaries of Russia, were under their control. Sophia, availing herself of these fortunate circumstances, pleaded with her supplicating beauty in the name of her brother; besought the strelitz, by arts of fascination which were irresistible, to make common cause with her; and where her eyes failed to impress their sluggard hearts, she was bountiful in money and promises. A body so corrupt and slavish as the strelitz was easily won by bribes to any offices of depredation, and they accordingly declared for the beautiful and prodigal Sophia.

The accession of fourteen thousand soldiers to her side — men who were ready at any moment to deluge the capital in blood — determined the scales at once. It was necessary in the first instance to exterminate the Narishkins, the formidable supporters of Peter; and next, if it could be accomplished with safety, to make away with the life of the prince. A rumour was accordingly disseminated that the Narishkins had compassed the death of Feodor, in order to make room for the young Peter; that they had poisoned him through the agency of foreign physicians; and that they contemplated a similar act of treachery towards Ivan. The zeal of the Narishkins seemed to justify these charges; and the populace, who were universally in favour of the direct lineal succession, were brought to believe them; particularly as Galitzin, the favourite minister of Feodor, was the chief counsellor and friend of Sophia. Affairs were now ripe for revolt. The chiefs of the strelitz, having previously concerted their plans, broke out into open violence; and for three days in succession this band of legalised plunderers committed the most extravagant excesses in the streets of Moscow, secretly abetted by the encouraging patronage of Sophia. In their fury they murdered all those officers of the state whom they suspected to be inimical to the views of the princess; and bursting into the palace of the czars demanded the lives of the Narishkins. Two brothers of Natalia, the widow of Alexis, were sacrificed on the spot, and sixty of her immediate kindred were shortly after put to death in the most cruel manner.

The czarina herself was forced to flee for safety from the capital, accompanied, providentially for the destiny of Russia, by the young prince Peter. For sixty versts she fled in consternation, carrying the boy, it is reported, in her arms: but the ferocious strelitz had tracked her footsteps, and followed close upon her path. Her strength at last began to fail: her pursuers were rapidly gaining on her; she could hear the sound of their yells, and the tramp of their approaching feet: her heart trembled at the horrors of her situation. and in despair she rushed into the convent of the Trinity to seek for a last shelter in the sanctuary. The strelitz, uttering cries of savage triumph, followed on the moment: the despairing mother had just time to gain the foot of the altar, and place the child upon it, when two of the murderous band came up. One of them seized the prince, and, raising his sword, prepared to sever the head from the body, when a noise of approaching horsemen was heard without: the ruffian hesitated — his fellow murderers at the distant part of the church were struck with terror — dismayed by the apprehension of some sudden change in the fortune of the day, he abandoned his grasp of the prince and fled, and Peter the Great was preserved to Russia.

The immediate result of those violent efforts of the strelitz was the decla-

[1684 A.D.]

ration of the sovereignty in the name of Ivan. That prince, however, trembled at the prospect of incurring the responsibility of a trust to which he felt himself to be unequal, and entreated his counsellors to permit his half-brother Peter to be associated with him in the government. This request, which was considered on all sides reasonable enough, could not be refused without increasing the difficulties of Sophia's party, and rendering such further measures necessary as might probably betray her motives too soon. It was therefore sanctioned by the nobles; and on the 6th of May, 1681, the coronation of Ivan and Peter were celebrated in due form; Sophia being nominated regent, on account of the imbecility of the one and the youth of the other. Thus far Sophia had carried her purpose. She was now in possession of the power to which her ambition tempted her to aspire; but she parted to have that power formally assigned and publicly acknowledged. In order the more effectually to exclude Peter from any future lien upon the throne, she brought about a marriage between Ivan and a young Soltikoff; trusting to the issue for an insurmountable obstacle in the path of the prince, whose dawning genius, even at that early age, she appeared to dread.<sup>c</sup>

## THE CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH OF PETER

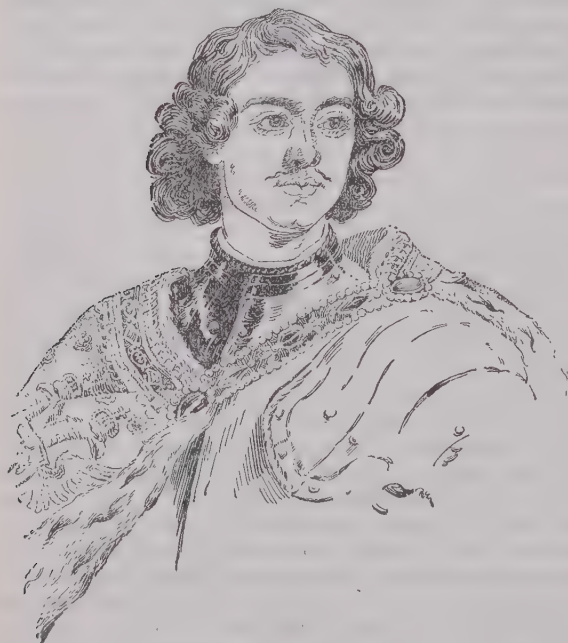
During Sophia's government Peter continued to reside with his mother in the village of Proobrazhenski. His education was entirely neglected; his teacher, Nikita Zotov, was taken away from him and not replaced by another; he spent his time in play, surrounded by companions of his own age and without any intelligent occupation: such an existence would certainly have spoiled and maimed a less gifted nature. Upon Peter it only had the effect, as he himself afterwards recognised, of making him feel in later years the want of that knowledge which is indispensable for a sound education. By reason of this neglect Peter had to study much when he reached maturity; besides this, the manner in which his boyhood was spent deprived him of that training of the character in intercourse with other people which is the mark of an educated man. From his youth Peter adopted the rough habits of those who surrounded him, an extreme want of self-restraint, and hideous debauchery.

But his unusually gifted nature could not be crushed by this absence of all intellectual interests. Peter had no early instruction, but the love of knowledge inherent in him could not be destroyed. He himself afterwards communicated the circumstances which directed him into the paths he elected to follow. When he was fourteen years of age, he heard from Prince Iakov Dolgoruki that he had possessed an instrument "by means of which it was possible to measure distances or extension without being on the spot." The young czar wished to see the instrument, but Dolgoruki replied that it had been stolen; so Peter commissioned the prince, who had gone to France as ambassador, to purchase there for him such an instrument. In 1688 Dolgoruki brought from France an astrolabe and case of mathematical instruments, but there was no one amongst the czar's entourage who had any understanding of what they were for. Peter applied to a German doctor, but neither did he know how to use the instruments; finally he found a Dutchman, Franz Timmerman, who explained to him the significance of the objects. The czar began to study arithmetic, geometry, and the science of fortification with him. The teacher was not a great authority in these matters, but he knew sufficient to give Peter indications, and the talented pupil worked out everything himself; but his education had been neglected to such an extent that

when he was learning the four rules of arithmetic, at the age of sixteen, he could not write a single line correctly and did not even know how to divide one word from the other, joining two or three together with continual mistakes and omissions.

Some time later Peter was in the village of Izmailov, and strolling through the storehouses, he looked over a lot of old things that had belonged to the cousin of the czar Michael Feodorovitch — Nikita Ivanovitch Romanov, who had been distinguished in his time for his remarkable love of knowledge. Here he found a foreign-built vessel and questioned Franz Timmerman about it; the latter could tell him only that it was an English boat, which had the superiority over Russian boats as being able to sail not only with the wind

but also against it. Peter inquired whether there was anyone who could mend the boat and show him how to sail it. Timmerman replied that there was and found for Peter the Dutchman, Christian Brandt (Kars-stein Brandt, as Peter called him). The czar Alexis Michailovitch had thought of building a ship and launching it at Astrakhan, and had therefore sent for shipwrights from Holland; but the ship that had been built and launched at Astrakhan was destroyed by Stenka Radzin, the shipwrights were dispersed, and one of them, the ship's carpenter, Karstein Brandt, lived in Moscow where he gained a living by doing carpenter's work.



PETER THE GREAT

(1672-1725)

By order of the czar Brandt mended the boat, put in a mast and sail, and in Peter's presence manœuvred it on the river Iauza. Peter was astonished at such art and himself repeated the experiment several times with Brandt, but not always successfully; it was difficult to turn the boat, which stuck to the shore because the channel was too narrow. Peter then ordered the boat to be taken to a pond in the village of Izmailov, but there also navigation was difficult. Then Peter learned that the lake near Pereiaslavl would be suitable for his purpose; it was thirty versts in circumference and had a depth of six sazhen.<sup>1</sup> Peter asked his mother's leave to go on a pilgrimage to the Troitsa monastery, came to Pereiaslavl, and examined the lake, which greatly pleased him. On his return to Moscow he entreated his mother to let him go again to Pereiaslavl in order to take the boat there. The czaritza could not refuse

<sup>1</sup> A verst is 3500 English feet and a sazhen 7 feet.



[1687-1689 A.D.]

her beloved son, although she was much against such a project out of fear for his life. Together with Brandt, Peter built a wharf at the mouth of the river Troubezhy, which falls into the lake of Pereiaslavl and thus he laid the foundation of his ship building.

At that period Peter's diversions with his companions began to lose their playful character. He enrolled amongst them volunteers of every condition and in 1687 he formed with them two regular regiments, called by the name of the two royal villages near Moscow—the Preobrazhenski and the Semenovski. Sophia and her partisans endeavoured to represent these diversions as foolish extravagances; Natalia Kirillovna, the mother of Peter, did not herself see anything more in them than the amusements of a spirited, impetuous youth, and thought to steady him by marriage. She found for him a bride in the person of Eudoxia Lapoukhin, a beautiful young girl; her father, an *okolnitchi*, or courtier of the second rank, called Sarion, had his name changed to Theodore, and the marriage took place on the 27th of January, 1689. Peter had no attachment or love for his wife and only married to please his mother; in fact, he married as the majority of men married at that period. His mother hoped that when the young man was married he would begin to lead the life that was considered fitting for exalted personages. But soon after the marriage, as soon as the ice began to break up in the rivers, Peter galloped away to Pereiaslavl and there occupied himself with the building of ships. His mother wished to draw him away and demanded his return to Moscow under the pretext of a requiem service for the czar Theodore: "You were pleased to summon me to Moscow," wrote the czar to his mother, "and I was ready to come, but verily there is business on hand." His mother insisted that he should come to the capital; Peter obeyed and came to Moscow, but after a month he was again back at the Pereiaslavl lake. He loved his mother and in his letters shared with her the satisfaction he experienced in the success of his work. "Thanks to your prayers," he wrote, "all is well, and the ships are a great success." But the czaritza Natalia did not understand her son's passion, and moreover feared Sophia's inimical designs; therefore she called him again to Moscow. His young wife also wearied for his presence and wrote to him, calling him "her joy, her light, her darling," and begging him either to come back or let her come to him. Peter, recalled by his mother's persistent demands, unwillingly returned that summer to Moscow.<sup>d</sup>

## PETER ASSERTS CONTROL

It is alleged, with what truth we know not, that at this period Sophia and her favourite, Prince Galitzin, engaged the new chief of the Strelitz to sacrifice the young czar to their ambition. It appears at least that six hundred of those soldiers were to seize on that prince's person, if not to murder him. Peter was once more obliged to take refuge in the monastery of the Trinity, the usual sanctuary of the court when menaced by the mutinous soldiery. There he convoked the boyars of his party, assembled a body of forces, treated with the captains of the strelitz, and sent for some Germans who had been long settled in Moscow, and were all attached to his person, from his already showing a regard to foreigners. Sophia protested her abhorrence of the plot, and sent the patriarch to her brother to assure him of her innocence; but he abandoned her cause on being shown proof that he himself was among those who had been marked out for assassination.

Peter's cause prevailed. All the conspirators were punished with great

severity; the leaders were beheaded, others were knouted, or had their tongues cut out, and were sent into exile. Prince Galitzin escaped with his life, by the intercession of a relative, who was a favourite of the czar Peter, but he forfeited all his property, which was immense, and was banished to the neighbourhood of Archangel.

The scene concluded with shutting up the Princess Sophia in a convent near Moscow, where she remained in confinement until her death, which did not happen until fifteen years afterwards. From that period Peter was real sovereign. His brother Ivan had no other share in the government than that of lending his name to the public acts. He led a retired life, and died in 1696.

Nature had given Peter a colossal vigour of body and mind, capable of all extremes of good and evil. It is impossible to review his whole history without mingled feelings of admiration, horror, and disgust. That he was

not altogether a monster of wickedness was not the fault of Sophia and her minister, whose deliberate purpose it was to destroy in him every germ of good, that he might become odious and insupportable to the nation. They succeeded only in impairing the health, corrupting the morals, and hardening the heart of the youthful czar; it was no more in their power to deprive him of his lofty nature than to have given it to him. General Menesius, a learned Scotchman, to whom Alexis had intrusted his education, refused to betray him, and was, therefore, driven from his charge. The first impressions on the mind of Peter were allowed to be received from coarse and sordid amusements, and from foreigners, who were repulsed by the jealousy of the boyars, hated by the superstition of the people, and despised by the general ignorance. Thus it was hoped that he would at last be driven by public execration to quit the palace for a monk's cell; but



SOPHIE ALEXIEVNA  
(1658-1704)

the very means which were taken to ensure his disgrace served to lay the foundations of his greatness and glory.

Kept at a distance from the throne, Peter escaped the influence of that atmosphere of effeminacy and flattery by which it is environed; the hatred with which he was inspired against the destroyers of his family increased the energy of his character. He knew that he must conquer his place upon the throne, which was held by an able and ambitious sister, and encircled by a barbarous soldiery; thenceforth, his childhood had that which ripened age too often wants, it had an aim in view, of which his genius, already bold and persevering, had a thorough comprehension. Surrounded by adventurers of daring spirit, who had come from afar to try their fortune, his powers were rapidly unfolded. One of them, Lefort, who doubtless perceived in this young barbarian the traces of civilisation, which had perhaps been left there by his first tutor, gave him an idea of the sciences and arts of Europe, and particularly of the military art.

[1689 A.D.] 1

## MILITARY REFORMS

Lefort, in whom Peter placed his whole confidence, did not understand much of the military service, neither was he a man of literature, having applied himself deeply to no one particular art or science; but he had seen a great deal, and was capable of forming a right judgment of what he saw. Like the czar, he was indebted for everything to his own genius: besides, he understood the German and Dutch languages, which Peter was learning at that time, in hopes that both those nations would facilitate his designs. Finding himself agreeable to Peter, Lefort attached himself to that prince's service: by administering to his pleasures he became his favourite, and confirmed this intimacy by his abilities. The czar intrusted him with the most dangerous design a Russian sovereign could then possibly form—that of abolishing the seditious and barbarous body of the strelitz. The attempt to reform the janissaries had cost the great sultan Osman his life. Peter, young as he was, went to work in a much abler manner than Osman. He began with forming, at his country residence of Preobrajen, a company of fifty of his youngest domestics; and some of the sons of boyars were chosen for their officers. But in order to teach those young boyars a subordination with which they were wholly unacquainted, he made them pass through all the military degrees, setting them an example himself, and serving successively as private soldier, sergeant, and lieutenant of the company.

This company, which had been raised by Peter only, soon increased in numbers, and was afterwards the regiment of Preobrajenski guards. Another company, formed on the same plan, became in time the regiment of guards known by the name of Semenovski. The czar had now a regiment of five thousand men on foot, on whom he could depend, trained by General Gordon, a Scotchman, and composed almost entirely of foreigners. Lefort, who had seen very little service, yet was qualified for any commission, undertook to raise a regiment of twelve thousand men, and effected his design. Five colonels were appointed to serve under him; and suddenly he was made general of this little army, which had been raised as much to oppose the strelitz as the enemies of the state.

Peter was desirous of seeing one of those mock fights which had been lately introduced in times of peace. He caused a fort to be erected, which one part of his new troops was to defend and the other to attack. The difference on this occasion was that, instead of exhibiting a sham engagement, they fought a downright battle, in which there were several soldiers killed and a great many wounded. Lefort, who commanded the attack, received a considerable wound. These bloody sports were intended to inure the troops to martial discipline; but it was a long time before this could be effected, and not without a great deal of labour and difficulty. Amidst these military entertainments, the czar did not neglect the navy: and as he had made Lefort a general, notwithstanding this favourite had never borne any commission by land, so he raised him to the rank of admiral, though he had never before commanded at sea. But he knew him to be worthy of both commissions. True, he was an admiral without a fleet, and a general without any other troops than his regiment.

By degrees the czar began to reform the chief abuse in the army, *viz.*, the independence of the boyars, who, in time of war, used to take the field with a multitude of their vassals and peasants. Such was the government of the Franks, Huns, Goths, and Vandals, who, indeed, subdued the Roman Empire in its state of decline, but would have been easily destroyed had they con-



tended with the warlike legions of the ancient Romans, or with such armies as in our times are maintained in constant discipline all over Europe.

Admiral Lefort had soon more than an empty title. He employed both Dutch and Venetian carpenters to build some long-boats, and even two thirty-gun ships, at the mouth of the Voroneje, which discharges itself into the Don. These vessels were to fall down the river, and to awe the Crim Tatars. Turkey, too, seemed to invite the czar to essay his arms against her; at the same time disputes were pending with China respecting the limits between that empire and the possessions of Russia in the north of Asia. These, however, were settled by a treaty concluded in 1692, and Peter was left free to pursue his designs of conquest on the European side of his dominions.

#### AZOV TAKEN FROM THE TURKS

It was not so easy to settle a peace with the Turks; this even seemed a proper time for the czar to raise himself on their ruin. The Venetians, whom they had long overpowered, began to retrieve their losses. Morosini, the same who surrendered Candia to the Turks, was dispossessing them of the Morea. Leopold, emperor of Germany, had gained some advantages over the Ottoman forces in Hungary; and the Poles were at least able to repel the incursions of the Crim Tatars.

Peter profited by these circumstances to discipline his troops, and to acquire, if possible, the empire of the Black Sea. General Gordon marched along the Don towards Azov, with his regiment of five thousand men; he was followed by General Lefort, with his regiment of twelve thousand; by a body of strelitz, under the command of Sheremetiev and Schein, officers of Prussian extraction; by a body of Cossacks, and a large train of artillery. In short everything was ready for this grand expedition (1694). The Russian army began its march under the command of Marshal Sheremetiev, in the beginning of the summer of 1695, in order to attack the town of Azov, situated at the mouth of the Don. The czar was with the troops, but appeared only as a volunteer, being desirous to learn before he would take upon him to command. During their march they stormed two forts which the Turks had erected on the banks of the river.

This was an arduous enterprise, Azov being very strong and defended by a numerous garrison. The czar had employed several Venetians in building long-boats like the Turkish saicks, which, together with two Dutch frigates, were to fall down the Voroneje; but not being ready in time, they could not get into the sea of Azov. All beginnings are difficult. The Russians, having never as yet made a regular siege, miscarried in this their first attempt.

A native of Dantzic, whose name was Jacob, had the direction of the artillery under the command of General Schein; for as yet they had none but foreign officers belonging to the train, and indeed none but foreign engineers and foreign pilots. This Jacob had been condemned to the rods by Schein, the Prussian general. It seemed as if these severities were necessary at that time in support of authority. The Russians submitted to such treatment, notwithstanding their disposition to mutiny; and after they had undergone that corporal punishment, they continued in the service as usual. This Dantzikier was of another way of thinking, and determined to be revenged, whereupon he spiked the cannon, deserted to the enemy, turned Mohammedan, and defended the town with great success. The besiegers made a vain attempt

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to storm it, and after losing a great number of men, were obliged to raise the siege.

Perseverance in his undertakings was the characteristic of Peter the Great. In the spring of 1696 he marched a second time to attack the town of Azov with a more considerable army. The most agreeable part of the czar's success was that of his little fleet, which he had the pleasure to see completely equipped and properly commanded. It beat the Turkish saicks that had been sent from Constantinople, and took some of them. The siege was carried on regularly, though not entirely after the English manner. The trenches were three times deeper than the English, and the parapets were as high as ramparts. At length the garrison surrendered, the 28th of July, 1696, without obtaining any of the honours of war; they were likewise obliged to deliver up the traitor Jacob to the besiegers.

The czar immediately began to improve the fortifications of Azov. He likewise ordered a harbour to be dug, capable of holding large vessels, with a design to make himself master of the straits of Caffa, which open the passage into the Black Sea. He left two-and-thirty armed saicks before Azov, and made all the preparations for fitting out a strong fleet against the Turks, which was to consist of nine sixty-gun ships, and of one-and-forty carrying from thirty to fifty pieces of cannon. The principal nobility and the wealthiest merchants were obliged to contribute to the fitting out of this fleet; and, as he thought that the estates of the clergy ought to bear a proportion in the service of the common cause, orders were issued that the patriarch, the bishops, and the superior clergy should find money to forward this new expedition, in honour of their country, and for the general advantage of Christendom. He likewise obliged the Cossacks to build a number of light boats, such as they use themselves, with which they might easily infest the whole coast of the Crimea. The scheme was to drive the Tatars and Turks forever out of the Crimea, and afterwards to establish a free and easy commerce with Persia, through Georgia. This is the very branch of trade which the Greeks formerly carried on to Colchis, and to this peninsula of the Crimea, which the czar seemed likely to subdue.

Before Peter left the Crimea he repudiated his wife Eudoxia, and ordered her to be sent to a convent, where, before his return to Moscow, she became a nun, under the name of Helena. She had long made herself distasteful to her husband by her querulous jealousy, for which, indeed, she had ample cause, and by her aversion to his foreign favourites and the arts they introduced.

After his successful campaign against the Turks and Tatars, Peter wished to accustom his people to splendid shows, as well as to military toil. With this view, he made his army enter Moscow under triumphal arches, in the midst of fireworks and other tokens of rejoicing. The soldiers who had fought on board the Venetian saicks against the Turks led the procession. Marshal Sheremetiev, generals Gordon and Schein, Admiral Lefort, and the other general officers, took precedence of their sovereign, who pretended he had no rank in the army, being desirous to convince the nobility by his example that merit ought to be the only road to military preferment.

This triumphal entry seemed, in some measure, to resemble those of the ancient Romans, especially in that as the triumphers exposed the captives to public view in the streets of Rome, and sometimes put them to death, so the slaves taken in this expedition followed the army; and Jacob, who had betrayed them the year before, was carried in a cart, with the gibbet, to which he was fastened after he had been broken upon the wheel.

Upon this occasion was struck the first medal in Russia. The legend, which was in the language of that country is remarkable: "Peter I, the august emperor of Muscovy." On the reverse is Azov, with these words, "Victorious by fire and water."

#### SCHEMES OF CONQUEST

The paramount idea of Peter's whole life displayed itself in the siege of Azov, his first military enterprise. He wished to civilise his people by beginning with the art of war by sea and land. That art would open the way for all the others into Russia, and protect them there. By it the czar was to conquer for his empire that element which, in his eyes, was the greatest civiliser of the world, because it is the most favourable to the intercourse of nations with each other.

But ignorant and savage Asia lay stretched along the Black Sea, between Russia and the south of Europe. It was not, therefore, through those waters that Peter could open himself a passage to European knowledge. But towards the northwest, another sea, the same whence, in the ninth century, came the first Russian founders of the empire, was within his reach. It alone could connect Muscovy with ancient Europe; it was especially through that inlet, and by the ports on the gulfs of Finland and of Riga, that Russia could aspire to civilisation. Those ports belonged, however, to a warlike land, thickly studded with strong fortresses. It mattered not; everything was to be tried to attain so important an object.

Peter, however, did not deem it proper to begin such an arduous enterprise until he should have made himself better acquainted with the nations which he wished to conciliate, or to conquer, and which were recommended to him as models. He was desirous, with his own eyes, of beholding civilisation in what he supposed to be its mature state, and to improve himself in the details of government, in the knowledge of naval affairs, and of the several arts which he wished to introduce among his countrymen.

#### CONSPIRACY TO MURDER PETER

But he was not allowed to depart in peace. The announcement of his intention was received with deep disgust by his bigoted subjects. The strelitz in particular, who saw themselves supplanted by the regiments disciplined in the European manner, were actively hostile. The childhood and youth of Peter had several times escaped from their rage; and now, in the horror which was inspired by his approaching departure for profane Europe, they determined to sacrifice the impious czar who was ready to defile himself by the sacrilegious touch of foreigners whom they abhorred. They saw in the midst of them twelve thousand heretics, already organised, who would remain masters of their holy city; while they themselves, exiled to the army, were destined to fight at a distance on the frontier. Nor was this their only grievance, for Peter had given orders to construct a fleet of a hundred vessels; and of this sudden creation they complained, as being an insupportable tax in the midst of an already ruinous war, and as rendering it necessary to introduce into their sacred land a fresh supply of those schismatical artisans who were preferred to them. A few days before the departure of their sovereign, Tsikler and Sukanin, two of the strelitz leaders, plotted a nocturnal conflagration. They knew that Peter would be the first to hasten to it; and in the midst of the tumult and confusion common to such accidents, they meant to



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murder him without mercy, and then to massacre all the foreigners who had been set over them as masters.

Such was the infamous scheme. The hour fixed for its accomplishment was at hand. The principal conspirators assembled at a banquet, and sought in intoxicating liquors the courage requisite for the dreadful work before them. But drunkenness produces various effects on different constitutions. Two of the villains lost in it their boldness, left the company under a specious pretext, promising their accomplices to return in time, and hurried to the czar to disclose the plot.

At midnight the blow was to have been struck; and Peter gave orders that, exactly at eleven, the haunt of the conspirators should be closely surrounded. Shortly after, thinking that the hour was come, he went thither alone, and entered boldly, not doubting that he should find them already fettered by his guards. But his impatience had anticipated the time, and he found himself, single and unarmed, in the midst of the ferocious gang at the instant when they were vociferating an oath that they would achieve his destruction.

At his unexpected appearance they all rose in confusion. Peter, at once comprehending the full extent of his danger, exasperated at the supposed disobedience of his guards, and furious at having thrown himself into peril, had yet the presence of mind to conceal his emotions. Having gone too far to recede, he unhesitatingly advanced among the throng of traitors, greeted them familiarly, and, in a calm and natural tone, said, that "as he was passing by their house he saw a light in it, and guessing that they were amusing themselves, he had entered in order to share their pleasures." He then seated himself, and drank to his assassins, who, standing up around him, could not avoid putting the glass about, and drinking his health.

But they soon began to exchange looks and signs. At last one of them leaned over to Sukanin, and said, in a low voice, "Brother, it is time!" The latter, for what reason is unknown, hesitated, and had scarcely replied, "Not yet," when Peter, who heard these words, and along with them the footsteps of his guards, started from his seat, knocked him down by a blow in the face, and exclaimed, "If it is not yet time for you, scoundrel, it is for me!" This blow, and the sight of the guards, threw the assassins into consternation; they fell on their knees and implored forgiveness. "Chain them!" replied the terrible czar. Then turning to the officer of the guards, he struck him, and reproached him with his want of punctuality; but the latter showed him his order; and the czar perceiving his mistake, clasped him in his arms, kissed him on the forehead, proclaimed his fidelity, and entrusted him with the custody of the traitors.

His vengeance was terrible: the punishment was more ferocious than the crime. First the rack, then the successive mutilation of each member; then death, when not enough of blood and life was left to allow of the sense of suffering. To close the whole, the heads were exposed on the summit of a column, the members being symmetrically arranged around them, as ornaments—a scene worthy of a government of masters and of slaves, brutifying each other, whose only god was fear.

#### PETER TRAVELS TO ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE

After this terrific execution, Peter began his journey in April, 1697, travelling incognito in the retinue of his three ambassadors, General Lefort, the boyar Alexis Golovin, and Vonitsin, *diak*, or secretary of state, who had been

long employed in foreign courts. Their retinue consisted of two hundred persons. The czar, reserving to himself only a *valet de chambre*, a servant in livery, and a dwarf, was confounded in the crowd. It was a thing unparalleled in history, either ancient or modern, for a sovereign of five-and-twenty years of age to withdraw from his kingdoms, only in order to learn the art of government. His victory over the Turks and Tatars, the splendour of his triumphant entry into Moscow, the multitude of foreign troops attached to his interest, the death of his brother Ivan, the confinement of the princess Sophia to a cloister, and the fearful example he had just made of the conspirators might naturally encourage him to hope that the tranquillity of his dominions would not be disturbed during his absence. The regency he entrusted to the boyar Strecknev and Prince Romadonovski, who in matters of importance were to consult with the rest of the nobility.

The troops which had been trained by General Gordon continued at Moscow, with a view to awe the capital. The disaffected strelitz, who were likely to create a disturbance, were distributed on the frontiers of the Crimea, in order to preserve the conquest of Azov and check the incursions of the Tatars. Having thus provided against every contingency, he gave a free scope to his passion for travelling, and his desire of improvement. He had previously sent threescore young Russians of Lefort's regiment into Italy, most of them to Venice and the rest to Leghorn, in order to learn the art of navigation and the method of constructing galleys: forty more set out by his direction for Holland, to be instructed in the art of building and working large ships: others were ordered to Germany, to serve in the land forces and to learn the military discipline of that nation.

At that period, Mustapha II had been vanquished by the emperor Leopold; Sobieski was dead; and Poland was hesitating in its choice between the prince of Conti and Augustus of Saxony; William III reigned over England; Louis XIV was on the point of concluding the Treaty of Ryswick; the elector of Brandenburg was aspiring to the title of king; and Charles XII had ascended the throne.

Setting out from Novgorod, Peter first visited Livonia, where, at the risk of his liberty, he reconnoitred its capital, Riga, from which he was rudely repulsed by the Swedish governor. Thenceforth he could not rest till he had acquired that maritime province through which his empire was one day to be enriched and enlightened. In his progress he gained the friendship of Prussia, a power which, at a future time, might assist his efforts; Poland ought to be his ally, and already he declared himself the supporter of the Saxon prince who was about to rule it.

The czar had reached Amsterdam fifteen days before the ambassadors. He lodged at first in a house belonging to the East India Company, but chose afterwards a small apartment in the yards of the admiralty. He disguised himself in a Dutch skipper's habit, and went to the great shipbuilding village of Zaandam. Peter admired the multitude of workmen constantly employed; the order and exactness observed in their several departments; the prodigious despatch with which they built and fitted out ships; and the vast quantity of stores and machines for the greater ease and security of labour. He began with purchasing a boat, and made a mast for it himself. By degrees he executed every part of the construction of a ship, and led the same life all the time as the carpenters of Zaandam — clad and fed exactly like them; working hard at the forges, at the rope-yards, and at the several mills for sawing timber, extracting oil, manufacturing paper, and wire-drawing. He entered himself as a common carpenter, and was enrolled in the list of workmen by the name

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of Peter Michaelov. They commonly called him Master Peter, or Peter-bas; and though they were confounded at first to behold a sovereign as their companion, yet they gradually accustomed themselves to the sight.

Whilst Peter was handling the compass and axe at Zaandam, he received intelligence of the division in Poland, and of the double nomination of the elector Augustus and the prince of Conti. Immediately the carpenter of Zaandam promised King Augustus to assist him with thirty thousand men. From his shop he issued orders to his army in the Ukraine, which had been assembled against the Turks.

His troops obtained a victory over the Tatars, in the neighbourhood of Azov; and a few months after became masters of the town of Orkapi, or Perekop. For his part he persisted in making himself master of different arts. With this view he frequently went from Zaandam to Amsterdam, in order to hear the anatomical lectures of the celebrated Ruisch. Under this master he made such progress as to be able to perform some surgical operations, which, in case of necessity, might be of use, both to himself and to his officers. He likewise studied natural philosophy, under Vitsen, celebrated for his patriotic virtue and for the noble use he made of his immense fortune.<sup>c</sup>

### *Peter in Holland, England, and Austria*

Besides shipbuilding Peter also turned his attention to machinery, factories, and industry of every kind. Sometimes he was to be found sitting at the weaver's loom, sometimes handling the sledge-hammer, axe, and plane. He could truthfully write to the patriarch Adrian concerning himself: "We act obedient to the word of God to our first parent Adam and are working — not because it is necessary, but in order that we may have a better insight into naval affairs and be the more able to go against the enemies of Jesus Christ's name and conquer by his grace."

On the 9th of September Peter, accompanied by Vitsen and Lefort, journeyed to Utrecht for a conference with the hereditary stadholder William of Orange, king of England. On his return he visited the whale-fishing fleet which had shortly before arrived, so as to become acquainted with everything concerning whale-fishing — that important branch of the seaman's activity.

Peter always took note of everything new and important that he saw. Vitsen had to take him everywhere — to the hospitals, the foundling asylums, and the prayer meetings of different religious sects. He found great pleasure in the anatomical cabinet of the celebrated Ruisch, who had greatly advanced the art of preserving corpses from decomposition by injections. It was with difficulty that the czar could be got out of the room. He stood there transfixed and as it were unconscious, and he could not pass before the body of a child, that seemed to smile as if it were alive, without kissing it. His taste for being present at surgical operations went so far that at his request a special door was made in the wall of the St. Peter Hospital, by which he could enter it with Ruisch from the embassy, unobserved and unmolested by the curious. It was this doctor who recommended to him the surgeons for the new Russian naval and military troops.

After a stay of two months the Russian embassy went to the Hague, where it had long been expected. The entry was even more magnificent than at Amsterdam. Peter wished to attend the formal audience of his embassy in strict incognito. Vitsen, accompanied by two gentlemen, fetched him in his carriage. The czar wished to take along his dwarf, and



when told that space was lacking, he replied: "Very well, then, he will sit on my lap." At his command a drive was taken outside the town. At every one of the many mills that he passed, he asked what it was for; and on being told that one before which there were no stores was a grinding-mill, he jumped out of the carriage, but it was locked. On the road to Haarlem he observed a small water-mill for irrigating the land. It was in vain that they told him it was encompassed by water. "I must see it," was the reply. The czar satisfied his curiosity and returned with wet feet. Twilight was already setting in, and the Dutch escort of the czar were rejoicing that the sight-seeing was at an end. But alas! before entering the Hague, Peter felt the carriage give a sharp jolt. "What is it?" he inquired. He was told that the carriage had driven on to a ferry-boat. "I must see it," said he, and by lantern light the width, length, and depth of the ferry-boat had to be taken. Finally, at eleven at night, one of the best hotels in the Hague was reached. The czar was given a beautiful bedroom with a four-post bed. He preferred a garret. After midnight it occurred to him to spend the night at the hotel where his ambassadors were. Looking there for a place to sleep in, he found a Russian servant snoring on a bear skin. With a few kicks he awakened him. "Go away, go away, I am going to sleep here." At last he found a comfortable resting place.

On the day of the audience, Peter dressed himself as an ordinary nobleman in a blue garment not overladen with gold lace, a large blond wig, and a hat with white feathers. Vitsen led him to the anteroom of a hall where soon the members of the states general and many distinguished spectators assembled. As some time passed before the retinue of his embassy arrived, and meanwhile all eyes in the hall were turned towards the ante-chamber where the czar was, he became extremely restless. "It takes too long," he said and wanted to depart. But Vitsen represented to him that he would have to pass through the hall where the states general were already assembled. Thereupon he demanded that the lords should turn their backs to him as he passed through the room. Vitsen replied that he could command the lords nothing, as they were the representatives of the sovereignty of the land, but that he would ask them. The reply brought back was that the lords would stand up as the czar passed through the room, but would not turn their backs. Peter then drew his great wig before his face and ran at full speed through the assembly room and down the porch.

In the Hague also Peter had several informal meetings with the stadholder, King William; he became personally acquainted with the eminent statesmen Heinsius, Van Slingerland, Van Welde, Van Haven, and with the recorder of the states general, Franz Flagel. He besought the latter to find him someone who would know how to organise the Russian chancellery on the Dutch model. He also entered into connection with the celebrated engineer, General Coehorn, and on his recommendation took many Dutch engineering officers into the Russian service.

As Peter next undertook a journey to Leyden, the great scientist Leeuwenhoek had to come on board his yacht. He brought some of his most beautiful apparatus and a microscope with him. Peter conversed with him for two hours, and manifested much pleasure in the observation of the circulation of the blood in fishes. Boerhaave took him to the Botanical Gardens and to the anatomical lecture-room. On observing that one of his suite could not hide his aversion for a body which seemed to him particularly worthy of observation on account of its exposed sinews, he ordered him to tear out one of these sinews with his teeth.

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From Leyden, Peter returned to Amsterdam. Here he often joined in the work on the galley which had been commenced at his request. In the name of the town Vitsen requested the czar to accept this ship as a present. Peter gave it the name *Amsterdam*, and in the following year, laden with wares bought by Peter himself, it started on its first journey to Archangel. From Amsterdam Peter often made excursions to Zaandam, ever keen and confident, although his Russian attendants trembled and quaked at the threatening dangers. On market days he was greatly entertained by the quacks and tooth drawers. He had one of the latter brought to him, and with great dexterity soon acquired the knack necessary for this profession. His servants had to provide him with opportunities for practising the newly acquired art.

Through Vitsen the Dutch Jews petitioned the czar to permit their nation, which had been banished by Ivan IV from Russia, to re-enter it, and they offered to prove their gratitude by a present of 100,000 gulden. "My good Vitsen," replied Peter, "you know my nation and that it is not yet the time to grant the Jews this request. Tell them in my name that I thank them for their offer, but that their condition would become pitiable if they settled in Russia, for although they have the reputation of swindling all the world in buying and selling, I am afraid they would be greatly the losers by my Russians."

During his sojourn in Amsterdam Peter received the joyful news of two successful engagements against the Tatars in July and August. To celebrate this victory he gave a brilliant fête to the authorities and merchants of the town. The brilliant victory of Prince Eugene at Zenta was yet more decisive for the issue of the war against the Turks.

On the 9th of November Peter, accompanied only by Lefort, returned to the Hague, where he informed King William III of his desire to see England. The king preceded him, and sent three men of war and a yacht under the command of Admiral Mitchel to conduct the czar. On the 18th of January, 1698, accompanied by Menshikov and fifteen other Russians of his suite, he set sail at Hellevootsluis. Soon after the first days of his arrival in England, he exchanged the dwelling assigned to him in the royal castle of Somerset for the house of Mr. Evelyn at Deptford in the neighbourhood of the admiralty works, whence he could enter the royal construction yards unseen. There he learned from the master builders how to draw up the plan according to which a ship must be built. He found extreme pleasure in observing the cannon at the Tower, and also the mint, which then excelled all others in the art of stamping.

In his honour Admiral Carmarthen instituted a sham sea fight at Spithead on the 3rd of April which was conducted on a greater scale than a similar spectacle given for him in Holland. He often visited the great cathedrals and churches. He paid great attention to the ceremonial of English church worship; he also visited the meeting-houses of the Quakers and other sects. At Oxford he had the organisation and institutions of the university shown him. As in Holland, he preferred to pass most of his time with handicraftsmen and artists of every kind; from the watchmaker to the coffin maker, all had to show him their work, and he took models with him to Russia of all the best and newest. During his stay he always dressed either as an English gentleman or in a naval uniform.

In Holland the English merchants had presented the czar with a memorial through the Earl of Pembroke on the 3rd of November, in which they had petitioned for permission to import tobacco (which had been so

strongly forbidden under the czars Michael and Alexis), and offered to pay a considerable sum of money for the privilege. The marquis of Carmarthen now again broached the subject, and on the 16th of April a treaty was signed with the Russian ambassador Golovin for three years, which authorised Carmarthen's agents to import into the Russian Empire in the first year three thousand hogsheads (of five hundred English pounds each), and in each of the following two years four thousand hogsheads, against a tax of 4 kopecks in the pound. Twelve thousand pounds were paid down in advance. This money placed the czar in a position to make still greater purchases, as well as to engage a greater number of foreigners in his service; amongst them the astronomer and professor of mathematics Fergusson of Scotland, the engineer Captain Perry, and the shipbuilders John Dean and Joseph Ney.<sup>f</sup>

King William made Peter a present of the *Royal Transport*, a very beautiful yacht, which he generally used for his passage over to Holland. Peter went on board this vessel, and got back to Holland in the end of May, 1698. He took with him three captains of men-of-war, five-and-twenty captains of merchant ships, forty lieutenants, thirty pilots, thirty surgeons, two hundred and fifty gunners, and upwards of three hundred artificers. This colony of ingenious men in the several arts and professions sailed from Holland to Archangel on board the *Royal Transport*; and were sent thence to the different places where their service was necessary. Those whom he engaged at Amsterdam took the route of Narva, at that time subject to Sweden.

While the czar was thus transporting the arts and manufactures from England and Holland to his own dominions, the officers whom he had sent to Rome and Italy succeeded so far as also to engage some artists in his service. General Sheremetrev, who was at the head of his embassy to Italy, made the tour of Rome, Naples, Venice, and Malta; while the czar proceeded to Vienna with the other ambassadors. All he had to do now was to observe the military discipline of the Germans, after seeing the English fleet and the dockyards in Holland. But it was not the desire of improvement alone that induced him to make this tour to Vienna, he had likewise a political view; for the emperor of Germany was the natural ally of the Russians against the Turks. Peter had a private audience of Leopold, and the two monarchs stood the whole time of the interview, to avoid the trouble of ceremony.

During his stay at Vienna, there happened nothing remarkable, except the celebration of the ancient feast of "landlord and landlady," which Leopold thought proper to revive upon the czar's account, after it had been disused during his whole reign. The manner of making this entertainment, to which the Germans gave the name of *Wirthschaft*, was as follows: The emperor was landlord, and the empress landlady; the king of the Romans, the archdukes, and the archduchesses were generally their assistants; they entertained people of all nations, dressed after the most ancient fashion of their respective countries. Those who were invited as guests drew lots for tickets; on each of which was written the name of the nation, and the character to be represented. One had a ticket for a Chinese mandarin, another for a Tatar mirza, another for a Persian satrap, or a Roman senator; a princess might happen to be allotted the part of a gardener's wife, or a milkwoman; and a prince might act the peasant or soldier. They had dances suited to these different characters; and the landlord and landlady with their family waited at table. On this occasion Peter assumed the habit of a Friesland boor, and in this character was addressed by everybody, at the same time that they talked to him of the great czar of Muscovy. "These indeed are trifles," says Vol-



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taire, from whom the account is taken, "but whatever revives the memory of ancient customs is, in some measure, worthy of being recorded."

## THE INSURRECTION OF THE STRELITZ

Peter was preparing to continue his journey from Vienna to Venice and Rome when he was recalled to his own dominions by news of a general insurrection of the strelitz, who had quitted their posts on the frontiers, and marched on Moscow. Peter immediately left Vienna in secret, passed through Poland, where he had an interview with King Augustus, and arrived at Moscow in September, 1698, before anyone there knew of his having left Germany.<sup>e</sup>

When Peter I arrived from Vienna he found that his generals and the *douma* had acted with too great leniency. He cherished an old grudge against the strelitz; they had formed the army of Sophia which had been arrayed against that of the czar, and in his mind was still alive the memory of the invasion of the Kremlin, the murder of his maternal relatives, the terrors undergone by his mother in Troitsa, the plots that had well-nigh prevented his departure for the west, and the check placed by the mutineers on the plans he had matured for the good of his country during his journey through Europe. He resolved to seize the opportunity thus placed in his hands to crush all his enemies at one blow, and to inaugurate in old Russia a reign of terror that should recall the days of Ivan IV. The particular point of attack had been his taste for foreign fashions, for shaven chins, and abbreviated garments. These therefore should be the rallying-sign of the Russia of the future. Long beards had been the standard of revolt; long beards must fall. He ordered all the gentlemen of his realm to shave, and even performed that office with his own hand for some of the highest nobles of his court. On the same day the Red Square was covered with gibbets. The patriarch Adrian tried in vain to divert the anger of the czar. "My duty is to protect the people and to punish rebels," was the only answer he received.

On the 10th of October a first consignment of two hundred prisoners arrived in the Red Square, followed by their wives and children, who ran behind the carts chanting funeral dirges. The czar ordered several officers to assist the headsman in his work. Johann Korb, an Austrian who was an eye-witness of the scene, relates that the heads of "five rebels were struck off by the noblest hand in Russia." Seven more days were devoted to the executions, and in all about a thousand victims perished. Many were previously broken on the wheel or given up to other frightful tortures. The czar forbade the removal of any of the bodies, and for five months Moscow was given the spectacle of corpses hanging from the turrets of the Kremlin, or exposed in the public squares. Two of Sophia's female confidantes were buried alive, and Sophia herself and the repudiated czarina, Eudoxia Lapukhin, noted for her attachment to old customs, were confined in monasteries. After the revolt of the inhabitants of Astrakhan, who murdered their voyevod (1705), the militia was abolished and the way was clear for the establishment of a new army.<sup>g</sup>

## WAR WITH SWEDEN

The external relations as well as the domestic circumstances of the empire were at this juncture peculiarly favourable to the czar's grand design of opening a communication with the Baltic. He had just concluded a treaty of

peace for thirty years with the Turks, and he found himself at the head of a numerous army, a portion, at least, of which was well disciplined, and eager for employment. The death of General Lefort, in 1699, at the early age of forty-six, slightly retarded the progress of his movements; but in the following year he prepared to avail himself of events that called other powers into action and afforded him a feasible excuse for taking the field.

Charles XII, then only eighteen years of age, had recently succeeded to the throne of Sweden. The occasion seemed to yield an auspicious opportunity to Poland and Denmark for the recovery of certain provinces that in the course of former wars had either been wrested from them by Sweden, or ceded by capitulation. Augustus, the elector of Saxony, called by choice to the throne of Poland, was the first to assert this doctrine of restitution, in which he was quickly followed by the Danish king. Livonia and Esthonia had been ceded by Poland to Charles XI, and the provinces of Holstein and Schleswig had been conquered from Denmark in the same reign, and annexed to the Swedish territories. The object of the allies was to recover those places. Sweden, thus assailed in two quarters, presented an apparently easy victory to the czar, whose purpose it was to possess himself of Ingria and Karelia, that lay between him and the sea. A confederacy was, therefore, entered into by the three powers for the specific view of recovering by war those provinces that had previously been lost by war. But Peter miscalculated his means. The arms of Sweden were crowned with triumphs, and her soldiery were experienced in the field. The Russian troops, on the contrary, were for the greater part but raw recruits, and, except against the Turks and Tatars, had as yet but little practice in military operations. The genius of Peter alone could have vanquished the difficulties of so unequal a contest.

The preparations that were thus in course of organisation awakened the energies of Charles. Without waiting for the signal of attack from the enemy, he sent a force of eight thousand men into Pomerania, and, embarking with a fleet of forty sail, he suddenly appeared before Copenhagen, compelled the king of Denmark within six weeks to sign a peace by which the possession of Holstein was confirmed to the reigning duke, and a full indemnity obtained for all the expenses of the war. He had no sooner overthrown the designs of the Danish monarch than he turned his arms against Poland. Augustus had laid siege to Riga, the capital of Livonia; but that city was defended with such obstinacy by Count Dalberg that the Polish general was glad to abandon the enterprise, upon the shallow pretext that he wished to spare the Dutch merchandise which was at that time stored in the port. Thus the confederation was dissolved, and the struggle was left single-handed between the Russians and the Swedes.

Peter, undismayed by the reverses of his allies, poured into Ingria an army of sixty thousand men. Of these troops there were but twelve thousand disciplined soldiers; the remainder consisted of serfs and fresh levies, gathered from all quarters, rudely clad, armed only with clubs and pikes, and unacquainted with the use of fire-arms. The Swedish army, on the other hand, was only eight thousand strong; but it was composed of experienced battalions, flushed by recent successes, and commanded by able generals. The advanced guards of the Russians were dispersed on their progress, in some skirmishes with the Swedes; but the main body penetrated to the interior, and intrenched itself before the walls of Narva, a fortified place on the banks of the Narova, a river that flowed from Lake Peipus into the Baltic Sea. For two months they lay before the town, when Peter, finding it necessary to hasten the movements of some regiments that were on their march from

[1701 A.D.]

Novogorod, as well as to confer with the king of Poland in consequence of his abandonment of the siege of Riga, left the camp, delegating the command to the duke of Croy, a Flemish officer, and prince Dolgoruki, the commissary-general.

His absence was fatal to this undertaking. Charles, during a violent snow-storm, that blew directly in the face of the Russians, attacked the enemy in their intrenchments. The besiegers were filled with consternation. The duke of Croy issued orders which the prince Dolgoruki refused to execute, and the utmost confusion prevailed amongst the troops. The Russian officers rose against the Germans and massacred the duke's secretary, Colonel Lyons, and several others. The presence of the sovereign was necessary to restore confidence and order, and, in the absence of a controlling mind the soldiers, flying from their posts and impeding each other in their attempts to escape, were slaughtered in detail by the Swedes. In this exigency, the duke of Croy, as much alarmed by the temper of the Russians as by the superiority of the enemy, together with almost all the German officers in the service, surrendered to the victorious Charles, who, affecting to despise his antagonist, contented himself with retaining a few general officers and some of the Saxon auxiliaries, as prisoners to grace his ovation at Stockholm, and suffered the vanquished troops to return home. Thus failed the first descent upon Ingria, which cost Russia, even on the statement of the czar himself, between five thousand and six thousand men. The loss of the Swedes is estimated by Peter at three thousand, but Voltaire reduces the number to twelve hundred, which, considering the relative positions of both armies, and the disadvantages of other kinds under which the Russians were placed, is more likely to be accurate.

This unpropitious event did not discourage Peter. "The Swedes," he observed, "will have the advantage of us for some time, but they will teach us, at last, how to beat them." If Charles, however, had followed up his success, and pushed his fortunes into the heart of Russia immediately after this victory, he might have decided the fate of the empire at the gates of Moscow. But, elated with his triumphs in Denmark, and tempted by the weakness of the Poles, he embraced the more facile and dazzling project of concentrating his whole power against Augustus, declaring that he would never withdraw his army from Poland until he had deprived the elector of his throne. The opportunity he thus afforded Peter of recruiting his shattered forces, and organising fresh means of aggression, was the most remarkable mistake in the whole career of that vain but heroic monarch.

#### RALLYING FROM DEFEAT

While Charles was engaged in Poland, Peter gained time for the accomplishment of those measures which his situation suggested. Despatching a body of troops to protect the frontiers at Pskov, he repaired in person to Moscow, and occupied himself throughout the ensuing winter in raising and training six regiments of infantry, consisting of 1000 men each, and several regiments of dragoons. Having lost 145 pieces of cannon in the affair at Narva he ordered a certain proportion of the bells of the convents and churches to be cast into field pieces; and was prepared in the spring of the year 1701 to resume hostilities with increased strength, and an artillery of 100 pieces of cannon, 142 field pieces, 12 mortars, and 13 howitzers.

Nor did he confine his attention to the improvement of the army. Conscious of the importance of diffusing employment amongst his subjects, and increasing their domestic prosperity, he introduced into the country flocks of



sheep from Saxony, and shepherds to attend to them, for the sake of the wool; established hospitals, and linen and paper manufactories; encouraged the art of printing; and invited from distant places a variety of artisans to impart to the lower classes a knowledge of useful crafts. These proceedings were treated with levity and contempt by Charles, who appears all throughout to have despised the Russians, and who, engrossed by his campaign in Courland and Lithuania, intended to turn back to Moscow at his leisure, after he should have dethroned Augustus, and ravaged the domains of Saxony.

Unfortunately the divisions that prevailed in the councils of Poland assisted to carry these projects rapidly into effect. Peter was anxious to enter into a new alliance with Augustus, but, in an interview he held with that prince at Birzen, he discovered the weakness of his position and the hopelessness of expecting any effectual succour at his hands. The Polish diet, equally jealous of the interference of the Saxon and Russian soldiery in their affairs, and afraid to incur the hostility of Charles, refused to sanction a league that threatened to involve them in serious difficulties. Hence, Augustus, left to his own resources, was easily deprived of a throne which he seemed to hold against the consent of the people, while Peter was forced to conduct the war alone. His measures were consequently taken with promptitude and decision. His army was no sooner prepared for action than he re-entered Ingria, animating the troops by his presence at the several points to which he directed their movements. In some accidental skirmishes with small bodies of the Swedes, he reaped a series of minor successes, that inspired the soldiers with confidence and improved their skill for the more important scenes that were to follow. Constantly in motion between Pskov, Moscow, and Archangel, at which last place he built a fortress called the New Dyina, he diffused a spirit of enthusiasm amongst the soldiers, who were now becoming inured to action.

An open battle at last took place in the neighbourhood of Dorpat, on the borders of Livonia, when General Sheremetev fell in with the main body of the enemy on the 1st of January, 1702, and, after a severe conflict of four hours, compelled them to abandon their artillery and fly in disorder. On this occasion, the Swedes are said to have lost three thousand men, while there were but one thousand killed on the opposite side. General Sheremetev was immediately created a field-marshal, and public thanks were offered up for the victory.

Following up this signal triumph, the czar equipped one fleet upon Lake Peipus to protect the territory of Novgorod, and manned another upon Lake Ladoga, to resist the Swedes in case they should attempt a landing. Thus guarded at the vulnerable points, he was enabled to prosecute his plans in the interior with greater certainty and effect.

Marshal Sheremetev in the meantime marched upon Marienburg, a town on the confines of Livonia and Ingria, achieving on his progress another triumph over the enemy near the village of Humolova. The garrison at Marienburg, afraid to risk the consequences of a siege, capitulated at once, on condition that the inhabitants should be permitted a free passage, which was agreed to; but an intemperate officer having set fire to the powder magazine, to prevent the negotiation from being effected, by which a number of soldiers on both sides were killed, the Russians fell upon the inhabitants and destroyed the town.

#### THE ANTECEDENTS OF AN EMPRESS

Amongst the prisoners of war was a young Livonian girl, called Martha, an orphan who resided in the household of the Lutheran minister of Marienburg.

[1702 A.D.]

She had been married the day before to a sergeant in the Swedish army; and when she appeared in the presence of the Russian general Bauer, she was bathed in tears, in consequence of the death of her husband, who was supposed to have perished in the *mêlée*. Struck with her appearance, and curious to learn the history of so interesting a person, the general took her to his house, and appointed her to the superintendence of his household affairs. Bauer was an unmarried man, and it was not surprising that his intercourse with Martha should have exposed her to the imputation of having become his mistress; nor, indeed, is there any reason, judging by the immediate circumstances as well as the subsequent life of that celebrated woman, to doubt the truth of the charge. Bauer is said to have denied the fact, which is sufficiently probable, as it was evidently to his interest to acquit the lady of such an accusation; but, however that may be, it is certain that Prince Menshikov, seeing her at the general's house, and fascinated by her manners, solicited the general to transfer her services to his domestic establishment; which was at once acceded to by the general, who was under too many obligations to the prince to leave him the option of a refusal.

Martha now became the avowed mistress of the libertine Menshikov, in which capacity she lived with him until the year 1704, when, at the early age of seventeen, she enslaved the czar as much by her talents as by her beauty, and exchanged the house of the prince for the palace of the sovereign. The extraordinary influence she subsequently exercised when, from having been the mistress she became the wife of the czar, and ultimately the empress Catherine, developing, throughout the various turns of her fortune, a genius worthy of consort with that of Peter himself, opens a page in history not less wonderful than instructive. The marriage of the sovereign with a subject was common in Russia; but, as Voltaire remarks, the union of royalty with a poor stranger, captured amidst the ruins of a pillaged town, is an incident which the most marvellous combinations of fortune and merit never produced before or since in the annals of the world.



CATHERINE I  
(1679-1727)

#### MILITARY SUCCESS: FOUNDATION OF ST. PETERSBURG

The most important operations of the campaign in the year 1702 were now directed to the river Neva, the branches of which issue from the extremity of Lake Ladoga, and, subsequently reuniting, are discharged into the Baltic. Close to the point where the river flowed from the lake was an island, on which stood the strongly-fortified town of Rottenburg. This place, maintaining a position that was of the utmost consequence to his future views, Peter resolved to reduce in the first instance; and, after laying siege to it for nearly a month, succeeded in carrying it by assault. A profusion of rewards and honours were on this occasion distributed amongst the army, and a triumphal procession

was made to Moscow, in which the prisoners of war followed in the train of the conqueror. The name of Rottenburg was changed to that of Schlüsselburg, or city of the key, because that place was the key to Ingria and Finland. The solemnities and pomp by which these triumphs were celebrated were still treated with contempt by Charles, who, believing that he could at any moment reduce the Russians, continued to pursue his victories over Augustus. But Peter was rapidly acquiring power in the very direction which was most fatal to his opponent, and which was directly calculated to lead to the speedy accomplishment of his final purpose.

The complete occupation of the shores of the Neva was the first object to be achieved. The expulsion of the enemy from all the places lying immediately on its borders and the possession or destruction of all the posts which the Swedes held in Ingria and Karelia were essential to the plans of the czar. Already an important fortress lying close to the river was besieged and reduced, and two Swedish vessels were captured on the lake by the czar in person. Further successes over the Swedish gun-boats, that hovered near the mouth of the river, hastened his victorious progress; and when he had made himself master of the fortress of Kantzi, on the Karelian side, he paused to consider whether it would be advisable to strengthen that place, and make it the centre of future operations, or push onwards to some position nearer to the sea. The latter proposal was decided upon; and a marshy island, covered with brush-wood, inhabited by a few fishermen, and not very distant from the embouchure of the Neva, was chosen as the most favourable site for a new fortress. The place was, by a singular anomaly, called Lust Eland, or Pleasure Island, and was apparently ill adapted for the destinies that in after-times surrounded it with glory and splendour. On this pestilential spot, Peter laid the foundations of the fortress of St. Petersburg, which gradually expanded into a city and ultimately became the capital of the empire.

The country in the neighbourhood of this desolate island, or cluster of swamps, was one vast morass. It did not yield a particle of stone, and the materials with which the citadel was built were derived from the ruins of the works at Nianshantz. Nor were these the only difficulties against which Peter had to contend in the construction of the fortifications. The labourers were not furnished with the necessary tools, and were obliged to toil by such expedients as their own invention could devise. So poorly were they appointed for a work of such magnitude that they were obliged to carry the earth, which was very scarce, from a considerable distance in the skirts of their coats, or in bags made of shreds and matting. Yet the fortress was completed within five months, and before the expiration of a year St. Petersburg contained thirty thousand houses and huts of different descriptions.

So gigantic an undertaking was not accomplished without danger, as well as extreme labour. Peter, who could not be turned aside from his purposes by ordinary obstacles, collected a vast concourse of people from a variety of countries, including Russians, Tatars, Kalmucks, Cossacks, Ingrians, and Finlanders; and employed them, without intermission, and without shelter from an inclement climate of sixty degrees of latitude, in deepening the channels of the rivers and raising the general level of the islands which were in the winter seasons usually sunk in the floods. The severity of the labour, and the insufficiency of provisions, caused a great mortality amongst the workmen. A hundred thousand men are said to have perished in the first year. While this fort was in progress of erection, Peter despatched Menzikov to a little island lying nearer to the mouth of the river, to build another fortress for the protection of the entrance. The model of the fortress



[1702 A.D.]

was made by himself in wood. He gave it the name of Kronstadt, which, with the adjacent town and buildings, it still retains. Under the cannon of this impregnable fortress the largest fleet might float in shelter.

The establishment of a new city on so unfavorable a site, and the contemplated removal of the seat of government, received considerable opposition from the boyars and upper classes, as well as from the inferior grades, who regarded the place with terror, in consequence of the mortality it had already produced. The discontent of the lower orders broke out in loud complaints during Peter's temporary absence. No measures short of the most despotic could have compelled the inhabitants of Moscow to migrate to the bleak and dismal islands of the Neva, and Peter was not slow to carry such measures into effect.

If the people could have looked beyond the convenience of the moment into the future prospects of the empire, they must at once have perceived the wisdom of the change. The paramount object of Peter's policy was the internal improvement of Russia. The withdrawal of the nobility, the merchants, and the artisans from their rude capital in the interior, to an imperial seat on the gulf of Finland, by which they would be brought into closer intercourse with civilised Europe, and acquire increased facilities for commercial enterprise, was evidently calculated to promote that object, which was distinctly kept in view in the place upon which the city was built. Peter had not forgotten the practical lessons he had learned during his residence in Holland. That country, the inhabitants of which in Pliny's time were described to be amphibious, as if it were doubtful to which element, the land or the sea, they really belonged, had been redeemed from the ocean by the activity and skill of the people; and Peter, profiting by their experience, adopted Amsterdam as his model in securing the foundations of St. Petersburg. He employed several Dutch architects and masons; and the wharfs, canals, bridges, and rectilinear streets, planted with rows of trees, attest the accuracy with which the design was accomplished. To a neighbouring island, which he made a depot for timber, he gave the name of New Holland, as if he meant to leave to posterity an acknowledgement of the obligations he owed to that country.

The speculations of the czar were rapidly fulfilled in the commercial relations invited by the establishment of St. Petersburg. Five months had scarcely elapsed from the day of its foundation when a Dutch ship, freighted with merchandise, stood into the river. Before the expiration of a year, another vessel from Holland arrived; and the third vessel, within the year, that entered the new port was from England. These gratifying facts inspired confidence amongst those who had been disposed to look upon the project with such hasty distrust; and Peter, whose power was now rapidly growing up on all sides, was enabled to extend his operations in every direction over Ingria. The variety of affairs which, at this juncture, occupied his attention sufficiently proves the grasp of his capacity and the extraordinary energy of his mind. At nearly the same time that he founded a new capital he was employed in fortifying Pskov, Novgorod, Kiev, Smolensk, Azov, and Archangel; and in assisting the unfortunate Augustus with men and money. Cornelius van Bruyer, a Dutchman, who at that period was travelling in Holland, states that Peter informed him that, notwithstanding all these undertakings, he had 300,000 roubles remaining in his coffers, after providing for all the charges of the war.

The advances that the czar was thus making in strengthening and civilising the empire were regarded with such contempt by Charles that he is

reported to have said that Peter might amuse himself as he thought fit in building a city, as he should soon find him to take it from him and set fire to his wooden houses. The Porte, however, did not look with indifference upon his movements, and sent an ambassador to him to complain of his preparations; but Peter replied that he was master of his own dominions, as the Porte was of his, and that his object was not to infringe the peace, but to render Russia "respectable" upon the Euxine.

#### RENEWED HOSTILITIES

The time was now approaching when the decision of the disputes in Poland enabled Charles to turn back upon Ingria, where Peter was making so successful a stand. On the 14th of February, 1704, the primate of Warsaw threw off his allegiance to Augustus, who was in due form deposed by the diet. The nomination of the new king was placed in the hands of Charles, who proposed Stanislaus Leszczyński, a young nobleman distinguished for his accomplishments, who was accordingly declared king of Poland and grand duke of Lithuania. But Lithuania had not as yet sent in her adherence to either side; and Peter, still taking a deep interest in the fortunes of Augustus, whose Saxon troops were every day suffering fresh discomfitures from the Swedish army, sent that monarch a reinforcement of twelve thousand men to support his claims in the undecided province. The military force of Russia had now become a formidable body, highly disciplined, and fully equipped; and Peter, without loss of time, in the spring of 1704, disposed the remainder of his army into two divisions, one of which he sent under the command of Field-Marshal Sheremetev, to besiege Dorpat, while he took in person the conduct of the other against Narva, where he had formerly endured a signal defeat.

Dorpat, which is better known by this siege than by the university which Gustavus Adolphus had previously established there, was forced to capitulate by a *ruse de guerre*. It was necessary in the first instance to become master of Lake Peipus, for which purpose a Russian flotilla was placed at the entrance of the Embach. Upon the advance of a Swedish squadron a naval battle ensued, which ended in the capture or destruction of the whole of the enemy's fleet. Peter now sat down before Dorpat, but, finding that the commandant held out for six weeks, he adopted an ingenious device to procure entrance into the town. He disguised two regiments of infantry and one of cavalry in the uniforms of Swedish soldiers, giving them Swedish standards and flags. These pretended Swedes attacked the trenches, and the Russians feigned a fight. The garrison of the town, deceived by appearances, made a sortie, when the false attackers and the attacked reunited, fell upon the troops, and entered the town. A great slaughter ensued, and, to save the remainder of the garrison, the commandant surrendered.

At Narva Peter was equally successful. The siege was conducted under his own personal command. Sword in hand, he attacked three bastions that offered the strongest points of defence, carried them all, and burst into the town. The barbarities that ensued were of a nature to revolt even the czar himself. Pillage, slaughter, and lustful excesses were committed by the infuriated men; and Peter, shocked at the cruelties he witnessed, threw himself amongst the barbarians who refused to obey his orders and slew several of them in the public streets. A number of the unfortunate citizens had taken refuge in the hôtel de ville; and the czar, appearing in the midst of them, cast his bloody sword on the table, declaring that it was stained not

[1704 A.D.]

with the blood of the citizens but of his own soldiers, which he had shed to save their lives.

These victories were decisive of the position of Peter. He was now master of all Ingria, the government of which he conferred upon Menzikov, whom he created a prince of the empire and major-general in the army. The elevation of Menzikov, through the various grades of the service, from his humble situation as a pastrycook's boy to the highest dignities in the state, was a practical reproof to the indolent and ignorant nobility, who were now taught to feel that merit was the only recommendation to the favour of the czar. The old system of promotion was closed. The claims of birth and the pride of station ceased to possess any influence at court. The great body of the people, impressed with the justice that dictated this important change in the dispensation of honour and rewards, began for the first time to be inspired with a spirit of emulation and activity; and exactly in proportion as Peter forfeited the attachment of the few, whose power was daily on the decline, he drew around him the mixed wonder and allegiance of the many, whose power he was daily enlarging. Thus were laid the foundations of a mighty empire in the hearts of a scattered population, as various in habits and in language as it had always been discordant in interests and disunited in action.

Having acquired this valuable possession, and secured himself in St. Petersburg against the Swedes, it was the profound policy of Peter to keep up the war between Charles and Augustus, with a view to weaken by diversion the strength of the former. He accordingly made a great offer of assistance to the dethroned king, and despatched General Repuin with six thousand horse and six thousand foot to the borders of Lithuania; while he advanced in person into Courland at the head of a strong force. Here he received a severe check, having fallen in with the Swedish general Lewenhaupt, who defeated the Russians after an obstinate battle, in which the czar's troops lost between five thousand and six thousand men, and the Swedes no more than two thousand. Peter, notwithstanding, penetrated into Courland, and laid siege to the capital, which surrendered by capitulation. On this occasion the Swedes degraded themselves by committing an extensive pillage in the palace and archives of the dukes of Courland, descending even into the mausoleums to rob the dead of their jewels. The Russians, however, before they would take charge of the vaults, made a Swedish colonel sign a certificate that their sacrilegious depredations were the acts of his own countrymen.

## POLISH AFFAIRS

The greatest part of Courland, as well as the whole of Ingria, had now been conquered in detail by Peter, and, as Charles was still engrossed by his operations in Poland and Saxony, he returned to Moscow to pass the winter; but intelligence of the approach of the Swedish king at the head of a powerful force towards Grodno, where the combined armies of Russia and Saxony were encamped, recalled him from his repose. Peter immediately hastened to the field, and found all the avenues occupied by Swedish troops. A battle ensued near Frauenstadt, in which the flower of the confederated battalions, under the command of General Schullenberg, to the number of eighteen thousand men, six thousand of whom were Russians, suffered a complete defeat. With an insignificant exception, they were nearly all slain. Some authorities attribute this disaster to the treachery of a French regiment, which had the care of the Saxon artillery; but it is certain that the most sanguinary atrocities



ties were committed on both sides, in a contest upon the issues of which two crowns appeared to be dependent.

The consequences of this overthrow would have been immediately fatal to Augustus, but for the energy of the czar, who, rapidly organising an army of twenty thousand men, urged that wavering prince to take advantage of

the absence of Charles in Saxony, and throw himself once more into Poland. A revolt in Astrakhan called Peter into that part of his territories; but he deputed General Patkul, a brave Livonian, who had formerly made his escape from the hands of Charles, and had passed from the service of Augustus into that of the czar, to explain the necessity of the measure. Augustus yielded to the advice of his ally, and marched into Poland; but he had no sooner made good his progress than, suddenly panic-struck by the increasing successes of Charles, he resolved to sue for peace upon any terms at which it could be procured. He accordingly invested two ambassadors with full powers to treat confidentially with Charles, and had the temerity to cast Patkul into prison. While the plenipotentiaries were negotiating this shameful treaty at the camp of Charles XII, Menshikov joined the forces of Augustus at Kalish with thirty thousand men. The consternation of Augustus at this unexpected reinforcement was indescribable; and his confusion



WIFE OF A MERCHANT OF KALONGA

amounted almost to despair upon the receipt of intelligence that ten thousand Swedes, under the command of General Meierfeldt, were on their march to give him battle.

In this dilemma he transmitted a private message to General Meierfeldt to inform him of the negotiation he had opened with his master; but that general, naturally treating the whole affair as a mere pretext to gain time, made preparations for hostilities. The superior force of the Russians decided the fate of the day, and, after having defeated the Swedes with great slaughter, they entered Warsaw in triumph. Had Augustus relied upon the energy and friendship of his ally, he would now have been replaced upon his throne; but the timidity that tempted him to cast himself upon the mercy of Charles was prolific of misfortunes. He had scarcely entered Warsaw as a victor when he was met by his own plenipotentiaries, who placed before him the treaty they

[1707 A.D.]

had just concluded, by which he had forfeited the crown of Poland forever. His humiliation was complete. Thus the weak and vacillating Augustus, fresh from a triumph that ought to have placed him upon the throne of Poland, was a vassal in its capital, while Charles was giving the law in Leipsic and reigning in his lost electorate.

His struggles to escape from the disgrace into which his folly and his fears had plunged him only drew down fresh contempt upon his head. He wrote to Charles a letter of explanation and apology, in which he begged pardon for having obtained a victory against his will, protesting that it was entirely the act of the Russians, whom it was his full intention to have abandoned, in conformity with the wishes of Charles; and assuring that monarch that he would do anything in his power to render him satisfaction for the great wrong he had committed in daring to beat his troops. Not content with this piece of humility, and fearing to remain at Warsaw, he proceeded to Saxony, and, in the heart of his own dominions, where the members of his family were fugitives, he surrendered in person to the victorious Swede. Charles was too conscious of his advantages not to avail himself of them to the full, and not only made the timid Augustus fulfil all the stipulations of the treaty, by which he renounced the crown of Poland, abandoned his alliance with the czar, surrendered the Swedish prisoners, and gave up all the deserters, including General Patkul, whom Augustus had arrested by a violation of good faith, but he forced him to write a letter to Stanislaus, congratulating him on his accession to the throne. The unfortunate Patkul was no sooner delivered into the hands of Charles than he condemned him to be broken on the wheel and quartered.

The timid and treacherous conduct of Augustus and the deliberate cruelty of Charles drew from Peter expressions of unbounded indignation. He laid a statement of the whole circumstances before the principal potentates of Europe, and declared his determination to use all the means in his power to drive Stanislaus from the throne of Poland. The first measure he adopted was the holding of a conference with several of the Polish grandees, whom he completely gained over to his side by the suavity of his manners. At a subsequent meeting it was agreed that the throne of Poland was in fact vacant, and that a diet should be summoned for the purpose of electing a king. When the diet assembled, Peter urged upon their attention the peculiar circumstances in which the country was placed, and the impossibility of effecting any substantial resistance against the ambitious intrigues of Charles, unless a new king were placed upon the throne. His views were confirmed by the voice of the assembly, who agreed to the public declaration of an interregnum, and to the investiture of the primate in the office of regent until the election should have taken place.

#### CHARLES XII INVADES RUSSIA (1707 A.D.)

But while these proceedings were going forward at Lublin, King Stanislaus, who had been previously acknowledged by most of the sovereigns of Europe, was advancing into Poland at the head of sixteen Swedish regiments, and was received with regal honours in all the places through which he passed. Nor was this the only danger that threatened to arrest the course of the proposed arrangements for the settlement of the troubles of Poland. Charles, whose campaign in Saxony had considerably enriched his treasury, was now prepared to take the field with a well-disciplined army of forty-five thousand men, besides the force commanded by General Lewenhaupt; and he did not affect

to conceal his intention to make Russia the theatre of war, in which purpose he was strengthened by an offer on the part of the Porte to enter into an offensive alliance with him against Peter, whose interference in the affairs of Poland excited great jealousy and alarm in Turkey. Charles calculated in some degree upon the support he might receive from the Russians themselves, who, he believed, would be easily induced to revolt against Peter, in consequence of the innovations he had introduced and the expenses that he would be likely to entail upon them by a protracted war.

But the people of Russia were well aware that mere personal ambition did not enter into the scheme of Peter, and that, although he had broken through many antiquated and revered customs, yet he had conferred so many permanent benefits upon the empire as entitled him to their lasting gratitude. Whatever prospects of success, therefore, Charles might have flattered himself upon deriving from the dissatisfaction of the great mass of the community were evidently vague and visionary. But the argument was sufficient for all his purposes in helping to inspire his soldiers with confidence. About this time the French envoy at the court of Saxony attempted to effect a reconciliation between Charles and the czar, when the former made his memorable reply that he would treat with Peter in Moscow; which answer being conveyed to Peter produced his equally memorable commentary — "My brother Charles wishes to play the part of Alexander, but he shall not find a Darius in me."

Rapid preparations were made on both sides for the war which had now become inevitable. In the autumn of 1707 Charles commenced his march from Altranstätt, paying a visit to Augustus at Dresden as he passed through that city, and hastening onwards through Poland, where his soldiers committed such devastations that the peasantry rose in arms against them. He finally fixed his winter quarters in Lithuania. During the time occupied by these movements Peter was wintering at Moscow, where, after an absence of two years, he had been received with universal demonstrations of affection. He was busily occupied in inspecting the new manufactories that had been established in the capital, when news reached him of the operations of the Swedish army. He immediately departed, and with six hundred of the guards established his headquarters in the city of Grodno. Charles no sooner heard of his arrival at that place than, with his usual impetuosity, he hastened forward with only eight hundred men to besiege the town.

By a mistake, the life of Peter was nearly sacrificed. A German officer, who commanded the gate towards which Charles approached, imagining that the whole Swedish army was advancing, fled from his post and left the passage open to the enemy. General consternation prevailed throughout the city as the rumour spread; and the victorious Charles, cutting in pieces the few Russians who ventured to contest his progress, made himself master of the town. The czar, impressed with the belief that the report was true, retreated behind the ramparts, and effected his escape through a gate at which Charles had placed a guard. Some Jesuits, whose house, being the best in the town, was taken for the use of Charles, contrived in the course of the night to inform Peter of the real circumstances; upon which the czar re-entered the city, forced the Swedish guard, and contended for possession in the streets. But the approach of the Swedish army compelled him at last to retire, and to leave Grodno in the hands of the conqueror.

The advance of the Swedes was now marked by a succession of triumphs; and Peter, finding that Charles was resolved to pursue him, and that the invader had but five hundred miles to traverse to the capital, an interval unprotected by any places of consequence, with the exception of Smolensk,



[1707 A.D.]

conceived a masterly plan for drawing him into a part of the country where he could obtain neither magazines nor subsistence for his army, nor, in case of necessity, secure a safe retreat. With this design he withdrew to the right bank of the Dnieper,<sup>1</sup> where he established himself behind sheltered lines, from which he might attack the enemy at an advantage, preserving to himself a free communication with Smolensk, and abundant means of retreat over a country that yielded plentiful resources for his troops.

In order to render this measure the more certain, he despatched General Goltz at the head of fifteen thousand men to join a body of twelve thousand Cossacks, with strict orders to lay waste the whole province for a circle of thirty miles, and then to rejoin the czar at the position he had taken up on the bank of the Dnieper. This bold movement was executed as swiftly as it was planned; and the Swedes, reduced to immediate extremity for want of forage, were compelled to canton their army until the following May. Accustomed, however, to the reverses of war, they were not daunted by danger or fatigue, but it was no longer doubtful that both parties were on the eve of decisive events. They regarded the future, however, with very different hopes. Charles, heated with victories, and panting for further acquisitions, surveyed the vast empire, upon the borders of which he now hung like a cloud, as if it were already within his grasp; while Peter, more wary and self-possessed, conscious of the magnitude of the stake for which he fought, and aware of the great difficulties of his situation, occupied himself in making provision against the worst.<sup>c</sup>

#### . REVOLT OF THE COSSACKS OF THE DON; MAZEPPA

Meantime there were foes at home that had demanded the attention of the czar.<sup>a</sup> The strelitz were not the only military body belonging to old Russia whose existence had become incompatible with the requirements of a modern state. The undisciplined Cossack armies, which had hitherto formed a rampart for Russia against barbarian hordes, were also to undergo transformation. The empire had many causes of complaint against the Cossacks, particularly those of the Ukraine and the Don who had formerly sustained the usurper, Dmitri, and from whose ranks had issued the terrible Stenka Radzin.

In 1706 the Cossacks of the Don had revolted against the government of the czar because they were forbidden to give asylum in their camp to refugee peasants or taxpayers. The ataman Boulavine and his aids, Nekrassov, Frolov, and Dranyi, called them to arms. They murdered Prince George Dolgoruki, defeated the Russians on the Liskovata, took Tcherkask, and menaced Azov, all the while proclaiming their fidelity to the czar and accusing the voyevods of having acted without orders. They were in turn defeated by Vasili Dolgoruki, Bulavin was murdered by his own soldiers and Nekrassov with only two thousand men took refuge in the Kuban. After clearing out the rebel camps Dolgoruki wrote: "The chief traitors and mutineers have been hung, together with one out of ten of the others; and all the bodies have been placed on rafts and allowed to drift with the current that the Dontsi may be stricken with terror and moved to repent."

Since the disgrace of Samoilovitch, Mazeppa had been the hetman of the Little Russian Cossacks in Ukraine. Formerly a page of John Casimir, king of Poland, he had in his youth experienced the adventure made famous by

<sup>1</sup> The ancient Borysthenes.

the poem of Lord Byron and the pictures of Horace Vernet. Loosened from the back of the untamed horse that fled with him to the deserts of Ukraine, he at once took rank in the Cossack army, and rose by means of treachery, practised against all the chiefs in turn, to fill the highest posts in the military service. His good fortune created for him numerous enemies; but the czar, who admired him for his intelligence and had faith in his fidelity, invariably delivered over to him his detractors. He put to death the monk Solomon for revealing his intrigues with Sophia and the king of Poland, and later denunciators shared the same fate.

Ukraine, meanwhile, was being undermined by various factions. In the Cossack army there was always a Russian party, a party that wished to restore the Polish domination, and a party which designed to deliver over the country to the Turks. In 1693 Petrik, a Turkish chief, invaded Ukraine but failed in his attempts at subjugation. Moreover, profound dissent existed between the army and the sedentary populations of Ukraine. The hetman was constantly scheming to make himself independent, the officers of the army objected to rendering an account of their actions to others, and the soldiers wished to live at the country's expense without working or paying taxes. The farmers, who had founded the agricultural prosperity of the country, the citizens in towns who were not secure in the pursuit of their avocations, the whole peaceful and laborious population, in fact, longed to be free from this turbulent military oligarchy and called upon the czar at Moscow to liberate them.

Mazeppa represented the military element in Ukraine and knew that he was odious to the quiet classes. The czar showered proofs of confidence upon him, but Mazeppa had reason to fear the consolidation of the Russian state. The burdens that the empire imposed upon the vassal state were day by day becoming heavier, and the war against Charles XII served to increase them still more. There was everything to fear from the imperious humour and autocratic pretensions of the czar, and the imminent invasion of the Swedes was certain to precipitate a crisis; either Little Russia would become independent with the aid of strangers, or their defeat on her soil would deal the death-blow to her prosperity and hopes for the future. Knowing that the hour was approaching when he should be obliged to obey the white czar Mazeppa allowed himself to be drawn into communication with Stanislaus Leszczynski, the king of Poland elected by the Swedish party. The witty princess Dolskaia gave him an alphabet in cipher. Hitherto Mazeppa had given over to the czar all letters containing propositions of betrayal, just as the czar had surrendered to him his accusers. On receiving the letters of the princess he remarked with a smile: "Wicked woman, she wishes to draw me away from the czar."

When, however, the hand of the sister of Menshikov was refused to one of his cousins, when the Swedish war and the passage of Muscovite troops limited his authority and increased taxation in his territory, when the czar sent urgent injunctions for the equipment of troops after the European fashion, and he could feel the spirit of rebellion against Moscow constantly growing around him, he wrote to Leszczynski that though the Polish army was weak in numbers it had his entire good will. His confidant Orlik was in the secret of all these manœuvres, and several of his subordinates who had divined them undertook to denounce him to the czar. The denunciation was very precise and revealed all the secret negotiations with the emissaries of the king and of the princess Dolskaia; but it failed before the blind confidence of the czar. Palci, one of the denunciators, was exiled to Siberia; Iskra and

[1708-1709 A.D.]

Kotchoubei, the remaining two, were forced by torture to avow themselves calumniators, and were then delivered over to the hetman and beheaded. Mazeppa realised that good fortune such as his could not long endure, and the malecontents urged upon him the consideration of the common safety. At this juncture Charles XII arrived in the neighbourhood of Little Russia. "It is the devil who brings him here!" cried Mazeppa, and placed between his two powerful enemies he exerted all his craft to preserve the independence of his little state without giving himself into the hands of either Charles XII or Peter the Great. When the latter invited him to join the army he feigned illness; but Menshikov approaching simultaneously with Charles XII, it was necessary to make a choice. Mazeppa left his bed, rallied his most devoted Cossacks about him, and crossed the Desna for the purpose of effecting a junction with the Polish army. At this the czar issued a proclamation denouncing the treason of Mazeppa, his alliance with the heretics, his plots to bring Ukraine once more under vassalage to Poland and to restore the temples of God and the holy monasteries to the uniates. Mazeppa's capital, Baturin, was taken by Menshikov and rased to the ground, his accomplices perished on the wheel or the scaffold.<sup>g</sup>

## MAZEPPA JOINS CHARLES XII; PULTOWA

Mazeppa with his army passed over the Desna; his followers, however, believed they were being led against Charles, and deserted their hetman as soon as his views were known, because they had more to fear from Peter than to hope from Charles. The hetman joined the Swedes with only seven thousand men, but Charles prosecuted his march and despised every warning. He passed the Desna; the country on the farther side became more and more desolate, and appearances more melancholy, for the winter was one of the most severe; hundreds of brave Swedes were frozen to death because Charles insisted upon pursuing his march even in December and January. The civil war in Poland in the mean time raged more violently than ever, and Peter sent divisions of his Russians to harass and persecute the partisans of Stanislaus. The three men who stood in most immediate relation to the Swedish king, Piper, Rehnskold, and Levenhaupt, belonged, indeed, among the greatest men of their century; but they were sometimes disunited in their opinions, and sometimes incensed and harassed by the obstinacy of the king.

Mazeppa fell a sacrifice to his connection with Charles, his residence (Baturin) was destroyed by Menshikov, and his faithful Cossacks, upon Peter's demand, were obliged to choose another hetman (November, 1708). Neither Piper nor Mazeppa could move the obstinate king to relinquish his march towards the ill-fortified city of Pultowa. Mazeppa represented to him in vain that, by an attack upon Pultowa he would excite the Cossacks of the Falls (Zaparogians) against him; and Piper entreated him, to no purpose, to draw nearer to the Poles, who were favourable to his cause, and to march towards the Dnieper; he continued, however, to sacrifice his men by his march, till, in February (1709), a thaw set in.

He was successful in gaining the favour of the Zaparogians through their hetman, Horodenski; but fortune had altogether forsaken the Swedes since January. In that month they were in possession of Moprik; in February, the battles at Goronodek and Rashevka were decided in favour of the Russians; in March, Sheremetrev took Gaditch, which was occupied by the Swedes, and thereby gave a position to the Russian army which could not but prove destructive to the Swedes, who were obliged to besiege Pultowa without the



necessary means, because their intractable king insisted upon the siege. In April and May, the Swedes exerted themselves in vain in throwing up trenches before the miserable fortifications of Pultowa, whilst the Russians were enclosing them in a net. One part of the Russians had already passed the Vorskla in May, and Peter had no sooner arrived, in the middle of June, than the whole army passed the river, in order to offer a decisive engagement to the invaders.

Rehnskold acted as commander-in-chief at the battle of Pultowa; for Charles had received a dangerous wound in his foot ten days before, and was unable to mount his horse. The Swedes on this day performed miracles of bravery, but everything was against them, for the Russians fought this time at least for their country, and had at length gained experience in the field. The defeat of the Swedes is easily explained, when it is known that they were in want of all the munitions of war, even powder and lead, that they were obliged to storm the enemy's fortifications in opposition to an overwhelming numerical force, and that Levenhaupt and Rehnskold were so much disunited in opinion that the former, in his report of the engagement at Pultowa, makes the bitterest complaints against the commander-in-chief, which have since that time been usually adopted by all historians. Of the whole Swedish army, only fourteen or fifteen thousand under Levenhaupt and Kreuz succeeded in erecting an ill-fortified camp on the Dnieper, where they were shut up by the Russians and the river.

This small force might possibly have succeeded in fighting its way into Poland, and Charles had at first adopted this determination; he was, however, with great trouble, induced to pass the Dnieper, and accompanied by a small guard, to take refuge in Turkey. His plan was to reach the Bug over the pasture lands which then belonged to the Tatars on the Black Sea, and, aided by the Turks and the Tatars, to make his way first to Otchakov and then to Bender, whence he hoped to persuade the Turks to take part in the Polish affairs. As soon as the king had escaped (July 10th, 1709), Levenhaupt, mourning over the sacrifice which the wilfulness of Charles had brought upon his Swedes, concluded a capitulation, in virtue of which all the baggage and artillery were surrendered to the Russians, together with the remnant of the Swedish army, which, calculating those who had been taken prisoners in the battle, amounted in all to about eighteen thousand men.

Charles' flight to Bender, and his long residence of five years in Turkey, were the most favourable events which could have occurred for the accomplishment of Peter's great plans. He was now master in Poland. In the Swedish, German, and French adventurers who had been in Charles' army, he received the very best instructors of his people. Among those who entered into his service, there were experienced officers, artillerymen, architects, and engineers.

The Swedes, who for thirteen long years were neither set at liberty nor accorded by their impoverished country the usual support of prisoners of war, were distributed over the whole of Russia, and sent far into Siberia. They founded schools and institutions, in order to get a livelihood, and used their knowledge and experience against their will for the promotion of Peter's designs. This was the more important, as there was not a man among those many thousand prisoners who was not in a condition to teach the Russians to whom he came something of immediate utility, drawn from his experience in his native land. Many never returned to their homes, because they had raised up institutions and commenced undertakings which were as advantageous to themselves as to the Russian Empire.<sup>e</sup>

[1711 A.D.]

## PETER AND THE POWERS

A treaty was entered into by Poland, Prussia, and Denmark, which restored to those states the conquests of Gustavus Adolphus, and to Russia her sovereignty over her ancient possessions of Livonia, Ingria, and a part of Finland. When these preliminaries were settled, Peter went in person to make a defensive treaty with the elector of Brandenburg, the first king of Prussia; a mode of negotiation unusual amongst sovereigns, but which was perfectly consistent with the individual character and promptitude of the czar. Having concluded these important plans, he proceeded to reduce some Swedish fortresses, and to bombard the town of Riga, the capital of Livonia, where he lost between nine and ten thousand men by a pestilence that was then raging in that place. The garrison, struck down by two enemies—the plague and the Russians, and scarcely able to decide which was the more fatal—speedily capitulated; and Livonia was once more rendered tributary to Muscovy.

In the meanwhile Charles was employing all his interest at Constantinople to prevail upon the sultan to undertake a war against Russia, which the sultan was easily induced to embrace, in consequence of the ravages committed by the Muscovite troops on the frontiers of Turkey, and the rapidly extending power of the czar on the sea of Azov and the Black Sea. The khan of the Crimean Tatars naturally regarded with apprehension the Russian establishment at Azov, which the Turks had been forced to surrender a few years before; and he, therefore, strengthened the arguments that were submitted to the Divan to persuade them into a declaration of hostilities against the common enemy. A statement setting forth the formidable advances that Russia was making in her navy on the Don and in the harbour of Taganrog, and of the spirit of acquisition she was constantly exhibiting in her encroachments upon the border lands, was laid before the council by Poniatowski, the active friend of the Swedish king, and was immediately assented to by the mufti. In order to render the views of the sultan still more impressive, Count Tolstoi, the czar's ambassador at Constantinople, was arrested in the public streets, and committed to the castle of the Seven Towers.

The indignity offered to Peter in the person of his minister was scarcely necessary to inflame his irritable temper. Within a short space of time his plenipotentiary in Saxony was broken on the wheel, and his ambassador in London imprisoned for debt; but these events had taken place before the battle of Pultowa, which suddenly elevated him to the highest consideration amongst contemporary sovereigns. The insult, therefore, which the sultan cast upon him by the arrest of Count Tolstoi was the more acutely felt, as it appeared to treat him with contempt in the very hour of victory. He soon made the necessary arrangements for the approaching war, sending one division of his army to Moldavia, another to Livonia; and fleets to Azov, the Baltic, and the Black Sea. It was necessary, however, to return to Moscow to make provision for the government during his absence, and while he was there he issued a conscription for the purpose of recruiting his army.

## CATHERINE ACKNOWLEDGED AS PETER'S WIFE (1711 A.D.)

The time was now arrived for acknowledging before his subjects his marriage with Catherine, which had taken place privately in 1707; and accordingly, on the 6th of March, 1711, the czarina Catherine Alexievna was solemnly declared to be his legitimate wife. The ascendancy which Catherine had

acquired over him was not more extraordinary than it was propitious. Peter's disposition was naturally impatient and cruel, and when he was excited to acts of severity he could not be restrained by any appeal to his reason or his humanity. The only influence that possessed any permanent power over him was that of female society; and the remarkably sweet temper of Catherine, who was never known to be out of humour, invariably tranquillised him, even in his most angry moods, so complete was the fascination she exercised over his mind that the agony of those spasmodic fits to which he was subject yielded to her soothing presence. Without forgetting the low condition from which she sprang, she maintained the pomp of majesty with irreproachable propriety, and united an air of ease and authority that excited the admiration of those by whom she was surrounded. She was not distinguished by that lofty beauty which would seem to sympathise with these august qualities; nor was she either very brilliant in conversation or of a very quick imagination, but she was graceful and animated; her features were pretty and expressive, and a tone of good sense and kindness always pervaded her actions. She was admirably formed for the sphere she embellished, and, above all, for the peculiar necessities of the era that called her to the throne. Her devotion to Peter was boundless. She constantly attended him, even upon occasions of the utmost danger, and especially upon this eventful expedition, when she accompanied him upon his campaign into Turkey.

#### WAR WITH TURKEY

The whole body of troops which the precautions of the czar had enabled him to collect amounted to 130,000 men; but, being distributed in different quarters, and failing to join the czar on the Pruth, as he expected, he was obliged to proceed with an army that fell short of 40,000 men. The perils of the enterprise were so apparent that Peter issued orders requiring the women who followed in the train of the army to return; but Catherine, who insisted upon remaining with the czar, prevailed upon him to retract his determination. This slight circumstance eventually proved to be the salvation of the czar and his empire.

From Sorokat the army proceeded to Jassy, where Peter was led to expect supplies from the prince of Wallachia, with whom he had entered into a secret negotiation; but the sultan, warned of the prince's intended revolt, suddenly deposed him, and appointed Cantemir in his place. But Cantemir, who was a Christian prince, was no less inclined to assist the czar, and proffered him such aid as he could command; admitting very candidly, however, that his subjects were attached to the Porte,<sup>1</sup> and firm in their allegiance. In this extremity Peter found himself at the head of a very inadequate force in the heart of a wild and rugged country, where the herbage was destroyed by swarms of locusts, and where it was impossible to procure provisions for the troops. The dangers of his situation, however, offered a valuable test of the fidelity and endurance of the soldiers, who, although they suffered the most severe privation, never uttered a single complaint.

In this state of things, intelligence was received that the Turkish army had crossed the Danube, and was marching along the Pruth. Peter called a council of war, and declared his intention of advancing at once to meet the enemy; in which measure all the generals, except one, expressed their con-

[<sup>1</sup> Porte is the name given to the chief office of the Ottoman government, so called from the gate of the palace at which justice was administered. The name is applied also to the Ottoman court—the government of the Turkish Empire.]



[1711 A.D.]

currence. The dissentient officer reminded the czar of the misfortunes of the king of Sweden in the Ukraine, and suggested to him the possibility that Cantemir might disappoint him; but Peter was resolved, and, after a fatiguing march for three nights over a desert heath, the troops arrived on the 18th of June at the river Pruth. Here they were joined by Prince Cantemir, with a few followers, and they continued their march until the 27th, when they discovered the enemy, to the number of 200,000 men, already crossing the river. There was no alternative left but to form the lines of battle; and Peter, perceiving that the enemy was endeavouring to surround him with cavalry, extended his lines a considerable way along the right bank.

The situation of the army at this juncture was extremely unfortunate. The great body of the Turkish soldiers were before the Russians on one side of the river, and on the other the hostile Tatars of the Crimea. The czar was thus completely surrounded, his means of escape by the river were cut off, and the great numbers of the Turks rendered a flight in the opposite direction impossible. He was placed in more critical circumstances than Charles at Pultowa, and he had been misled, like that unfortunate prince, by an ally who did not possess the power of fulfilling his promise. But his presence of mind and indomitable courage never forsook him. He formed his army, which consisted in detail of 31,554 infantry, and only 6,692 cavalry, into a hollow square, placing the women in the centre, and prepared to receive the disorderly but furious onslaught of the Turks. It is evident that, if the forces of the sultan had been commanded by skilful officers, the contest must have been speedily terminated. But the superior discipline of the Russians was shown in the steadiness with which they met the charge, and maintained themselves against such great odds. The Turks injudiciously confined their attack to one side of the square, by which, although the loss sustained by the Russians was immense, the czar was enabled constantly to relieve the troops, and supply the front with fresh men. The fight continued for three days. Their ammunition was at last exhausted, and there remained no choice between surrendering and making a desperate attempt to cut their way through the enemy. This latter proposition is said to have been entertained by Peter, who proposed to force a passage in the night, accompanied by his officers and a few select men; but it is extremely unlikely that he should have contemplated a step that must inevitably have sacrificed the czarina and the remnant of his brave army.

*Catherine's Heroism; the Peace of Pruth*

It is not improbable, however, that Peter may have conceived some heroic design for forcing a passage; but the certainty of failure must have overruled such an intention almost as soon as it was formed. After the agitation of that eventful day, he surrendered himself to the anxiety by which he was oppressed, and, retiring to his tent on the third night, gave strict orders that he should be left undisturbed. It was on this occasion that the genius and influence of the czarina preserved the empire, her consort, and the army. She who had accompanied him through so many dangers, who had shared in the toils of the field without murmuring, and partaken in the fatigues consequent upon his reforms and improvements, had a right to be heard at a moment of such critical importance. In despite, therefore, of his prohibition she entered his tent, and representing to him the perils by which they were on all sides environed, urged upon him the necessity of seeking to negotiate a peace. She not only suggested this measure, which was probably the very

last that might have occurred to Peter, but she undertook to carry it into effect herself. It is the immemorial custom in the East to approach all sovereigns, or their representatives, with presents, and Catherine, aware of that usage, collected all her own jewels and trinkets, and those of the women who had accompanied the expedition, giving a receipt for their value to be discharged on their return to Moscow, and dispatched the vice chancellor, accompanied by an officer, with a letter from Marshal Sheremetrev to the grand vizir, proposing negotiations for a treaty of peace.<sup>1</sup>

Some hours elapsed, and no answer was returned. It was supposed that the bearers of the letter were put to death, or placed under arrest, when a second officer was despatched with a duplicate of the letter, and it was determined in a council of war, that, should the vizir refuse to accept the proffered terms, an attempt should be made to break through the enemy's ranks. With this view an intrenchment was rapidly formed, and the Russians advanced within a hundred paces of the Turkish lines. A suspension of arms, however, was immediately proclaimed by the enemy, and negotiations were opened for a treaty.

It would appear strange that the vizir should have consented to a cessation of hostilities under such circumstances, when the Russians were completely at his mercy; but he was aware that the Russian troops in Moldavia had advanced to the Danube after reducing the town of Brailow, and that another division of the general army was on its march from the frontiers of Poland. He, therefore, considered it advisable to avail himself of that opportunity to dictate to Peter the terms upon which he wished to terminate the campaign, knowing that if he postponed the treaty he would be compelled to renew the war against the whole force of the empire. The conditions he proposed were sufficiently humiliating. He demanded the restitution of Azov, the demolition of the harbour of Taganrog, the renouncement of all further interference in the affairs of Poland and the Cossacks, a free passage for Charles back to his own country, and the withdrawal from the sea of Azov and the Black Sea. Peter subscribed to all these conditions, but refused to deliver up Prince Cantemir to the sultan, declaring that he would rather cede to the Turks the whole country as far as Kursk than violate his word.

This treaty, however, did not satisfy the expectations of Charles; and, indeed, obtained for him scarcely any advantage. The only passage it contained which directly related to him was that which bound Peter to give him a safe return home, and to conclude a peace with him, if the terms could be agreed upon. He never ceased to importune the sultan to dismiss the vizir and make war upon Russia, until the Porte, wearied by his ungrateful and frantic complaints, at last recalled the pension allowed him, and sent him an order to leave the Turkish dominions. The sequel of that monarch's career presents a series of acts that abundantly justify the suspicion that his mind was shattered by the reverses of fortune he had undergone; for, after remaining five years in Turkey, and venturing with a band of grooms and valets, secretaries and cooks to make a stand against an army of janissaries, spahis, and Tatars he fled in the disguise of a courier to his own kingdom, where he

<sup>1</sup> Bruce, who was in the battle of the Pruth, asserts his belief that this negotiation was conducted without Peter's knowledge; and the *Journal de Pierre le Grand* alludes to the transmission of the letter, but is silent as to the share Catherine took in the affair. There is no doubt, however, that the details of her interference are correct, and Peter afterwards appears to have confirmed them by his declaration at the coronation of the empress in 1723, that she "had been of great assistance to the empire in all times of danger, but particularly at the battle of the Pruth."

[1714 A.D.]

had not been seen during that long interval and where his death had for some time been currently believed in.

The battle of the Pruth, so fatal in its results to Peter, was a very destructive engagement. If the statements of the czar be correct, his army, on the first day of the engagement, consisted of 31,554 infantry, and 6,692 cavalry, and was reduced on the last day to 22,000 men, which would make his loss amount to 16,246. The loss sustained by the Turks was still greater in consequence of their irregular and scattered method of attack. But numerical details cannot always be relied upon, since they are frequently modified to suit the views of one party or the other. There can be no doubt, however, that the czar fought at an extraordinary disadvantage, and that the losses on both sides were dreadful.

When the treaty was concluded, Peter returned into Russia, causing the fortresses of Samara and Kamenka to be demolished; but, as some unavoidable delay occurred in the surrender of Azov and Taganrog, the sultan became dissatisfied, and Peter entered into a fresh treaty, by which he pledged himself to evacuate Poland within three months; stipulating, however, that Charles, who was still intriguing with the Divan, should be required immediately to withdraw from Turkey. The fatigues of the campaign required repose; and Peter, who had suffered considerably by ill health, rested for some time at Carlsbad for the benefit of the waters.

When Peter returned to St. Petersburg, he again solemnised his wedding with the czarina, and held a festival in that city which was remarkable for its pomp and the expression it drew forth of the popular confidence. But this was only the prelude to fresh labours. He renewed his plans for the improvement of the country, laid down a number of new roads, cut several canals, enlarged his navy, and encouraged the erection of more substantial dwellings in the new city. His ultimate design of establishing St. Petersburg as the capital of the empire now gradually developed itself; and the first open measure he adopted towards the accomplishment of that object was the removal of the senate from Moscow. The commercial advantages the people had already gained through their communication with the Baltic had reconciled them to the change, and the opposition with which the return had been originally received was now considerably relaxed. But much remained yet to be done before the prosperity of the new capital could be secured. Resistance from without was more to be apprehended than remonstrances at home; and Peter was not slow to act upon the necessity of circumstances.

#### WAR WITH SWEDEN (1714 A.D.)

The possession of Pomerania, the most northerly of the German provinces, was necessary to the projects of the czar, who desired as much to humiliate the king of Sweden as to secure the safety of his establishment on the embouchure of the Neva. Pomerania, which lies north and south between the Baltic and Mecklenburg, had passed through the hands of several masters, and had at last been ceded to Gustavus Adolphus in the Thirty Years' War. In order to render his design more certain, Peter entered into a league with the electors of Brandenburg and Hanover, and the king of Denmark, drawing up the articles himself, and the details of the necessary operations. Stralsund was first blockaded, and the allied forces proceeded along the Wismar road, followed at a distance by the Swedish troops under the command of Count Stenbock, who, coming up with the Danish and Saxon divisions before the



Russians had time to join them, completely routed them in a few hours. This slight check to their progress was soon repaired by a victory obtained by Peter over Stenbock (whose march was signalised by disgraceful excesses), in the little town of Altona, close to Hamburg, which he reduced to ashes.

The Russian army went into quarters for the winter, and the campaign was again renewed with vigour in the following year, when Stenbock was compelled to abandon the town of Tenningen, into which he had obtained entrance by the intrigues of Baron Görtz, one of the most crafty and unprincipled diplomatists of his age. Stenbock and eleven thousand Swedes surrendered themselves prisoners of war, and although the ransom demanded for the liberation of that general was only 8,000 imperial crowns, he was suffered to linger in the dungeons of Copenhagen until the day of his death. Nearly the whole of Pomerania was overrun and partitioned amongst the allies, scarcely a place remaining in the possession of Sweden except Stralsund, the siege of which Peter confided to Menshikov, while he returned to St. Petersburg to make preparations for a descent upon Helsingfors in the gulf of Finland. His operations along the whole line of that coast were equally successful. He soon mastered Bergo and Åbo, the capital; and, transferring to St. Petersburg from the latter town a magnificent library, he raised a building for its reception, which still remains a witness to his enterprise and the spirit of improvement which seemed to preside over all his actions.

### *A Naval Victory; Peter's Triumph*

But the Swedes, viewing the encroachments of the czar in Finland with terror, and resolving to spare no means to arrest his progress, fitted out a considerable squadron to cruise in the gulf. The czar, however, was ready to meet them; and, setting sail from Kronstadt, fell in with them close to the island of Åland, where, after a severe engagement, he destroyed several of their ships, and took the admiral prisoner. The consternation which the news of this victory spread over Sweden was so great that even Stockholm trembled for its safety.

His return to St. Petersburg on this occasion was an ovation of more than ordinary magnificence. The czarina had just given birth to a daughter; and, upon his triumphal entry, Peter instituted the order of St. Catherine to commemorate his sense of her devotion and magnanimity. The galleys of the conquerors and the conquered sailed up the Neva in procession, and the czar, in his capacity of rear-admiral, presented to the senate a report of the battle, and was immediately created vice-admiral, amidst the rejoicings of the people. It was not the least remarkable feature in the character of this great man that he set the example, in his own person, of ascending through the different grades of the service by the force of his individual claims. At Pultowa he served as major-general, and in the action in the gulf of Finland he acted as rear-admiral, under the command of Admiral Apraxin. This precedent could not fail to have due weight with a people who had been so long accustomed to oppression and the right of the strong hand. It had more effect in generating a spirit of emulation, and in eradicating the prejudices and vices of feudal slavery, than a code of the wisest laws could have accomplished.

St. Petersburg presented a scene of festivity such as had never been known in Russia before. The intercourse of the people with other nations had in a few years changed the whole character of society. Balls and entertainments, upon a large scale, diffused amongst the inhabitants a taste for pleasures that had been hitherto unknown to them. Public dinners were

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given in the palace of the czar, to which all classes of persons were invited, and at which the different ranks were appropriately divided at separate tables, the czar passing from table to table, freely conversing with his subjects on matters connected with their particular trade or occupations. Civilisation was thus promoted in detail, and insinuated in the most agreeable shape into the domestic usages of the citizens.

## PETER AT THE HEIGHT OF POWER

But while amusements occupied a part of the czar's time, he was not forgetful of the more important affairs that demanded consideration. The necessity of establishing a naval force had always been apparent, and his recent victories over the Swedes sufficiently testified the facility with which it might be rendered available for the ulterior projects which the extension and security of the empire required. He accordingly devoted much care to the subject, and in an incredibly short period was master of so large a fleet that he contemplated a descent upon Sweden, and even calculated upon the possibility of entering Stockholm. Besides a variety of galleys and other vessels, he built fifty ships of war, which were all ready for sea within a twelve-month.

The discovery of some large peculations amongst the ministers and several favourites of the court just at this juncture directed the czar's proceedings, for a short time, into an unexpected channel. It appeared that Menshikov, Apraxin, and others who held high offices of trust and responsibility had, either by themselves or through their servants, embezzled a part of the finances of the empire; that the revenues were consequently in a state of confusion, that trade was greatly deranged, and that the payments to the army had been made very irregularly. The ministers, availing themselves of the new outlet for commerce, had monopolised its chief advantages; and the Dutch merchants complained bitterly of a system by which they were deprived of the greater part of their profits. Peter at once established an inquisition into the facts, and proceeded to act with the utmost rigour. He felt that the prosperity of his new capital depended mainly upon the justice with which its affairs were administered, and that its geographical position, which afforded it so complete a command of maritime resources, must cease to attract a foreign trade unless its fiscal officers possessed the confidence of the merchants. Menshikov and the rest pleaded that they had been engaged abroad in the service of the country, and could not be aware of the malpractices of their servants. The czar admitted that their plea was in some measure founded in justice; but, resolved to make an example, he confiscated the greater part of the property of those whose agents were proved to be guilty. The estates of the remainder were wholly forfeited; some individuals were sentenced to the knout, and others were banished to Siberia. This measure was loudly called for by the necessities of the case, and the inflexible honesty of the sovereign was never exercised with a more beneficial result.

The unhappy wife of Alexis, who had been treated by her husband with the most cruel neglect, expired in a few days after having given birth to a son, whose fortunes she committed to the guardianship of the czar. The court was plunged into deep affliction by this melancholy circumstance, and the czar in particular exhibited profound grief. But the birth of a prince to the czarina converted their mourning into congratulations, and the most extravagant festivities were held in honour of the event.

St. Petersburg had now gradually become the capital of Russia. Foreign

merchandise imported at Archangel was prohibited from being sent to Moscow, and was consequently transmitted to St. Petersburg, which was the residence of the court, of the principal nobility, and of all the ambassadors from other powers, including at this period two from the East. The rapidity with which its prosperity advanced was unparalleled. Its manufactures increased with its external trade, and it soon assumed a rank equal to that of some of the most important cities in Europe. The fame and power of Peter were attaining their utmost height. Livonia, Esthonia, Karelia, Ingria, and nearly the whole of Finland were now annexed to the Russian Empire. He had established outlets to the sea by which he could communicate in security with civilised Europe; and within his own territories he had created new establishments adapted to the various departments of industry, to the army, the navy, and the laws. Prince Galitzin occupied Finland with a disciplined army; generals Bruce and Bauer had the command of thirty thousand Russians, who were scattered through Poland; Marshal Sheremetev lay in Pomerania with a large force; Weimar had surrendered by capitulation, and all the sovereigns of the north were either his allies or his instruments. The dream of Russian aggrandisement appeared now to be realised almost in full by the sleepless activity and fertile genius of the czar. It was not surprising, therefore, that the people of Stockholm daily expected that he would appear before their gates, and, taking advantage of the disasters of their fugitive monarch, reduce Sweden to subjection, as he had previously laid waste the provinces that separated him from the coast of the Baltic Sea on the one side, and the Black Sea on the other. He was master of both shores of the gulf of Finland, and the possession of Sweden would have given him the entire command of the Baltic and the gulf of Bothnia, over which, even as it was, his flag ranged in freedom. But Peter was too politic to attempt at this juncture so enormous an extension of power. He was aware of the jealousies which such a disposition must have excited in Germany and Poland, and he wisely contented himself with the acquisitions he had already secured; suffering the headstrong Charles to bring his kingdom into greater jeopardy, in the hope, probably, that it might ultimately fall to pieces by its own weakness.

At this crisis of affairs the unprincipled Görtz endeavoured to effect a union between the two monarchs; and negotiations, having that object in view, were actually commenced, and might have been carried to a more decisive conclusion but for events which diverted the attention of both sovereigns into other channels. Görtz has been blamed for projecting this treaty of reconciliation, and accused of desiring to accomplish through its means a variety of results, such as the restoration of Pomerania to Sweden and the crown of Poland to Stanislaus, the dethronement of the king of England, and, by a conspiracy against the duke of Orleans, the reduction of France under a Spanish regency. It is very probable that the subtle minister might have contemplated some of these projects, that he might have anticipated from the combined armies of the two northern heroes the rescue of Spain and the advancement of Alberoni, and that he might have even calculated upon the cession of Pomerania and the recognition of Stanislaus. But, as the adviser of Charles XII, he was justified in seeking an alliance which must in any case have greatly benefited his master and protected his country against those imminent dangers that appeared to be impending over it at the moment; and if he looked beyond immediate advantages, to remote contingencies, the design was not, on that account, the less worthy of applause. As it was, it had the effect of openly confirming the dispositions of Peter towards Sweden,



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the czar declaring that he did not enter into war for the sake of glory, but for the good of the empire, and that he had no desire to exhibit any feelings of animosity against an enemy whom he had deprived of the power of doing mischief. Whatever faults may be charged upon Görtz — and there is no doubt that they were numerous enough — history must pronounce his conduct upon this occasion to have been guided by a sagacious policy.

## PETER'S SECOND EUROPEAN TOUR (1717 A.D.)

Satisfied with the circumstances of the empire, and anxious to improve his knowledge of other nations, Peter now resolved to undertake a second tour through Europe. His first tour had been limited to practical inquiries into the useful arts; but his second was mainly addressed to an examination of the political systems of the European cabinets. When he first left his own country to acquire information abroad, he was young, ardent, uninstructed, and undistinguished; but now he had achieved a name that was famous all over the world, and he was regarded, with justice, as one of the most extraordinary persons of the age. During the nineteen years that had elapsed, in the interval, he had strengthened and enlarged his dominions, had traversed and subjugated many provinces, had succeeded in accomplishing the great purposes of his wise ambition, and had experienced amidst the splendid triumphs of his career some serious reverses, from which such a mind as his could not fail to extract useful admonitions. He went forth, followed by the gratitude of Russia, to improve his knowledge of the means by which he could contribute still more largely to her prosperity. The czarina accompanied him upon this journey, but being in her third pregnancy she rested for a short time at Schwerin, whence she soon afterwards set out to rejoin her husband at Holland. On her way, however, she was again taken ill, and delivered at Wesel of a prince, who died on the following day. This event, it appears, did not delay her intention of meeting her husband in Holland, as we find that in ten days afterwards she arrived in Amsterdam.

In the meantime Peter had visited Stralsund, Mecklenburg, Hamburg, and Pymont, and subsequently proceeded to Copenhagen, where he was received with great distinction by the king of Denmark. On this occasion, a squadron of British ships, under the command of Sir John Norris, and a squadron of Dutch ships, commanded by Rear-Admiral Grave, arrived at Copenhagen; and, it being understood that a Swedish fleet was out at sea, the four armaments, Russian, Danish, Dutch, and English, united under the standard of the czar, and put out to sea. Not falling in with the Swedes, who had secured their safety in Karlskrona, the fleets separated, and Peter, taking leave of the court of Denmark, proceeded to Hamburg. This incident was always referred to by Peter as one of the most gratifying circumstances of his life, and even his proudest victories appeared to afford him less pleasure than the recollection of the moment when he raised his flag as commander-in-chief of the united fleets.

From Hamburg he continued his route to Lubeck, and had a private interview with the king of Prussia at Havelberg, whence he returned by the Elbe to Hamburg. The anecdotes of his journey that have been preserved in a variety of personal memoirs are all calculated to show the simplicity of his manners and his natural aversion to parade and ceremony. At Nimeguen, where he arrived late at night in a common postchaise, accompanied by only two attendants, he is said to have supped upon poached eggs and a little bread and cheese, for which the landlord charged 100 ducats the next morn-

ing. Peter remonstrated against the demand, and inquired if eggs were so very scarce in that place. "No," replied the landlord, "but emperors are." Peter paid the bill, and was well satisfied to have purchased such a hint of European tactics at so small a rate.

At Amsterdam he was received with a feeling of delight almost approaching idolatry. The people regarded him as their pupil in the arts of commerce and ship-building; and shared in the glories of the victor of Pultowa, as if he were one of themselves. Nor did Peter hesitate in putting them as much at their ease in his presence as he had done when he had formerly lived amongst them, working like themselves and participating in their hard labour and rude fare. The cottage in which he had resided when he was learning the art of ship-building he now found just as he had left it, but distinguished by the name of the Prince's House, and preserved in order by the affectionate people with unabated interest. Upon entering this humble scene, he was deeply affected, and desired to be left alone. The recollections that pressed upon him at that moment were not amongst the least impressive of his busy life.

His residence in Holland, where he remained for three months, exhibited a succession of trivial incidents connected with his former associates, all of whom were recognised by the czar with the greatest cordiality; but while he was thus engaged in revisiting the dockyards, in examining models, and receiving small tokens of popular attachment, he was not indifferent to matters of higher importance. The Hague, from the time of the Peace of Nimeguen, had acquired the reputation of being the centre of the negotiations of Europe, and was crowded with travellers and foreign ministers. The foundations of a European revolution were then being laid in the diplomatic circles of that place; and the czar prolonged his stay in the Netherlands, with a view to assure himself more clearly of the state of parties in the south and in the north, and to prepare for the side which, in the course of time, it might become advisable for him to take.

Keeping himself aloof from the intrigues by which he was surrounded, and availing himself of all the opportunities within his reach of improving his information respecting the state of Europe, he proceeded to fulfil his intention of visiting France, after he had satisfied his curiosity in Holland. Vast preparations, worthy of the occasion, were made in France for his reception; but Peter, with his accustomed contempt of splendour, desired to avoid the display as much as possible. Accompanied by four gentlemen, he outstripped the escorts, and entered Paris without ostentation. His journey was a succession of fêtes; wherever he appeared he was treated with magnificence. His fame had penetrated the haunts of art and science, as well as the halls of palaces; portraits of himself and the czarina, medals with flattering inscriptions, and the most ingenious devices, representing some of the events of his life, started up before him in places where he least expected to meet such evidences of his greatness. He stepped in the midst of triumphs, and renewed, in his ovation at the French capital, the whole history of his glories as a hero and a legislator. But he could not be flattered out of his simplicity. Declining the offers of the court, he retired to a private hotel in a remote quarter of the town, in order that he might employ his time agreeably to his own wishes, instead of being trammelled by the fatiguing and idle ceremonies of the Louvre.

He left Catherine behind him in Holland on this occasion, apprehending that the witty court of France, with its sarcasms and its ceremonials, might possibly wound by neglect the delicacy of a woman whose greatness of soul

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elevated her above the conventions of the palace. The marriage of Louis XIV with Madame de Maintenon bore some resemblance, it is true, to his own union with Catherine; but Madame de Maintenon was an accomplished person, and Catherine's merits were of a different order. Catherine was a heroine, Madame de Maintenon a fascinating woman. Catherine had perilled life by the side of her husband, from the Pruth to the Baltic, upon land and sea; Madame de Maintenon, retreating from political display, was content to attest her devotion, and preserve her supremacy, in retirement. Catherine was of obscure origin, Madame de Maintenon was of noble birth; and while the czarina was publicly acknowledged by Peter, Madame de Maintenon became the wife of Louis XIV in private. Yet, although Peter determined not to risk the feelings of the czarina in the French court, especially as the death of Louis XIV had removed Madame de Maintenon from the position which she had previously held, the last wish he expressed on leaving Paris was to see that celebrated woman, the widow of the king.

Peter was not only a practical artist, but was well acquainted with those sciences upon which the practical arts are based. He possessed a mathematical mind and a skilful hand. The rapidity with which he accumulated knowledge could be paralleled only by the tenacity with which he retained it, and the facility with which he could employ it as the occasion served. At the Academy of Sciences they placed before him, amongst other curiosities, a map of Russia, which he instantly discovered to be full of errors, and pointed out to the exhibitors the mistakes they had made in the geography of his dominions, and of the tracts on the borders of the Caspian Sea. He afterwards accepted at their hands the honour of being admitted as a member of their body. He visited the manufactories and mercantile depots, and carried away all the information he could glean from them; had several private conferences with the French ministers in relation to the subsisting peace between the northern powers; and drew up the minutes of a treaty of commerce, which he caused to be shaped into regular form, and negotiated on his return to St. Petersburg.

Every moment was filled with business. He visited the tapestry of the Gobelins, the carpets of the Savonnerie, the residences of the goldsmiths, painters, sculptors, and mathematical instrument makers; and so far overcame his scruples against appearing in public that he went to see the French parliament, and attended public worship on two occasions in state. Amongst the objects that extracted unbounded admiration from him was the tomb of Cardinal Richelieu, one of the richest specimens of sculpture in Paris. But it was not on account of the glories of the chisel that it occupied his attention. He is said to have exclaimed, upon seeing it, "Great man! I would have given half of my empire to learn of thee how to govern the other half!"

Having satisfied his curiosity in France, he took his leave of that country, carrying with him several artisans for the purpose of establishing their different crafts in Russia. During the period of his short residence in the French capital he inspired a universal sentiment of respect. Although he did not hesitate to protest against the luxurious extravagance of the court, and even carried the expression of his opinions so far as to say that he "grieved for France and its infant king, and believed that the latter was on the point of losing his kingdom through luxury and superfluities"; yet the witty and satirical courtiers, who observed him closely, were compelled to bear testimony to the magnanimity of his nature. Contemporary criticism is of so much value in the attempt to determine historical character that the opinions which were pronounced concerning him at this period cannot be excluded



from the estimate which posterity will make of his faults and merits. Louville,<sup>1</sup> who was attached to the court, describes him thus:

"His deportment is full of dignity and confidence, as becomes an absolute master. He has large and bright eyes, with a penetrating and occasionally stern glance. His motions, which are abrupt and hasty, betray the violence of his passions and the impetuosity of his disposition; his orders succeed each other rapidly and imperiously; he dismisses with a word, with a sign, without allowing himself to be thwarted by time, place, or circumstance, now and then forgetting even the rules of decorum; yet with the regent and the young king he maintains his state, and regulates all his movements according to the points of a strict and proud etiquette. For the rest, the court discovered in him more great qualities than bad ones; it considered his faults to be merely trivial and superficial. It remarked that he was usually sober, and that he gave way only now and then to excessive intemperance; that, regular in his habits of living, he always went to bed at nine o'clock, rose at four, and was never for a moment unemployed; and, accordingly, that he was well-informed, and seemed to have a better knowledge of naval affairs and fortification than any man in France." The writers of that period, who possessed the best opportunities of becoming acquainted with his movements, speak in terms of admiration of the experienced glance and skilful hand with which he selected the objects most worthy of admiration, and of the avidity with which he examined the studios of the artists, the manufactories, and the museums. The searching questions which he put to learned men afforded sufficient proof, they observe, of the sagacity of a capacious mind, which was as prompt to acquire knowledge as it was eager to learn.

The journey of the czar through France, to rejoin the czarina at Amsterdam, was distinguished by the same insatiable love of inquiry. Sometimes he used to alight from his carriage, and wander into the fields to converse with the husbandmen, taking notes of their observations, which he treasured up for future use. The improvement of his empire was always present to his thoughts, and he never suffered an occasion to pass away, however trivial, from which he could extract a practical hint, without turning it to account. His activity appeared to be incapable of fatigue. From Amsterdam, accompanied by Catherine, he passed on to Prussia. Upon his arrival at Berlin he went at once to a private lodging; but the king sending his master of the ceremonies to attend upon him, the czar informed that officer that he would wait upon his majesty the next day at noon. Two hours before the time, a magnificent cortege of royal carriages appeared before the door of the czar's lodging; but when noon arrived, they were informed that the czar was already with the king. He had gone out by a private way, to avoid the magnificence which he regarded as an impediment to action.

The character of Frederick of Prussia was distinguished by the same blunt, persevering, military qualities which belonged to that of Peter. He lived plainly, dressed like a common soldier, was extremely abstemious, and exhibited in his habits even a needless severity of discipline. The meeting, therefore, between sovereigns who so closely resembled each other in their tastes, who were equally self-devoted to the good of their people, and equally uncorrupted by the pomp and temptations of power, was a spectacle such as history rarely presents. The czarina was worthy of entering into the scene, for she was the only female sovereign in Europe who could share, without shrinking, the toils and difficulties of their career. Voltaire remarks that if Charles XII had been admitted to the group, four crowned heads would have been

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seen together, surrounded by less luxury than a German bishop or a Roman cardinal.

But, while Peter, Catherine, and Frederick entertained an utter contempt for ostentatious display, the fashion of the court, which was probably directed by the queen, rendered it necessary that the illustrious visitors should be treated with a show of grandeur and parade which they despised. They were entertained in a costly style at the palace; and their manners did not fail to excite the sarcasms and gossip of the courtiers, who were incapable of comprehending the real dignity of their character, and who were disappointed to find in the czar and czarina of Russia a couple of plain, rough, and, agreeably to their notions, vulgar persons. The particulars of this visit to the court of Prussia are minutely commemorated in the loose and satirical memoirs of the day; while the visits to Paris, Amsterdam, and London are recorded, without a single exception, in a spirit of grave admiration, that exhibits a curious contrast to the flippant tracasseries of Berlin.

Amongst the most pert and lively writers who chronicled the visit and caricatured the czar and his simple train of followers, is the markgräfin von Bayreuth. She gives a very amusing account in her memoirs of the reception at court; and says that when Peter approached to embrace the queen, her majesty looked as if she would rather be excused. Their majesties were attended, she informs us, by a whole train of what were called ladies, as part of their suite, consisting chiefly of young German women, who performed the part of ladies' maids, chamber-maids, cook-maids, and washerwomen; almost every one of whom had a richly clothed child in her arms. The queen, it is added, refused to salute these creatures. At table the czar was seized with one of his convulsive fits, at a moment when he happened to have a knife in his hand, and the queen was so frightened that she attempted to leave the table; but Peter told her not to be uneasy, assuring her that he would do her no harm. On another occasion, he caught her by the hand with such force that she was obliged to desire him to be more respectful; on which he burst out into a loud fit of laughter, and said that she was much more delicate than his Catherine. But the most entertaining part of the whole is a sketch of the personal appearance of the uncultivated sovereigns. "The czarina," says the markgräfin, "is short and lusty, remarkably coarse, and without grace or animation. One needs only see her to be satisfied of her low birth." At the first blush one would take her for a German actress. Her clothes looked as if bought at a doll-shop, everything was so old-fashioned and so bedecked with silver and tinsel. She was decorated with a dozen orders, portraits of saints, and relics, which occasioned such a clatter that when she walked one would suppose an ass with bells was approaching. The czar, on the contrary, is tall and well made. His countenance is handsome; but there is something in it so rude that it inspires one with dread. He was dressed like a seaman, in a frock, without lace or ornament." The spirit of the tiring-woman shines through the whole of this saucy and superficial description. The markgräfin took the measure of the illustrious visitors as she would of her lady's robe—colour, spangles, and shape. It never occurred to her that, in the little coarse woman who looked so like a German actress, she saw the heroine of the Pruth; and that the rude seaman who frightened the queen was the man who, amidst ignorant wonder and superstitious resistance, laid the foundations of the most gigantic empire that the world has ever seen! But the circumstances under which the markgräfin obtained her impressions were unfavourable to the formation of a just opinion, or, indeed, of any opinion at all. She was only eight years of age when

she saw Peter and Catherine, although she had arrived at a mature age when she wrote her memoirs. She retained no more than the silly whispers and jests of the ante-chamber. She noted down what she heard rather than what she thought; but it serves to show very clearly the sort of atmosphere in which the eccentric Frederick moved, and the courtly weaknesses against which, in his own person, he must have been compelled to sustain a continual warfare.

On Peter's return through Holland, he purchased a variety of pictures of the Dutch and Flemish schools, several zoölogical, entomological, and anatomical cabinets, and a large collection of books. With the treasures thus accumulated he laid the foundation of the imperial Academy of Sciences, the plan of which he drew up himself. He would probably have lingered longer in those countries, but for the intelligence which he received concerning the conduct of his son Alexis, which induced him to hasten to St. Petersburg under the agitation of bitter feelings, in which the natural dispositions of the father were drawn into direct collision with the duty of the sovereign.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE CZAREVITCH ALEXIS DISINHERITED (1718 A.D.)

The czar arrived at St. Petersburg from his foreign tour on the 21st of October, 1717. Twenty years before he had signalled his return from a first visit to civilised countries by the inhuman butchery of the strelitz, and now he was about to give still more appalling evidence of the deep depravity of his heart.

Peter's early aversion to Eudoxia had a most deplorable influence on Alexis, the son she bore him in 1690. The dissensions between the father and the mother speedily diminished the father's affection for Alexis. Moreover, as Peter's vast labours prevented him from paying much attention to the education of his son, Alexis at first grew up under female tuition, and then fell into the hands of some of the clergy, under whose guidance he daily conceived a greater abhorrence for his father. This being observed by Peter, he put an end to the spiritual education, and appointed Menshikov superintendent of the prince's preceptors.

Menshikov was no friend to Alexis, and the latter had been early inspired by his mother with contempt and aversion for the favourite of his father. The tutors who were now placed about the prince were not able to eradicate the prejudices impressed on his mind from his infancy, and now grown inveterate: besides, he had an unconquerable dislike to them as foreigners. The future sovereign of so vast an empire that was now reformed in all its parts, and by prosperous wars still further enlarged; the heir of a throne whose possessor ruled over many millions of people, had been brought up from his birth as if designed for a Russian bishop; theology continued to be his favourite study. With a capacity for those sciences which are useful in government, he discovered no inclination to them. Moreover, he addicted himself early in life to drunkenness and other excesses. There were not wanting such as flattered his perverse dispositions, by representing to him that the Russian nation was dissatisfied with his father, that it was impossible for him to be suffered long in his career of innovation, that even his life was not likely to hold out against so many fatigues, with many other things of a like nature.

The conduct of Alexis, particularly his indolence and sloth, were highly displeasing to Peter. Menshikov, from political motives, to preserve himself and Catherine, was constantly employed in fanning the czar's resent-



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ment, while the adherents of Alexis, on the other hand, seized every opportunity to increase the aversion of the prince, who, from his very cradle, had never known what it was to love, and had only dreaded his father. Alexis at times even gave plain intimations that he would hereafter undo all that his father was so sedulously bringing about. Nay, when the latter, in 1711, appointed the prince regent during his absence, in the campaign of the Pruth, Alexis made it his first business to alter many things in behalf of the clergy, so as clearly to evince in what school he had been brought up.

The czar was in hopes of reforming his son by uniting him with a worthy consort; but even this attempt proved fruitless. The princess of Brunswick-Wolfenbüttel, who was selected for his bride, and to whom Alexis was married at Torgau, in 1711, notwithstanding all her eminent qualities of mind and heart and her great beauty, could make no impression on him, and sunk under the load of grief brought on by this unhappy connection, soon after giving birth to a prince, who was called by the name of his grandfather, Peter (1715). By a continuance in his dissolute mode of life, by his bad behaviour towards his spouse, and his intercourse with persons who were notorious for their hatred of Peter and his reforms, Alexis seemed bent upon augmenting his father's displeasure.

After the death of the princess, Peter wrote his son a letter, the conclusion of which ran thus: "I will still wait awhile, to see if you will amend: if not, know that I will deprive you of the succession, as a useless limb is cut off. Do not imagine I am only frightening you; nor would I have you rely on the title of being my eldest son; for since I do not spare my own life for the good of my country and the prosperity of my people, why should I spare yours? I shall rather commit them to a stranger deserving such a trust than to my own undeserving offspring."

At this very juncture the empress Catherine was delivered of a prince, who died in 1719. Whether the above letter disheartened Alexis, or whether it was imprudence or bad advice, he wrote to his father that he renounced the crown, and all hopes of reigning. "God is my witness," said he, "and I swear upon my soul, that I will never claim the succession: I commit my children into your hands, and for myself desire only a subsistence during life."

His father wrote to him a second time. "I observe," says he, "that all you speak of in the letter is the succession, as if I stood in need of your consent. I have represented to you what grief your behaviour has given me for so many years, and not a word do you say of it; the exhortations of a father make no impression on you. I have brought myself to write to you once more; but for the last time. If you despise my counsels now I am living, what regard will be paid to them after my death? Though you may now mean not to violate your promises, yet those bushy beards will be able to wind you as they please, and force you to break your word. It is you those people rely on. You have no gratitude to him who gave you life. Since you have been of proper age, did you ever assist him in his labours? Do you not find fault with, do you not detest everything I do for the good of my people? I have all the reason in the world to believe that, if you survive me, you will overthrow all that I have been doing. Amend, make yourself worthy of the succession, or turn monk. Let me have your answer either in writing, or personally, or I will deal with you as a malefactor."

Though this letter was harsh, the prince might easily have answered that he would alter his behaviour; but he only acquainted his father, in a few

lines, that he would turn monk. This assurance did not appear natural; and it is something strange that the czar, going to travel, should leave behind him a son so obstinate, but this very journey proves that the czar was in no manner of apprehension of a conspiracy from his son. He went to see him before he set out for Germany and France; the prince being ill, or feigning to be so, received him in bed, and confirmed to him, by the most solemn oaths, that he would retire into a convent. The czar gave him six months for deliberation, and set out with his consort.

He had scarcely reached Copenhagen when he received advice (which was no more than he might well expect) that Alexis admitted into his presence only evil-minded persons, who humoured his discontent; on this the czar wrote to him that he must choose the convent or the throne, and, if he valued the succession, to come to him at Copenhagen.

The prince's confidants instilled into him a suspicion that it would be dangerous for him to put himself into the hands of a provoked father and a mother-in-law, without so much as one friend to advise with. He therefore feigned that he was going to wait on his father at Copenhagen, but took the road to Vienna, and threw himself on the protection of the emperor Charles VI, his brother-in-law, intending to continue at his court till the czar's death.

This was an adventure something like that of Louis XI, who, whilst he was dauphin, withdrew from the court of Charles VII, his father, to the duke of Burgundy. Louis was, indeed, much more culpable than the czarevitch, by marrying in direct opposition to his father, raising troops, and seeking refuge with a prince, his father's natural enemy, and never returning to court, not even at the king's repeated entreaties.

Alexis, on the contrary, had married purely in obedience to the czar's order, and had not revolted nor raised troops; neither, indeed, had he withdrawn to a prince in anywise his father's enemy; and, on the first letter he received from his father, he went and threw himself at his feet. For Peter, on receiving advice that his son had been at Vienna, and had removed thence to Naples, then belonging to the emperor Charles VI, sent Romanzov, a captain of the guards, and Tolstoi, a privy-councillor, with a letter in his own hand, dated from Spa, the 21st of July, N.S. 1717. They found the prince at Naples, in the castle of St. Elmo, and delivered him the letter, which was as follows:

"I now write to you, and for the last time, to let you know that you had best comply with my will, which Tolstoi and Romanzov will make known to you. On your obedience, I assure you, and promise before God, that I will not punish you; so far from it, that if you return I will love you better than ever. But if you do not, by virtue of the power I have received from God as your father, I pronounce against you my eternal curse; and as your sovereign, I assure you I shall find ways to punish you; in which I hope, as my cause is just, God will take it in hand, and assist me in revenging it. Remember further that I never used compulsion with you. Was I under any obligation to leave you to your own option? Had I been for forcing you, was not the power in my hand? At a word, I should have been obeyed."

Relying on the faith thus solemnly given by a father and a sovereign, Alexis returned to Russia. On the 11th of February, 1717, N.S., he reached Moscow, where the czar then was, and had a long conference in private with his father. A report immediately was spread through the city that a reconciliation had taken place between the father and son, and that everything was forgotten; but the very next day the regiments of guards were ordered

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under arms, and the great bell of Moscow tolled. The boyars and privy-councillors were summoned to the castle; the bishops, the archimandrites, and two monks of the order of St. Basil, professors of divinity, met in the cathedral. Alexis was carried into the castle before his father without a sword, and as a prisoner; he immediately prostrated himself, and with a flood of tears delivered to his father a writing, in which he acknowledged his crimes, declared himself unworthy of the succession, and asked only his life. The czar, raising him up, led him to a closet, where he put several questions to him, declaring, that if he concealed anything relating to his escape, his head should answer for it. Afterwards the prince was brought back into the council-chamber, where the czar's declaration, which had been drawn up beforehand, was publicly read.

The father in this piece reproached his son with his manifold vices, his remissness in improving himself, his intimacy with the sticklers for ancient customs, his misbehaviour towards his consort: "He has," says he, "violated conjugal faith, taking up with a low-born wench whilst his wife was living." Alexis might fairly have pleaded that in this kind of debauchery he came immeasurably short of his father's example. He afterwards reproaches him with going to Vienna, and putting himself under the emperor's protection. He says that Alexis had slandered his father, intimating to the emperor Charles VI that he was persecuted; and that a longer stay in Muscovy was dangerous, unless he renounced the succession; nay, that he went so far as to desire the emperor openly to defend him by force of arms.<sup>e</sup>

### *Death of the Czarevitch Alexis*

The proceedings against the czarevitch and his friends lasted for about half a year: they were begun in Moscow and continued in St. Petersburg; the cells of the fortress of the latter place were filled with prisoners, amongst whom were two members of the royal family — the czarevitch and Marie Alexievna; fresh persons were continually added to their number, denounced under the pressure of unbearable tortures. One of the differences between the legal proceedings of that period and the present consists in the fact that, when we now have the evidence of a crime before us, we endeavour to discover the persons guilty of it, whereas then they sought to find out whether someone had not done something criminal.

In May a "declaration" or manifesto was issued setting forth the czarevitch's crimes. His whole life was related in the manifesto; mention was made of his idleness in studying, his disobedience to his father's will, his ill treatment of his wife, and finally his flight and his apparent solicitation of the help of the German emperor and "the protection of an armed hand," — which was not at all clearly proved by the evidence. There was, however, no mention in the manifesto of the fact that he had been promised an unconditional pardon and the permission to live at a distance with his beloved Euphrosyne. For all these offences, for his disobedience to his father, his treachery and dissimulation, the czarevitch and his "accomplices" were delivered up for judgment to the tribunal; but this tribunal was not an ordinary one: it was a special one, composed of persons named by Peter himself. Why was such a departure made from the usual order of things? In matters of peculiar importance, when it happened that persons in proximity to the throne were to be judged, it was not unfrequent in western Europe that special, so-called supreme tribunals were named. But this custom always gave reason to suppose that the members of those supreme tribunals were only



chosen from amongst those who would be ready to fulfil the will of him who had named them.

The committee appointed to judge the czarevitch consisted of 127 members of the clergy and laity; in the instructions given by the czar to the first it was enjoined that they should act "without any hypocrisy or partiality"; in the instructions given to the laity the following was signified: "I ask you in order that this matter may be truthfully accomplished, without seeking to flatter me; without any respect for persons, to act righteously, and not to destroy your souls and mine, so that our consciences may be pure at the terrible day of judgment, and our country secure." Such were the words that the czar addressed to the tribunal; they were fine in themselves, but their signification could not have been great, because the judges were not independent. The conceptions of the present time require that judges should not be afraid of being dismissed from their functions, of being deprived of the salaries accompanying these functions, and so on — then only can a judge be entirely impartial; but were the judges of the czarevitch and in general all the judges of that time in such a position? They were all persons in the government service and entirely dependent on their chiefs; in the present case whom was it they risked displeasing? The czar himself! It was natural that they should try and read the czar's will in the eyes of Menshikov, Tolstoi, and others of his intimates.

On the 24th of June, 1718, the sentence of the supreme tribunal was pronounced. The clergy refused to pronounce sentence, but the laity unanimously decreed the penalty of death against the czarevitch. Execution, however, did not follow, but something far more terrible than a public death on the scaffold did — the czarevitch was tortured on the rack. In fact, during the last days of the sitting of the tribunal, he had been several times subjected to it and, he was even tortured after sentence had been passed upon him! All this was more than the feeble organism of the czarevitch could bear, and on the 26th of June he died in a cell of the Petersburg fortress. Amongst the number of his friends and sharers in his flight many were executed, others banished to distant places, to monasteries and fortresses; amongst the latter was also the czarevna Marie Alexievna, who was sent to Schlüsselburg.

Such is one of the darkest episodes of the reign of Peter. The czarevitch Alexis could not have continued the work commenced by his father; he could not have succeeded him; he might have been judged, even condemned, if the tribunal (but an impartial tribunal) had found him guilty, and his head might have fallen at the hands of the public executioner like that of a criminal. But he was promised pardon if he would return, and having returned he was delivered up to the tribunal, he was judged by persons in whose impartiality it is impossible to believe; finally he was tortured after sentence was pronounced, when everywhere, even to the most insignificant of men and the greatest of criminals, time is given to prepare for death. For these things history cannot forgive the czar. Upon contemporaries the judgment and death of the czarevitch produced a deep impression. There were persons who admired the czar's decision to sacrifice his son to the welfare of the country and his great plans; they compared him to Brutus. But there were but few such persons and they for the greater part were foreigners and not Russians. The greatness of Brutus and civic virtues in general did not powerfully move the hearts of our forefathers; but each of them felt that it was unnatural for a father to take away his son's life!

Terrible rumours as to the details of the czarevitch's death began to be current amongst the people; some said that he had been secretly poisoned,

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others that he had been strangled, and yet others that the czar himself had cut off his head in the cell. All these were fables, but fables which, however, may even now be met with in the works of many foreign authors and which also prove how powerfully the imagination of contemporaries was affected by this event and how much it was talked of. That noble quality of human nature — sympathy with sufferings even when they are deserved — made the czarevitch dearer still to his numerous partisans. The idea that Peter had indeed been “changed” became stronger. The common people, the merchants, the clergy, even distinguished persons, when they were not afraid of being overheard, said: “Would such a thing have been possible if he were the rightful czar — would he have killed his son and made the czarevna take the veil?” In some more fanatical minds the idea became confirmed that the czarevitch was alive and the name of the unfortunate young man became, as did in previous times the name of the czarevitch Dmitri, an ensign for impostors and pretenders.<sup>h</sup>

## DOMESTIC AFFAIRS

The appalling episode we have just related was so far from engrossing the thoughts of the czar that it hardly interrupted the course of his ordinary occupations. Nay, as if to darken still more the tragic horrors of the year 1718, by mingling with them the coarsest and most disgusting buffoonery, it was in that very year he instituted the crapulous burlesque of the Conclave. The occasion of it was this: During the czar's visit to Paris, the doctors of the Sorbonne addressed him with the view of effecting a union between the Russo-Greek church and that of Rome, and they presented to him a memorial full of learned arguments against the schismatical tenets of his co-religionists. This memorial only gave great offence to the court of Rome, without pleasing either the emperor or the church of Russia.

“In this plan of reunion,” says Voltaire, “there were some political matters which they did not understand, and some points of controversy which they said they understood and which each party explained according to its humour. There was a question about the Holy Ghost, who, according to the Latins, proceeds from the Father and the Son; and according to the Greeks, at present, proceeds from the Father, through the Son, after having, for a long time, proceeded from the Father only. They quoted St. Epiphanius, who says that ‘the Holy Ghost is not the Son's brother, nor the Father's grandson.’ But the czar, at leaving Paris, had other business than to explain passages from St. Epiphanius; however, he received the Sorbonne's memorial with great affability. They also wrote to some Russian bishops, who returned a polite answer; but the greater number received the overture with indignation.” It was to dissipate the apprehensions of this reunion that, after expelling the Jesuits from his dominions, he instituted the mock conclave, as he had previously set on foot other burlesque exhibitions, for the purpose of turning the office of patriarch into ridicule.

There was at his court an old man named Sotov, an enormous drunkard, and a court-fool of long standing; he had taught the czar to write, and by this service imagined that he deserved the highest dignities. Peter promised to confer on him one of the most eminent in the known world: he created him *kniaz papa*, that is to say, prince-pope, with a salary of 2,000 roubles, and a palace at St. Petersburg, in the Tatar ward. Sotov was enthroned by buffoons; four fellows, who stammered, were appointed to harangue him on his exaltation; his mock holiness created a number of cardinals, and rode in procession

at the head of them, sitting astride on a cask of brandy, which was laid on a sledge drawn by four oxen. They were followed by other sledges loaded with food and drink; and the march was accompanied by the rough music of drums, trumpets, horns, hautboys, and fiddles, all playing out of tune; and the clattering of pots and pans, brandished by a troop of cooks and scullions. The train was swelled by a number of men dressed as monks of various Romish orders, and each carrying a bottle and glass. The czar and his courtiers brought up the rear, the former in the garb of a Dutch skipper, the latter in various comic disguises.

When the procession arrived at the place where the conclave was to be held the cardinals were led into a long gallery, part of which had been boarded off into a range of closets in each of which a cardinal was shut up with plenty of food and intoxicating liquors. To every one of their eminences were attached two conclavists — cunning young fellows, whose business it was to ply their principals well with drink, carry real or pretended messages to and fro between the members of the sacred college, and provoke them to bawl out all sorts of abuse of each other and of their respective families. The czar listened eagerly to all this ribaldry, not forgetting in the midst of his glee to note down on his tablets any hints of which it might be possible for him to make a vindictive use. The cardinals were not released from confinement until they were all agreed upon a number of farcical questions submitted to them by the *kniaz papa*.

The orgie lasted three days and three nights. The doors of the conclave were at last thrown open in the middle of the day, and the pope and his cardinals were carried home dead drunk on sledges — that is to say, such of them as survived; for some had actually died during the debauch, and others never recovered from its effects. This stupid farce was repeated three times; and on the last occasion especially it was accompanied with other abominations, which admit of no description. Peter himself had his death accelerated by his excesses in the last conclave.

From 1714 to 1717 Peter published ninety-two ordinances or regulations; in 1718 alone, in that year of crime, thirty-six ukases, or regulations, were promulgated, and twenty-seven in 1719. The majority of them related directly to his new establishments. The council of mines dates in its origin from that period, as do also the uniformity of weights and measures, the institution of schools for teaching arithmetic in all the towns of the empire; that of orphan-houses and founding-hospitals, of workshops for the poor, and of manufactories of tapestry, silks, linens, and cloths for soldiers' clothing; the founding of the city of Ladoga; the canal of the same name, which he began with his own hands; that of Kronstadt; the plan of another, which now unites the Baltic to the Caspian by the intermedium of the Volga; besides numerous measures of detail, including the police, the health of towns, lighting and cleansing, founded upon what he had remarked during the previous year in the great cities of Europe.

At this sanguinary epoch it was that, by this multitude of establishments for the promotion of all kinds of industry, he gave the most rapid impulse to the knowledge, commerce, and civilisation to which he sacrificed his son; as though, by thus redoubling his activity, he had sought to escape from himself, or to palliate, by the importance of the result, the horror of the sacrifice. In several of these ordinances it is remarkable that, either from the inconsistency which is inherent in our nature or from the pride of a despot, which believes itself to be detached from and above everything, he required respect to be paid to religion, at the very moment when, with such cruelty, he was paying no



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respect to the sanctity of his own oath; and yet the importance of keeping sworn faith must have been well known to a prince who one day said, "The irreligious cannot be tolerated because, by sapping religion, they turn into ridicule the sacredness of an oath, which is the foundation of all society."

It is true that, on this occasion, pushing right into wrong, as he too often did, he mutilated and banished to Siberia a miserable creature who, when drunk, had been guilty of blasphemy. So intolerant was he against intolerance. The raskolniks were, and still are, the blind and uncompromising enemies of all innovation. One of them, at that period, even believed that he might avenge heaven by an assassination. Under the guise of a suppliant, this fanatic had easily penetrated into the chamber of the prince; he was already within reach of him, and, while he feigned to implore him, his hand was seeking for the dagger under his clothes, when, fortunately, it dropped and betrayed the assassin, by falling at the feet of the czar.

This abortive crime had made the persecution rage with redoubled fury when, all at once, a frightful report was spread; it was soon confirmed that several hundred of these wretched beings had taken refuge in a church, and, rather than abjure their superstitions, had set fire to their asylum, leaving nothing but their ashes to their persecutor. A horrible sacrifice, which, however, was not useless. Peter saw his error; his intolerance was only political — it was enlightened by these flames, which religious intolerance witnessed with such atrocious joy.

Yet, unable to forgive these sectaries an obstinacy which was victorious over his own, he once more tried against them the weapon of ridicule. He ordered that they should wear a bit of yellow stuff on their backs, to distinguish them from his other subjects. This mark of humiliation, however, they considered as a distinction. Some malignant advisers endeavoured to rouse his anger again, but he replied, "No; I have learned that they are men of pure morals; they are the most upright merchants in the empire; and neither honour nor the welfare of the country will allow of their being martyred for their errors. Besides, that which a degrading badge and force of reason have been unable to effect will never be accomplished by punishment; let them, therefore, live in peace."

These were remarkable words, and worthy the pupil of Holland and England, worthy of a prince to whom superstition was a most inveterate enemy. In reality, he was a believer, but not credulous; and even while he knelt on the field of victory, he gave thanks to God alone for the reward of so many toils, and could separate the cause of heaven from that of the priests; it was his wish that they should be citizens. We have seen that he subjected them to the same taxes as his other subjects; and because the monks eluded them he diminished their numbers. He unmasked the superstitious impostures of the priests, who all sought to close up every cranny by which the light might have a chance of reaching them.

For this reason, they held St. Petersburg in abhorrence. According to their description of it, this half-built city, by which Russia already aspired to civilisation, was one of the mouths of hell. It was they who obtained from the unfortunate Alexis a promise that it should be destroyed. Their prophecies repeatedly fixed the epoch at which it would be overthrown by the wrath of heaven. The labours upon it were then suspended, for so great was the fear thus inspired that the orders of the terrible czar were issued almost in vain.

On one occasion, these lying priests were for some days particularly active; they displayed one of their sacred images, from which the tears flowed miraculously; it wept the fate which impended over those who dwelt in this new

city. "Its hour is at hand," said they, "and it will be swallowed up, with all its inhabitants, by a tremendous inundation." On hearing of this miracle of the tears, the treacherous construction which was put upon it, and the perturbation which it occasioned, Peter thought it necessary to hasten to the spot. There, in the midst of the people, who were petrified with terror, and of his tongue-tied court, he seized the miraculous image, and discovered its mechanism; the multitude were stupefied with a pious horror, but he opened their eyes by showing them, in those of the idol, the congealed oil, which was melted by the flame of tapers inside, and then flowed drop by drop through openings artfully provided for the purpose.

At a later period he did still more; the horrible execution of a young Russian by the priests was the cause. This unfortunate man had brought back from Germany a highly valuable knowledge of medicine, and had left there some superstitious prejudices. For this reason all his motions were watched by the priests; and they at last caught up some thoughtless words against their sacred images. They immediately arrested the regenerated young Russian, sentenced him without mercy, and put him to a torturing death. But this individual evil produced a general good. Indignant at their cruelty, Peter deprived the clergy of the right of condemning to death. The priests lost a jurisdiction which they alleged they had possessed for seven centuries, from the time of Vladimir the Great, and thus the source of their power was forever annihilated by this execrable abuse of it.

It was particularly in that sanguinary year, so fatal to the last hope which the old Russians placed in his successor, that Peter seemed in haste to sever them from their ancient customs, by giving an entirely new form to the administration of his empire. As far back as 1711, he had already replaced the old supreme court of the boyars by a senate, a sovereign council, into which merit and services might obtain admission, independent of noble origin. Subsequently, and every year, other changes had been effected. Thus, in 1717, he brought from France, along with a commercial treaty, the institution of a general police. But, in 1718, instead of the old prikaz, he substituted, at one stroke, colleges for foreign affairs, naval affairs, finance, justice, and commerce, and fixed, by a general regulation, and with the utmost minuteness, the functions and privileges of each of them.

At the same time, when capable Russians were not to be found, he appointed his Swedish prisoners, and the most eminent of the foreigners, to fill these administrative and judicial situations. He was careful to give the highest offices to natives, and the second to foreigners, that the native officers might support, against the pride and jealousy of their countrymen, these foreigners who served them as instructors and guides. For the purpose of forming his young nobles for the service of the state, he adjoined a considerable number of them to each college; and there merit alone could raise them from the lowest stations to the first rank.

#### RENEWED HOSTILITIES WITH SWEDEN (1719-1721 A.D.)

The death of Charles XII was immediately followed by a revolution in Sweden. His sister Ulrica Eleonora, who was married to the crown prince of Hesse-Cassel, succeeded him on the throne; but the constitution was changed, the despotic authority of the crown was reduced to a mere shadow, and the queen and her husband became the tools of an oligarchy who usurped all the powers of the state. The czar and the new queen mutually protested their desire for peace; but Peter at the same time announced to the Swedish plen-

[1719-1720 A.D.]

ipotentiaries that, if the propositions he had made were not accepted within two months, he would march forty thousand men into Sweden to expedite the negotiations.

A project for the pacification of the north, the very opposite from that conceived by Görtz, was formed by the diet of Brunswick. The concoctors of this scheme started from the principle that the German possessions of Sweden were more onerous than profitable to that power, as the occasions of interminable wars. It was resolved, therefore, that they should be abandoned to the powers that had conquered them; but as it was reasonable that the new possessors should purchase the ratification of their titles by some services to the common cause, they were required to aid Sweden in recovering possession of Finland and of Livonia, the granary of that kingdom. Of all the czar's conquests nothing was to be left to him but St. Petersburg, Kronstadt, and Narva; and, if he refused to assent to this arrangement, all the contracting powers were to unite their forces and compel him to submit. This was one of those brilliant and chimerical schemes with which diplomatists sometimes allow their minds to be so dazzled as not to be convinced of their impracticability until after a lavish waste of blood.

Whilst the allies were in imagination depriving Peter of his conquests, Siniavin, his admiral, took from the Swedes two ships of the line and a brigantine, which were carrying corn to Stockholm. The queen of Sweden, however, encouraged by the promises made her by Lord Carteret, the ambassador of George I, intimated to the czar that she would break off the conferences at Åland if he did not consent to restore all the provinces he had conquered. By way of reply, Peter went in June, 1719, with a fleet of 30 ships, 150 galleys, and 300 barges, carrying in all 40,000 men, to Åland, took up his station for a while under the cliffs of the island of Länckland, and sent Apraxin to ravage the wastes on the right of Stockholm, whilst Lessy destroyed everything on the left of the city. North and south Tegel, Nyköping, Norköping, Osthhammer, and Oregrund, together with two small towns, were burned, besides 150 noble mansions, 43 mills, 1,360 villages, 21 copper, iron, and tile works — among the iron works one was worth 300,000 dollars; 100,000 cattle were slaughtered, and 80,000 bars of iron thrown into the sea. The mines were blown up and the woods set on fire, and Stockholm itself was seriously threatened. Meanwhile, the English fleet under Admiral Norris again entered the Baltic. Peter sent a message to the English admiral asking peremptorily whether he came only as a friend to Sweden or as an enemy to Russia. The admiral's answer was that as yet he had no positive orders. This equivocal reply did not hinder Peter from keeping the sea, and incessantly harrassing the Swedes before the eyes of their naval allies.

The Swedish oligarchs and their mock king<sup>1</sup> had reckoned in vain upon the intercession of the English ambassador, and the aid of the admiral and his fleet. Carteret was not even listened to by Peter, and Admiral Norris did not venture to attack the Russians, because he knew that the English nation was dissatisfied with the politics of their king and of his ministers, who favoured his Hanoverian plans. The Swedes were at length obliged to acquiesce in the Russian demands; negotiations for peace were again commenced in Nystad at the end of the year 1720, but their conclusion was only brought about at the close of the following year by the exercise of some further cruelties on the part of the Russians. The Swedes had demanded a

<sup>1</sup> Ulrica had ceded the crown to her husband.



cessation of hostilities during the whole time in which the negotiations were pending, but Peter only granted it till May, 1721, in order to compel the council of state to come to a resolution by that time; and as they still procrastinated, the whole coast of Sweden was again plundered and devastated in the month of June.

The Russian incendiaries landed in sight of the English, whose fleet under Admiral Norris, still continued in the Baltic, but did not venture to lend any assistance to the Swedes. The whole coast, from Gefle as far as Umea, was ravaged; four small towns, nineteen villages, eighty nobles' and five hundred peasants' houses burned; twelve iron-works and eight saw-mills destroyed; six galleys and other ships carried away. Peter's plenipotentiaries at last prevailed — for he so jocularly called his soldiers and sailors who were committing such horrible destruction in Sweden. Negotiations were again opened in Nystad, a small town in Finland, and the war of twenty-one years was closed by a peace dictated by the conquering czar.

The provinces ceded to Russia by the Peace of Nystad (September 10th, 1721) were Livonia, Esthonia, and Karelia, together with Viborg, Kexholm, and the island of Ösel; on the other hand, Peter restored Finland, with the exception of Viborg and Kexholm, and promised to pay two millions of dollars, but in the first years of the peace scarcely paid off half a million.

From this time forward, the despotic sway and military oppression of Russia became the dread of all neighbouring countries and people. All contributed to the external greatness and splendour of the ruler of a barbarous but powerful race of slaves, whom he constrained to adopt the vestments of civilisation. The czar commanded in Poland and Scandinavia, where weak or wicked governments were constantly in dread from the discontent of the people. He also gained an influence in Germany, which ultimately caused no small anxiety to the emperor and the empire. The Russian minister Bestuzhev played the chief part in Sweden in all political affairs, sometimes by counsel and sometimes by threats, sometimes by mediation and sometimes by commands. Bestuzhev was powerful in the Swedish council, and at the same time, in compliance with the wishes of his master, allured artists, artisans, workmen, and all those who had been deprived of occupation or ruined by the late inroads of the Russians, to remove with their tools, manufactures, and trades to Russia. Peter employed these people in all parts of his empire to raise up manufactories, to originate trades, and to set mines and iron-works in action.

The Russian minister spoke in a no less commanding tone in Copenhagen than in Sweden, for Denmark was also frightened by Peter's threats to adopt and second the cause of the duke of Holstein. The duke was detained in Russia by repeated promises, of whose fulfilment there was little prospect. The Poles, through Russian mediation, were at length reconciled to their king, and the Russians not only kept firm possession of Courland, but remained in Poland itself, under the pretence of preserving the peace of the country. Peter, nevertheless, in his negotiations with Görtz and Charles XII, had showed himself well inclined to sacrifice King Augustus to his plans; but this scheme was frustrated by the death of Charles.

#### PETER AS ADMINISTRATOR

Peter had now achieved a prodigious amount of external and internal power; yet the original nucleus of it all was nothing more than fifty young

[1721 A.D.]

companions in debauchery, whom he transformed into soldiers, and the remains of a sailing-boat, which had been left forgotten in a magazine. In twenty-five years this seed, nursed by a skilful and vigorous hand, had, on the one part, produced two hundred thousand men, divided into fifty-five regiments, and cantoned, with three hundred field pieces, in permanent quarters; a body of engineers, and, particularly, of formidable artillery-men; and fourteen thousand pieces of cannon, deposited in a great central establishment, in the fortresses, and three military magazines on the frontiers of the three chief national enemies, the Turks, the Poles, and the Swedes. On the other hand, from the relics of the sailing boat had arisen thirty ships of the line, a proportionate number of frigates and smaller vessels of war, two hundred galleys with sails and oars, and a multitude of experienced mariners.

But with what treasures did Peter undertake the moral and physical transformation of such an extensive empire? We behold an entire land metamorphosed, cities containing a hundred thousand souls, ports, canals, and establishments of all kinds, created; thousands of skilful Europeans attracted, maintained and rewarded; several fleets built, and others purchased; a permanent army of a hundred and twenty thousand men, trained, equipped, provided with every species of arms and ammunition, and several times renewed; subsidies of men and money given to Poland; and four wars undertaken. One of these wars spread over half of Europe and when it lasted twenty-one years the treasury from which it was fed still remained full. And Peter, whose revenues on his accession did not exceed a few hundred thousand pounds, declared to Munich that he could have carried on the war for twenty-one years longer without contracting any debt.

Will order and economy be sufficient to account for these phenomena? We must, doubtless, admire them in the czar, who refused himself every superfluity at the same time that he spared nothing for the improvement of his empire. Much must have been gained when, after having wrested the indirect taxes from the boyars, who were at once civil, military, and financial managers, and from those to whom the boyars sold in portions the collecting of them, Peter, in imitation of Holland, entrusted the finances to committees composed of select merchants. We may also feel less surprised at the increase of his revenue, after we have seen him subjecting to taxation the clergy as well as the laity; suppressing a number of monasteries, by forbidding monastic vows to be taken before the age of fifty; and uniting their estates to the domains of the crown, which were swelled by confiscations, by the reversion of his brother Ivan's appanage, and by his conquests from the Swedes.

We must remark, at the same time, that he had opened his states to foreign commerce and to the treasures of Europe, which were carried thither to be exchanged for the many raw materials which had hitherto remained valueless; we must consider the augmentation of revenue which necessarily ensued, and the possibility of requiring to be paid in money a multitude of taxes which had previously been paid in kind. Thus, in place of quotas of provisions, which were brought from great distances and were highly oppressive to the people, he substituted a tax; and the sum raised was applied to the payment of contractors. It is true that even under this new system the state was shamefully robbed; for the nobles contrived in secret to get the contracts into their own hands, in order to fatten upon the blood of the people; but Peter at length perceived them; the evil betrayed itself by its own enormity. The czar then created commissions of inquiry, passed whole days in them, and, during several years, keeping these great speculators always in sight, made

them disgorge by fines and confiscations, and punished them by the knout, the halter, and the axe.

To this superintendence by the head of the state, which, subsequently to 1715, the contraction of the war within a narrower circle allowed him to exert, let us add the increase of salary to the collectors, which deprived them of all pretext for misconduct. Nor must it be forgotten that most of the stipends were paid in kind; and that, for several years, the war, being carried on out of the empire, supplied its own wants. It must be observed, too, that the cities and provinces in which the troops were afterwards quartered furnished their pay on the spot, by which the charge of discount was saved; and that the measures which they adopted for their subsistence appear to have been municipal, and consequently as little oppressive as possible. Finally, we must remark, in 1721, the substitution, in place of the Tatar house-tax, of a poll-tax, which was a real impost on land, assessed according to a census repeated every twenty years, the payment of which the agriculturists regulated among themselves, in proportion to the value of their produce.

At the same time, the reformer refused to foreigners the privilege of trading with each other in Russia; he even gave to his subjects exclusively the right of conveying to the frontiers of the empire the merchandise which foreigners had bought from them in the interior. Thus he ensured to his own people the profit of carriage. In 1716 he chose rather to give up an advantageous alliance with the English than to relinquish this right in their favour.

But all the causes we have enumerated will not yet account for the possibility of so many gigantic undertakings and such immense results, with a fixed revenue in specie which, in 1715, was estimated by an attentive observer at only some millions of roubles. But in the fiscal expedients of a despotic empire it is to fluctuating revenue, illegal resources, and arbitrary measures that we must direct our attention; astonishment then ceases, and then begins pity for one party, indignation against another, and surprise excited by the ignorance with respect to commercial affairs which is displayed by the high and mighty geniuses of despotism, in comparison with the unerring instinct which is manifested by the humblest community of men who are free.

It is the genius of Russian despotism, therefore, that we must question as to the means by which it produced such gigantic results; but however far it may be disposed to push its frightful candour, will it point out to us its army recruited by men whom the villages sent tied together in pairs, and at their own expense — soldiers at a penny a day, payable every four months, and often marching without pay; slaves whom it was thought quite enough to feed, and who were contented with some handfuls of rye or of oats made into gruel or into ill-baked bread; unfortunate wretches who, in spite of the blunders of their generals, were compelled to be victorious, under pain of being decimated! Or will this despotism confess that, while it gave nothing to these serfs, who were enlisted for life, it required everything from them; that, after twenty-one years of war, it compelled them to dig canals, like miserable bond-slaves? "For they ought to serve their country," said Peter, "either by defending or enriching it; that is what they are made for."

Could this autocrat pride himself on the perennial fulness of an exchequer which violated its engagements in such a manner that most of the foreigners who were in his service were anxious to quit it? What answer could he make to that hollow and lengthened groan which, even yet, seems to rise from every house in Taganrog, and in St. Petersburg, and from his forts, built by the most deadly kind of statute-labour, and peopled by requisitions? One half of the inhabitants of the villages were sent to construct them, and were



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relieved by the other half every six months; and the weakest and the most industrious of them never more saw their homes!

These unfortunate beings, whatever might be their calling, from the common delver to the watchmaker and jeweller, were torn without mercy from their families, their ploughs, their workshops, and their counting-houses. They travelled to their protracted torture at their own expense; they worked without any pay. Some were compelled to fill up swamps, and build houses on them; others, to remove thither suddenly, and establish their trade there; and all these hapless men, one part of whom were bent to the earth with toil, and the other part in a manner lost in a new world, were so badly fed and sheltered, or breathed such a pestilential air, that the Russians of that period used to say that St. Petersburg was built upon a bed of human skeletons.

Listen to the complaints of the nobles and the richest merchants: after the gift of a hundred vessels had been required from them, they were forced to unite in this slough to build stone houses, and were also constrained to live there at a much greater expense than they would have incurred in their own homes. And when even the clergy remonstrated against the excessive taxes laid upon the priests (who were able to indemnify themselves out of their flocks) who can be astonished at the possibility of so many creations, and at the plenitude of a treasury which opened so widely to receive and so scantily to disburse?

Personal services, taxes in kind, taxes in money — these were the three main sources of the power of the czar. We have just seen what estimate we ought to form as to the manner in which the first of these was employed. As to the taxes in kind and in money, how could the insulated cries of such a multitude of tax-payers, who were scattered over so wide a space, have reached the present age, if the excess of a simultaneous and universal evil had not blended them into one vast clamour, stronger than time and space? It is from this we learn the names of the throng of taxes which were laid upon everything, and at every opportunity, for the war, the admiralty, the recruiting-service, for the horses used in the public works, for the brick and limekilns required in the building of St. Petersburg, for the post-office, the government offices, the extraordinary expenses, for the contributions in kind, for the requisitions of men and their pay and subsistence, and for the salaries of those who were in place; to which must be added innumerable other duties on mills, ponds, baths, beehives, meadows, gardens, and, in the towns, on every square fathom of land which bore the name of black, or non-free. And all this was aggravated by other exorbitant and grinding burdens, and by fleecing the artisans in proportion to their industry and their assumed wealth — the result of which was that they concealed both; the most laborious of them buried their earnings that they might hide them from the nobles; and the nobles intrusted their riches to foreign banks, that they might hide them from the czar.

To this we have yet to add the secondary oppressions; collectors, whose annual pay was, for a long time, only six roubles; and who, nevertheless, accumulated fortunes in four years, for they converted to their own use two thirds of the sums which they extorted; executing by torture whoever was unable to pay, they made the most horrible misuse of the unlimited powers which according to the practice of absolute governments, were necessarily entrusted to them — despotism being unable to act otherwise than by delegation.

These men had the right of levying taxes on all the markets of the country, of laying whatever duties they pleased upon commodities, and of breaking

into houses, for the purpose of preventing or discovering infractions of their orders, so that the unfortunate people, finding that they had nought which they could call their own, and that everything, even to their industry, belonged to the czar, ceased to exert themselves for more than a mere subsistence, and lost that spirit which only a man's personal interest can inspire. Accordingly, the forests were peopled with men driven to desperation, and those who at first remained in the villages, finding that they were obliged to pay the taxes of the fugitives as well as their own, speedily joined their companions.

What can bear witness more strongly to the disordered state of those times than the facts themselves? They show us *grandeės*, who were possessed of the highest credit, repeatedly convicted of embezzling the public money; others hanged or beheaded! and a vice-chancellor himself daring, without any authority, to give places and pensions, and, in so poor a country, contriving to purloin nearly a hundred and fifty thousand pounds. It was not, therefore, the czar alone whom the people accused of their sufferings. But such is the tenure of despotism that, in depriving the people of their will, it takes upon itself the whole responsibility. All, however, agree that, about 1715, they beheld their czar astounded at the aspect of such numerous evils; they acknowledge the efforts which he had made, and that all of them had not been fruitless.

But, at the same time, to account for the inexhaustible abundance of the autocrat's treasury, they represent him to us as monopolising everything for his own benefit, giving to the current coin of his empire the value which suited his purpose, and receiving it from foreigners at no more than its intrinsic worth. They accuse him of having engrossed the purchase or sale of numberless native and foreign productions, either by suddenly taxing various kinds of merchandise or by assuming the right of being the exclusive purchaser, at his own price, to sell again at an exorbitant price when he had become the sole possessor. They say also that, forestalling everything, their czar made himself the sole merchant trading from European Russia to China and Siberia, as well as the sole mint-master, the sole trader in tobacco, soap, tallow, pitch, and tar; that having also declared himself the only public-house keeper in an empire where drunkenness held sovereign sway, this monopoly annually brought back into his coffers all the pay that had been disbursed from them.

When, in 1716, he wished to defray the expenses of his second journey to Holland, and at the same time avoid being a loser by the rate of exchange, what was the plan which he adopted? He laid hands on all the leather intended for exportation, which he paid for at a maximum fixed by himself, and then exported it on his own account, the proceeds being made payable in Holland, where it was purchased by foreigners.

It is thus that many of his contemporaries explain the riches of a prince who was the principal manufacturer and merchant of a great empire — the creator, the superintendent of its arts. In his eyes, his subjects were nothing more than workmen, whose labours he prompted, estimated, and rewarded according to his own pleasure; he reserved to himself the sale of the produce of their industry, and the immense profits which he thus gained he employed in doubling that produce.

What a singular founder of commerce in his empire was a monarch who drew it all within his own sphere and absorbed it in himself! We may, however, be allowed to believe that he sometimes became a merchant and manufacturer, as he became a soldier and a sailor, for the sake of example, and that the obstinate repugnance of his ignorant subjects to many branches

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of industry and commerce long compelled him to retain the monopoly of them, whether he would or not. It is curious to remark how his despotism recoiled upon himself when he interfered with matters so impatient of arbitrary power as trade and credit. Soloviev is an example of this. Assisted by the privileges which Peter had granted to him, that merchant succeeded in establishing at Amsterdam the first commercial Russian factory that had ever been worthy of notice: but in 1717, when the czar visited Holland for the second time, his greedy courtiers irritated him against their fellow countryman. Soloviev had not chosen to ransom himself from the envy which his riches inspired. They therefore slandered him to their sovereign: he was arrested and sent back to Russia: his correspondents lost their advances: confidence was ruined, and the autocrat, by confiscating this source of riches, destroyed his work with his own hand. Yet he had a glimpse of something like free-trade principles. He would never impose any higher penalty on smuggling than confiscation. "Commerce," he said, "is like a timid maiden, who is scared by rough usage, and must be won by gentle means. Smuggle who will, and welcome. The merchant who exposes himself to the chance of having his goods confiscated runs a greater risk than my treasury. If he cheats me nine times and I catch him the tenth, I shall be no loser by the game."

### *The Church and the Aristocracy*

Peter had never been at any pains to conceal his indifference or contempt for the national church: but it was not until that culminating point in his history at which we are now arrived that he ventured to accomplish his design of abolishing the office of patriarch. He had left it unfilled for one-and-twenty years, and he formally suppressed it after the conclusion of the Peace of Nystad: when heaven had declared in his favour, as it seemed to the multitude, who always believe the Deity to be on the strongest side. In the following year, however, the synod, in spite of Theophanes, its president, whom we may consider as his minister for religious affairs, dared to desire that a patriarch might be appointed. But bursting into a sudden passion Peter started up, struck his breast violently with his hand and the table with his cutlass, and exclaimed, "Here, here is your patriarch!" He then hastily quitted the room, casting, as he departed, a stern look upon the panic-struck prelates.

Of the two conquests which Peter consummated about the same time — that over Sweden and that by which he annihilated the independence of the Russian clergy — it is hard to say which was the more gratifying to his pride. Someone having communicated to him the substance of a paper in the English *Spectator*, in which a comparison was made between himself and Louis XIV, entirely to his own advantage, he disclaimed the superiority accorded to him by the essayist, save in one particular: "Louis XIV," said he, "was greater than I, except that I have been able to reduce my clergy to obedience, while he allowed his clergy to rule him."

Soon after the abolition of the patriarchate, Peter celebrated the marriage of Buturlin, the second *kniaz papa* of his creation, with the widow of Sotov, his predecessor in that mock dignity. The bridegroom was in his eighty-fifth year, and the bride nearly of the same age. The messengers who invited the wedding guests were four stutterers; some decrepit old men attended the bride: the running footmen were four of the most corpulent fellows that could be found; the orchestra was placed on a sledge drawn by bears, which



being goaded with iron spikes made with their horrid roarings an accompaniment suitable to the tunes played on the sledge. The nuptial benediction was given in the cathedral by a blind and deaf priest with spectacles on. The procession, the marriage, the wedding feast, the undressing of the bride and bridegroom, the ceremony of putting them to bed were all in the same style of repulsive buffoonery. Among the coarse-minded courtiers this passed for an ingenious derision of the clergy.

The nobles were another order in the state whose resistance, though more passive than that of the clergy, was equally insufferable to the czar. His hand had always been heavy against that stiff-necked race. He had no mercy upon their indolence and superstition, no toleration for their pride of birth or wealth. As landed proprietors he regarded them merely as the possessors of fiefs, who held them by the tenure of being serviceable to the state. Such was the spirit of the law of 1715 relative to inheritances, which till then had been equally divided; but from that date the real estate was to descend to one of the males, the choice of whom was left to the father, while only the personal property was to pass to the other children. In this respect the law was favourable to paternal authority and aristocracy; but its real purpose was rendered obvious by other clauses. It decreed that the inheritors of personal property should not be permitted to convert it into real estate until after seven years of military service, ten years of civil service, or fifteen years' profession of some kind of art or of commerce. Nay, more, if we may rely on the authority of Perry, every heir of property to the amount of five hundred roubles, who had not learned the rudiments of his native language or of some ancient or foreign language, was to forfeit his inheritance.

The great nobles had ere this been shorn of their train of boyar followers, or noble domestics, by whom they were perpetually attended, and these were transformed into soldiers, disciplined in the European manner. At the same time several thousand cavalry were formed out of the sons of the priests, who were free men, but not less ignorant and superstitious than their fathers. Against the inertia of the nobles, too, Peter made war even in the sanctuary of their families. Every one of them between the ages of ten and thirty, who evaded an enlistment which was termed voluntary, was to have his property confiscated to the use of the person by whom he was denounced. The sons of the nobles were arbitrarily wrested from them; some were placed in military schools; others were sent to unlearn their barbarian manners and acquire new habits and knowledge among polished nations; many of them were obliged to keep up a correspondence with the czar on the subject of what they were learning; on their return, he himself questioned them, and if they were found not to have benefited by their travels, disgrace and ridicule were their punishment. Given up to the czar's buffoon, they became the laughing-stocks of the court, and were compelled to perform the most degrading offices in the palace. These were the tyrannical punishments of a reformer who imagined that he might succeed in doing violence to nature by beginning education at an age when it ought to be completed, and by subjecting grown-up men to chastisements which would scarcely be bearable for children.

It is with reason that Mannstein reproaches Peter with having expected to transform, by travels in polished countries, men who were already confirmed in their habits, and who were steeped to the core in ignorance, sloth, and barbarism. "The greatest part of them," he says, "acquired nothing but vices." This it was which drew upon Peter a lesson from his sage; for such was the appellation which he gave to Dolgoruki. That senator

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having pertinaciously, and without assigning any reason, maintained that the travels of the Russian youth would be useless, made no other reply to an impatient and passionate contradiction from the despot than to fold the ukase in silence, run his nail forcibly along it, and then desire the autocrat to try whether, with all his power, he could ever obliterate the crease that was made in the paper.

At last, by his ukase of January 24th, 1722, Peter annihilated the privileges of the old Russian aristocracy, and under the specious pretext of making merit the only source of social distinction, he created a new order of nobility, divided into eight military and as many civil grades, all immediately and absolutely dependent on the czar. The only favour allowed to the old landed aristocracy was that they were not deprived of the right of appearing at court; but none of them could obtain the rank and appointments of an officer, nor, in any company, the respect and distinctions exclusively belonging to that rank, until they had risen to it by actual service. Such was the fundamental principle of that notorious system called the *tchin*;<sup>1</sup> and plausible as it may appear upon a superficial view, it has been fruitful of nothing but hideous tyranny, corruption, chicanery, and malversation. The modern nobility of Russia is in fact but a vile bureaucracy. The only thing truly commendable in the ukase of 1722 is that it degrades to the level of the rabble every nobleman convicted of crime and sentenced to a punishment that ought to entail infamy. Previously, as the reader has already seen, a nobleman might appear unabashed in public, and claim all the privileges of his birth, with his back still smarting from the executioner's lash.

### *Commerce with the East*

Peter had always encountered great difficulty in attracting to St. Petersburg the commerce of central Russia, which the merchants obstinately persisted in throwing away upon Archangel. Yet at St. Petersburg they enjoyed several privileges, and a milder climate allowed of two freights a year, while at Archangel the ice would admit of only one. To this must be added the advantage of a calmer sea, a better port, lower duties, a much shorter distance, and a much larger concourse of purchasers; but no persuasion could make the Russians abandon the old routine, until at last Peter treated them like ignorant and stubborn children, to whom he would do good in spite of themselves. In 1722 he expressly prohibited the carrying of any goods to Archangel but such as belonged to the district of that government. This ordinance at first raised a great outcry among the traders, both native and foreign, and caused several bankruptcies; but the merchants, accustoming themselves by degrees to come to St. Petersburg, at last found themselves gainers by the change.

The trade with the Mongols and Chinese had been jeopardised by the extortions of Prince Gagarin, the governor of Siberia, and by acts of violence committed by the Russians in Peking and in the capital of Contaish, the prince pontiff of a sect of dissenters from Lamaism. To check the growth of this evil, Peter sent Ismailov, a captain in the guards, to Peking, with presents to the emperor, among which were several pieces of turnery, the work of his own hands. The negotiation was successful; but the Russians soon lost the fruits of it by fresh acts of indiscretion, and were expelled from China by order of Kam-hi. The Russian court alone retained the right of sending a caravan every three years to Peking; but that right again was subsequently lost in

<sup>1</sup> The men who have no *tchin*, the *tchornii narod*, that is, the black people, or blackguards.

consequence of new quarrels. The court finally renounced its exclusive privilege, and granted the subjects leave to trade freely on the Kiakhtha.

#### WAR WITH PERSIA (1722-1724 A.D.)

Peter's attention had long been directed to the Caspian Sea with a view to making it more extensively subservient to the trade of Russia with Persia and central Asia, which as yet had been carried on at Astrakhan alone, through the medium of Armenian factors. Soon after the Peace of Nystad had left the czar free to carry his arms towards the East, a pretext and an opportunity were afforded him for making conquests on the Caspian shores. The Persian Empire was falling to pieces under the hand of the enervated and imbecile Husain Shah. The Lesghians, one of the tributary nations that had rebelled against him, made an inroad into the province of Shirvan, sacked the city of Shemakha, put the inhabitants to the sword, including three hundred Russian traders, and plundered Russian property to the amount of 4,000,000 roubles. Peter demanded satisfaction; the shah was willing to grant it, but pleaded his helpless condition, and entreated the czar to aid him in subduing his rebellious subjects.

This invitation was promptly accepted. Peter set out for Persia on the 15th of May, 1722, his consort also accompanying him on this remote expedition. He fell down the Volga as far as the city of Astrakhan, and occupied himself in examining the works for the canals that were to join the Caspian, Baltic, and White seas, whilst he awaited the arrival of his forces and material of war. His army consisted of twenty-two thousand foot, nine thousand dragoons, and fifteen thousand Cossacks, besides three thousand sailors on board the several vessels, who, in making a descent, could do the duty of soldiers. The cavalry marched by land through deserts, which are frequently without water; and beyond those deserts, they were to pass the mountains of Caucasus, where three hundred men might keep a whole army at bay; but Persia was in such anarchy that anything might be attempted.

The czar sailed above a hundred leagues southward from Astrakhan, as far as the small fortified town of Andreeva, which was easily taken. Thence the Russian army advanced by land into the province of Daghestan; and manifestoes in the Persian and Russian language were everywhere dispersed. It was necessary to avoid giving any offence to the Ottoman Porte, which besides its subjects, the Circassians and Georgians, bordering on this country, had in these parts some considerable vassals, who had lately put themselves under its protection. Among them, one of the principal was Mahmud D'Utmich, who styled himself sultan, and had the presumption to attack the troops of the emperor of Russia. He was totally defeated, and the public account says "his country was made a bonfire."

In the middle of September, Peter reached Derbent, by the Persians and Turks called *Demir-kapu*, i.e. Iron Gate, because it had formerly such a gate towards the south; it is a long narrow town, backed against a steep spur of the Caucasus; and its walls, at the other end, are washed by the sea, which, in stormy weather, is often known to break over them. These walls may be justly accounted one of the wonders of antiquity; they were forty feet high and six broad; flanked with square towers at intervals of fifty feet. The whole work seemed one single piece, being built of a kind of brown free-stone, and a mortar of pounded shells, the whole forming a mass harder than marble itself; it was accessible by sea, but, on the land side, seemed impregnable. Near it were the ruins of an old wall, like that of China, unquestionably built



[1723 A.D.]

in times of the earliest antiquity; it was carried from the Caspian to the Black Sea, and probably was a rampart thrown up by the ancient kings of Persia against the numerous barbarian hordes dwelling between those two seas. There were formerly three or four other Caspian gates at different passages, and all apparently built for the same end; the nations west, east, and north of this sea having ever been formidable barbarians; and from these parts principally issued those swarms of conquerors which subdued Asia and Europe.

On the approach of the Russian army, the governor of Derbent, instead of standing a siege, laid the keys of the city at the emperor's feet — whether it was that he thought the place not tenable against such a force, or that he preferred the protection of the emperor Peter to that of the Afghan rebel Mahmud. Thus the army quietly took possession of Derbent, and encamped along the sea-shore. The usurper Mahmud, who had already made himself master of a great part of Persia, had neglected nothing to be beforehand with the czar and hinder him from getting into Derbent; he raised the neighbouring Tatars, and hastened thither himself; but Derbent was already in the czar's hands.

Peter was unable to extend his conquests further, for the vessels with provisions, stores, horses, and recruits had been wrecked near Astrakhan; and as the unfavourable season had now set in he returned to Moscow and entered it in triumph (January 5th, 1723), though he had no great reason to boast of the success of his ill-planned expedition.

Persia was still divided between Husain and the usurper Mahmud; the former sought the support of the emperor of Russia; the latter feared him as an avenger who would wrest from him all the fruits of his rebellion. Mahmud used every endeavour to stir up the Ottoman Porte against Peter. With this view, he sent an embassy to Constantinople; and the Daghestan princes, under the sultan's protection, having been dispossessed of their dominions by the arms of Russia, solicited revenge. The Divan were also under apprehensions for Georgia, which the Turks considered part of their dominions. The sultan was on the point of declaring war, when the courts of Vienna and Paris diverted him from that measure. The emperor of Germany made a declaration that if the Turks attacked Russia he should be obliged to join in its defence; and the marquis de Bonae, ambassador from France at Constantinople, seconded the German menaces; he convinced the Porte that their own interest required them not to suffer the usurper of Persia to set an example of dethroning sovereigns, and that the Russian Empire had done no more than the sultan should have done.

During these critical negotiations, the rebel Mahmud had advanced to the gates of Derbent, and laid waste all the neighbouring countries, in order to distress the Russians. That part of ancient Hyrcania, now known by the name of Ghilan, was not spared, which so irritated the people that they voluntarily put themselves under the protection of the Russians. Herein they followed the example of the shah himself, who had sent to implore the assistance of Peter the Great; but the ambassador was scarcely on the road ere the rebel Mahmud seized on Ispahan, and the person of his sovereign. Thamaseh, son of the captive shah, escaped, and getting together some troops fought a battle with the usurper. He was not less eager than his father in urging Peter the Great to protect him, and sent to the ambassador a renewal of the instructions which the shah Husain had given.

Though this Persian ambassador, named Ismail Beg, was not yet arrived, his negotiation had succeeded. On his landing at Astrakhan, he heard that

General Matufkin was on his march with fresh troops to reinforce the Daghestan army. The town of Baku, from which the Persians called the Caspian Sea, the sea of Baku, was not yet taken. He gave the Russian general a letter to the inhabitants, exhorting them, in his master's name, to submit to the emperor of Russia; the ambassador continued his journey to St. Petersburg, and General Matufkin went and sat down before the city of Baku. The Persian ambassador reached the czar's court at the same time as the news of the surrender of that city (August, 1723).

Baku is situated near Shemakha, where the Russian factors were massacred; and although in wealth and number of people inferior to it, is very famous for its naphtha, with which it supplies all Persia. Never was treaty sooner concluded than that of Ismail Beg. The emperor Peter, desirous of revenging the death of his subjects, engaged to march an army into Persia, in order to assist Thamaseb against the usurper; and the new shah ceded to him, besides the cities of Baku and Derbent, the provinces of Ghilan, Mazandaran, and Astarabath.

Ghilan, as we have already noticed, is the southern Hyrcania; Mazandaran, which is contiguous to it, is the country of the Mardi; Astarabath borders on Mazandaran; and these were the three principal provinces of the ancient kings of the Medes. Thus Peter by his arms and treaties came to be master of Cyrus' first monarchy; but this proved to be but a barren conquest, and the empress Anna was glad to surrender it thirteen years afterwards in exchange for some commercial advantages.

So calamitous was the state of Persia that the unhappy sophy Thamaseb wandering about his kingdom, pursued by the rebel Mahmud, the murderer of his father and brothers, was reduced to supplicate both Russia and Turkey at the same time, that they would take one part of his dominions to preserve the other for him. At last it was agreed between the emperor Peter, the sultan Achmet III, and the sophy Thamaseb, that Russia should hold the three provinces above mentioned, and that the Porte should have Kasbin, Tauris, and Erivan, besides what it should take from the usurper.

#### LAST YEARS AND DEATH OF PETER

Peter, at his return from his Persian expedition, was more than ever the arbiter of the north. He openly took into his protection the family of Charles XII, after having been eighteen years his declared enemy. He invited to his court the duke of Holstein, that monarch's nephew, to whom he betrothed his eldest daughter, and from that time prepared to assert his rights on the duchy of Schleswig-Holstein, and even bound himself to it in a treaty which he concluded with Sweden (February, 1724). He also obtained from that power the title of royal highness for his son-in-law, which was a recognition of his right to the throne, should King Frederick die without issue. Meanwhile he held Copenhagen in awe of his fleet, and ruled there through fear, as he did in Stockholm and Warsaw.

The state of Peter's health now warned him that his end was near; yet still he delayed to exercise the right of naming a successor, which he had arrogated to himself in 1722. The only step he took which might be interpreted as an indication of his wishes in that respect was the act of publicly crowning his consort Catherine. The ceremony was performed at Moscow (May 18th, 1724) in the presence of the czar's niece, Anna, duchess of Courland, and of the duke of Holstein, his intended son-in-law. The manifesto published by Peter on this occasion deserves notice; after stating that it was customary

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with Christian monarchs to crown their consorts, and instancing among the orthodox Greek emperors Basilides, Justinian, Heraclius, and Leo the Philosopher, he goes on to say:

“It is also known how far we have exposed our own person, and faced the greatest dangers in our country’s cause, during the whole course of the last war, twenty-one years successively, and which, by God’s assistance, we have terminated with such honour and advantage, that Russia never saw a like peace, nor gained that glory which has accrued to it by this war. The empress Catherine, our dearly beloved consort, was of great help to us in all these dangers, not only in the said war but likewise in other expeditions, in which, notwithstanding the natural weakness of her sex, she voluntarily accompanied us, and greatly assisted us with her advice, particularly at the battle of the river Pruth against the Turks, where our army was reduced to 22,000 men, and that of the Turks consisted of 270,000. It was in this desperate exigency that she especially signalised a zeal and fortitude above her sex; and to this all the army and the whole empire can bear witness. For these causes, and in virtue of the power which God hath given us, we have resolved, in acknowledgment of all her fatigues and good offices, to honour our consort with the imperial crown, which, by God’s permission, shall be accomplished this winter at Moscow; and of this resolution we hereby give notice to all our faithful subjects, our imperial affection towards whom is unalterable.”

In this manifesto nothing was said of the empress’ succeeding to the throne; but the nation were in some degree prepared for that event by the ceremony itself, which was not customary in Russia, and which was performed with sumptuous splendour. A circumstance which might further cause Catherine to be looked upon as the presumptive successor was that the czar himself, on the coronation day, walked before her on foot, as first knight of the order of St. Catherine, which he had instituted in 1714 in honour of his consort. In the cathedral he placed the crown on her head with his own hand. Catherine would then have fallen on her knees, but he raised her up, and when she came out of the cathedral the globe and sceptre were carried before her.

It was not long before Peter was with difficulty restrained from sending to the block the head on which he had but lately placed the crown. We have already mentioned that the enmity of his first wife is said to have sprung from her jealousy of Anne de Moens, who was for awhile the czar’s mistress, and whom, as Villebois tells us, he had serious thoughts of raising to the throne. But she submitted to his passion only through fear, and Peter, disgusted with her coldness towards him, left her to follow her inclinations in marrying a less illustrious lover. Five-and-twenty years afterwards Eudoxia was avenged through the brother of her rival. Anne de Moens, then the widow of General Balk, was about the person of Catherine, and the handsome and graceful young Moens de la Croix was her chamberlain. A closer intimacy soon arose between them, and so unguarded were they that Villebois, who saw them together only in public during a very crowded reception at court, says that their conduct was such as left no doubt on his mind that the empress was guilty. The czar’s suspicions were roused, and he set spies upon Catherine.

The court was then at Peterhof; Prince Repnin, president of the war department, slept not far from the czar; it was two o’clock in the morning; all at once the marshal’s door was violently thrown open, and he was startled by abrupt and hasty footsteps: he looked round in astonishment; it was Peter the Great; the monarch was standing by the bedside; his eyes sparkled with rage, and all his features were distorted with convulsive fury. Repnin



tells us that at the sight of that terrible aspect he was appalled, gave himself up for lost, and remained motionless; but his master, with a broken and panting voice, exclaimed to him, "Get up! speak to me! there's no need to dress yourself"; and the trembling marshal obeyed.

He then learned that, but the instant before, guided by too faithful a report, the czar had suddenly entered Catherine's apartment; that the crime was revealed, the ingratitude proved; that at daybreak the empress should lose her head — that the emperor was resolved!

The marshal, gradually recovering his voice, agreed that such a monstrous act of treachery was horrible; but he reminded his master of the fact that the crime was as yet known to no one, and of the impolicy of making it public; then, growing bolder, he dared to call to recollection the massacre of the strelitz, and that every subsequent year had been ensanguined by executions; that, in fine, after the imprisonment of his sister, the condemning of his son to death, and the scourging and imprisonment of his first wife, if he should likewise cut off the head of his second, Europe would no longer look upon him in any other light than that of a ferocious prince, who thirsted for the blood of his subjects and even of those who were a part of himself. Besides, he added, the czar might have satisfaction by giving up Moens to the sword of the law upon other charges; and as to the empress, he could find means to rid himself of her without any prejudice to his glory.

While Repnin was thus advising, the czar, who stood motionless before him, gazed upon him intently and wildly, and kept a gloomy silence. But in a short time, as was the case when he was labouring under strong emotions, his head was twisted to the left side, and his swollen features became convulsively contracted — signs of the terrible struggle by which he was tortured. And yet the excessive working of his mind held his body in a state of frightful immovability. At length, he rushed precipitately out of the chamber into the adjoining room. For two whole hours he hastily paced it; then suddenly entering again like a man who had made up his mind, he said to Repnin, "Moens shall die immediately! I will watch the empress so closely that her first slip shall cost her life!"

Moens and his sister were at once arrested. They were both confined in the winter palace, in an apartment to which none had admission except the emperor himself, who carried them their food. At the same time a report was spread that the brother and the sister had been bribed by the enemies of the country, in hopes of bringing the empress to act upon the mind of the czar prejudicially to the interests of Russia. Moens was interrogated by the monarch in presence of General Uschakov; and after having confessed whatever they pleased, he lost his head on the block (November 27th). At the same time his sister, who was an accomplice in the crime and a favourite of Catherine, received the knout, and was banished to Siberia; her property was confiscated; her two sons were degraded and were sent to a great distance, on the Persian frontier, as private soldiers.

Moens walked to meet his fate with manly firmness. He always wore a diamond bracelet, on which was a miniature of Catherine; but, as it was not perceived at the time of his being seized, he found means to conceal it under his garter; and when he was on the scaffold he confided this secret to the Lutheran pastor who accompanied him, and under cover of his cloak slipped the bracelet into his hand to restore it to the empress.

The czar was a spectator of the punishment of Moens from one of the windows of the senate. The execution being over, he got upon the scaffold, took the head of Moens by the hair, and expressed with brutal energy how

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delighted he was with the vengeance he had taken. The same day Peter had the cruelty to conduct Catherine in an open carriage round the stake on which was fixed the head of her unfortunate lover. He watched her countenance attentively, but fortunately she had self-command enough not to betray her grief. Reppin adds that, from that dreadful night till his death, Peter never more spoke to the empress except in public, and that, in his dwelling, he always remained separate from her.<sup>e</sup>

Peter the Great lived only to his fifty-third year. In spite of frequent attacks of illness and of his calling himself an old man, the emperor might have hoped to live yet a long while and to be able to dispose of his great inheritance in accordance with the interests of the state. But his days were already numbered. When Peter came to St. Petersburg in March, 1723, on his return from Persia, he appeared in much better health than before the campaign; in the summer of 1724 he became very weak, but in the second half of September he grew visibly better, walked at times in his gardens, and sailed on the Neva. On the 22nd of September he had a very severe attack; it is said that he fell into such a state of irritation that he struck the doctors and called them asses; afterwards he again became better, and on the 29th of September he was present at the launching of a frigate, although he told the Dutch minister Wild that he still felt rather weak. In spite of this he set off in the beginning of October to inspect the Ladoga canal, against the advice of his doctor Blumentrost; then he went to the Olonetz iron works and hammered out with his own hands a bar of iron of the weight of three pounds;<sup>1</sup> from there he went to Staryá Rusa to inspect the salt works, and in the beginning of November he went by water to St. Petersburg. But there, at a place called Lakta, he saw that a boat coming from Konstadt with soldiers had run aground; he allowed no one to restrain him, but went himself to their assistance and helped to float the boat and save the people, standing up to his waist in the water. The attacks were speedily renewed; Peter arrived at St. Petersburg ill and could not regain his health; the affair of Mons also aggravated his condition. He occupied himself but little with affairs, although he showed himself as usual in public. On the 17th of January, 1725, the malady increased; Peter ordered that a movable church should be constructed near his sleeping room and on the 22nd he made his confession and received the sacrament; his strength began to leave him, he no longer cried out as before from the violence of the pain but only groaned. On the 27th all criminals were pardoned who had been condemned to death or to the galleys according to the articles of war, excepting those guilty of the first two offences against the law — murder and repeated robbery: the noblemen who had not appeared at the military reviews at the appointed time were also pardoned. On that day, at the expiration of the second hour, Peter asked for paper and tried to write, but the pen fell out of his hand: of that which he had written only the words "give up everything" could be deciphered; he then ordered his daughter Anna Petrovna to be called so that she might write under his dictation, but he could not pronounce the words. The following day, the 28th of January, at the beginning of the sixth hour after midnight, Peter the Great was no more. Catherine was almost unceasingly with him, and it was she who closed his eyes.

In terrible physical sufferings, in full recognition of the weakness of humanity, asking for the comfort afforded by religion, died the greatest of historical workers. We have already spoken in the proper place of how the work of

<sup>1</sup> A poud contains forty Russian pounds, or about thirty-six pounds avoirdupois.

Peter was prepared by all preceding history; how it necessarily proceeded from the same; how it was required by the people, who by means of a tremendous revolution in their existence and customs, by means of an extraordinary effort of strength, had to be brought forth from their hopeless condition into a new way, a new life. But this in nowise diminishes the greatness of the man who in the accomplishment of so difficult an exploit lent his mighty hand to a great nation, and by the extraordinary power of his will strained all her forces and gave direction to the movement.

#### SOLOVIEV'S ESTIMATE OF PETER'S WORK

Revolutionary epochs constitute a critical time for the life of nations, and such was the epoch of the reformation of Peter. Complaints of the great

burdens were to be heard from all sides — and not without cause. The Russian knew no rest from recruiting: recruiting for painful, ceaseless military service in the infantry, and for the newly created naval service; recruiting of workmen for new and difficult labour in distant and unattractive places; recruiting of scholars for the schools, and of young men to be sent to study abroad. For the army and for the fleet, for the great works and undertakings, for the schools and the hospitals, for the maintenance of diplomats and diplomatic bribery, money was necessary. But there was no money in the impoverished state, and heavy taxes in money and in kind had to be levied upon all; in necessary cases they were deducted from the salaries; well-to-do people were ruined by the construction of houses in St. Petersburg; everything that could be taken was taken, or farmed out; the poor people had one object of luxury — oak coffins; but these were confiscated by the fiscus and sold at a high price; *raskolniki* (dissenters) had to pay double taxes; the bearded had to pay for the privilege of wearing their beards.



A BASHKIRIAN WOMAN

Orders upon orders were issued; men were to seek for ores and minerals, and for dye-stuffs; they were to tend their sheep not as they had previously done, to dress the skins differently, to build boats in a new way, to dare weave no narrow pieces of cloth, to take their goods to the west instead of to the north.<sup>1</sup> New government centres were created, new courts established, the people did not know where to turn, the members of these new institutions and courts did not know how to go about their novel duties, and official papers were sent from one place to another.

The standing army pressed heavily on the unarmed population. People tried to escape from the hard service and hide themselves, but all were not

[<sup>1</sup> That is, to St. Petersburg instead of to Archangel.]



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successful, and cruel punishments threatened the disobedient. Illiterate nobles were forbidden to marry. Meanwhile beneath the new French frocks and wigs there was the old coarseness of manners; the same want of respect for human dignity in oneself and in others; the same hideous drunkenness and noisy brawling with which every festivity was terminated. Woman was brought into the society of men, but she was not surrounded with the respect due to her sex and obligations; pregnant women were made to drink to excess. The members of the highest institutions quarrelled and abused each other in the coarsest manner; bribery was as bad as before; the weak were subjected to every violence from the strong, and, as formerly, the noble was permitted to oppress the *moujik* (peasant), the well-born the base-born.

But this is only one side: there is another. The people were passing through a hard school — the stern teacher was not sparing in punishments for the idle and those who violated the regulations; but the matter was not limited to threats and punishments alone. The people were really learning, learning not only figures and geometry, not only in Russian and foreign schools; the people were learning the duties of citizens, the work of citizens. At the emission of every important regulation, at the inauguration of every great reform, the lawgiver explains why he acts thus, why the new is better than the old. The Russians then received such instruction for the first time; what now seems to us so simple and within the reach of all was first learned by these people from the edicts and manifestoes of Peter the Great.

For the first time the mind of the Russian was awakened, his attention directed to the great questions of political and social organisation; whether he turned sympathisingly or unsympathisingly to the words and deeds of the czar was a matter of indifference — he was obliged to think over these words and deeds, and they were continually there to arouse him. That which might have ruined a decrepit society, a people incapable of development — the shocks of the epoch of reforms, the utter restlessness — developed the forces of a vigorous young nation which had been long asleep and required a violent shock to awaken it. And there was much to be learned. Above was the governing senate, the synod; everywhere was collegiate organisation, the advantages of which were set forth in the church statutes. Everywhere the principle of election was introduced. The trade guilds were withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the local governors and given their own independent administration. Peter's whole system of government was directed against the chief evils from which ancient Russia had suffered: the immaturity of forces, the want of a public spirit, the lack of independence of action, the absence of initiative capacity. The former council of the czar (*douma*) had suffered from all the deficiencies enumerated. Peter established the senate, to which fidelity had to be sworn and the ukases of which had to be obeyed as the ukases of the czar himself. Peter was not jealous of the power created



A PEASANT OF LITTLE RUSSIA

by him: he did not limit it; but on the contrary he continually and without ceremony required that it should profit by its importance, that it should really be a governing body. Peter's reproaches and rebukes to the senate were directed against its slowness, its languor, its want of management, and its inability to carry its decrees into immediate effect. The Russian of former times who had received a commission from the government went about in leading strings. He was not trusted, his smallest movement was feared, he was swathed like a child in long detailed instructions, and upon every fresh occasion that presented itself and was not defined in the instructions, the grown up child required teaching. This habit of asking for orders greatly angered Peter: "Act according to your own consideration, how can I tell you from such a distance!" he wrote to those who asked him for instructions. He employed the collegiate system — whether he had met with it in the west or whether it had been advised by Leibnitz is a matter of indifference; he employed it everywhere as the most powerful method of training the Russian people to unrestrained public activity. Instead of separate individuals, institutions came to the front, and over all rose the state, the real significance of which the people of Russia now learned for the first time when they had to take the oath.

Having set forth the importance of the state, and demanding that heavy sacrifices should be made, to this new divinity, himself giving the example, he nevertheless took measures that the individual should not be crushed, but should receive the requisite, balancing development. The first place must here naturally be given to the civilisation introduced by Peter, to the acquaintance with other nations in advance of Russia. We know that before the time of Peter the bond of the family was powerfully maintained in Russia; its prolonged existence is easily explained by the condition of society, which was unable to safeguard its members, and who were therefore obliged to seek security in private associations, chief among which was the natural blood relationship between members of the same family or clan. The elder protected the younger, and had power over them because they had to answer to the government for them. It was thus in every sphere of society; the independent Russian never presented himself alone, but always accompanied by his brothers and nephews; to be without clan and family was equivalent to being in the utmost poverty. It is easy to understand that the clan association hindered the development of personality; the state could not give to personal merit power over clan rights; jealous to the last degree of any insult to the honour of his clan, the ancient Russian was indifferent to his own personal honour. But by the end of the seventeenth century the demands of the state had so increased that the unity of the clan could not withstand them, and the destruction of precedence (*meshchestvo*) struck a blow to the clan bond in the highest class of society, among those in the service of the czar. The reform of Peter struck a final blow by its decided, exclusive attention to personal merit, by raising persons "above their old parents" (that is, their kinsfolk), by bringing into the service a large number of foreigners; it became advantageous for new men to appear to have no clan relations, and many of them began willingly to trace their origin from foreign countries.

As to the lower ranks of the population, the blow to the clan bond was brought about by the poll-tax; the former expression, "such a one with his brothers and nephews," began to disappear, for the brothers and nephews had to pay separately each for himself, and appeared as separate, independent individuals. And not only did the former clan relations disappear,

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but even within the family itself, while requiring the deepest respect from children to their parents,<sup>1</sup> Peter recognised the right of the individual, and enjoined that marriages should be celebrated by the agreement of the children, and not by the will of their parents; the right of the person was also recognised in the bond-servant, for the landowner had to swear that he would not compel his peasants to marry against their will. We have heard the dispassionate declaration of a contemporary Russian as to the corruption of persons in the service of the czars in the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, of their indifference to honour, so that amongst them the shameful saying was current: "Flight may be dishonourable, but it is salutary." Under Peter this saying was extirpated, and he himself testified that in the second half of the Northern War flight from the field of battle had ceased. Finally the personality of woman was recognised in consequence of her liberation from the *ter.m.*<sup>2</sup>

Thus were the people of Russia trained in the stern school of reform. The terrible labour and privations they endured were not in vain. A vast and comprehensive programme was traced out for many future years, not on paper but on the earth which must open up its riches to the Russian, who through science had acquired the full right of disposing of it; on the sea, where the Russian fleet had now appeared; on the rivers, united by canals; it was traced out in the state by the new institutions and regulations; it was traced out in the people by the new civilisation, by the enlarging of its mental sphere, by the rich stores of mental food furnished by the west, now disclosed to his view, and by the new world created within Russia herself. The greater part of all this was only in its beginnings; the rest in rough outline — for much only the materials were prepared, only indications made; and therefore we have called the work of the epoch of reform a programme, which Russia is fulfilling until now, and will continue to fulfil, and any deviation from which has always been accompanied by grievous consequences.

Clearly recognising that the Russian people must pass through a hard school, Peter did not hesitate to subject it to the painful, humiliating position of a pupil; but at the same time he succeeded in balancing the disadvantages of such a position by glory and greatness: in converting it into an active one, he succeeded both in creating the political importance of Russia and the means for its maintenance. A difficult problem presented itself to Peter; for the education of the Russian people it was necessary to call in foreign instructors, directors who naturally endeavoured to subject their pupils to their influence, to set themselves above them; but this humiliated the pupils, of whom Peter wished to make masters as soon as possible. He did not give way to the temptation, did not accept proposals to carry the work to a speedy success with the aid of learned foreigners; he desired that his own Russian subjects should pass through an active, practical school, even though it might occasion great losses and be accompanied by great discomforts. We have seen how he hastened to rid himself of a foreign field-marshal, how he put Russians in all the highest positions and foreigners only in secondary ones; and we have also seen how he was rewarded for his faith in his people and his devotion to it.

It was with the same uncommon caution, with the skill required for remaining within due bounds that Peter solved the difficult problem of church

<sup>1</sup> Peter's own words were as follows: "Those who do not respect them that have given them life are most ungrateful creatures, and ingratitude is the most abominable of all vices," — ГОЛЖКОВ.<sup>m</sup>

[<sup>2</sup> The separate female apartments, corresponding to the Attic *γυναϊκῶν*.]



reform. He destroyed unipersonal government and replaced it by the collegiate or council system, which fully corresponded with the spirit of the eastern church; we have seen that one of Peter's chief cares was to raise the Russian clergy by means of education; in spite of his strong and comprehensible aversion to monasticism he did not abolish this institution as did Henry VIII of England — he only tried to give it a greater activity corresponding to its character.

From whatever point of view we study the epoch of reforms, we must fall into wonderment both at the mental and physical powers of Peter. Powers are developed by their exercise, and we do not know of any historical worker whose sphere of activity was so vast. Born with an unusually wide-awake intellect, Peter cultivated this quickness of perception to the highest degree. From his youth he listened and looked to everything himself, was not guided or restricted by anyone, but was excited and aroused by the state of society, already then on the threshold of changes and hesitating between two directions, agitated by the question of the old and new, when by the side of ancient Moscow the advance guard of the west, the German suburb, was already in view. Peter's nature was cast in the old Russian heroic mould; he loved breadth and scope; this explains the fact that besides his conscious attraction for the sea he had also an unconscious attraction for it: the heroes of ancient Russia yearned for the wide steppes — the new hero yearned after the broad ocean; places shut in by mountains were displeasing and wearisome to him. Thus he complained to his wife of the situation of Karlsbad: "This place is so merry that it might almost be called an honorable prison, for it is so squeezed in between mountains that the sun can hardly be seen." In another letter he calls Karlsbad a hole in the ground.

To the powers of a hero of ancient times corresponded passions not moderated by any regular, skilful education. We are aware to what lengths the unbridled passions of a vigorous man could be carried in ancient Russian society, unrestrained as it was by due bounds: how then could such a society put a check upon the passions of a man who stood at the very summit of power? But an observant contemporary woman has very justly declared with regard to Peter that he was both a very good and a very bad man. Without denying or diminishing the dark side of Peter the Great's character, let us not forget the brighter side, which outweighed the dark and was able to attach people so strongly to him. If his wrath burst forth at times so terribly against those whom he regarded as the enemies of the country and of the general welfare, yet he attached to himself strongly, and was strongly attached to persons of opposite tendencies.

An unusual greatness, joined to the recognition of the insignificance of mere human intellect, a stern insistence on the fulfilment of duties, a stern demand for truth, the capacity of listening to the harshest objections, an extraordinary simplicity, sociability, and kind heartedness — all these qualities powerfully attached to Peter the best of the men who had occasion to come in contact with him; and it is therefore easy to understand the impression produced upon them by the news of the death of the great emperor. Nepluev writes as follows: "In the month of February, of the year 1725, I received the lamentable news that the father of the country, the emperor Peter I had departed this life. I watered this paper with my tears, both out of duty to my sovereign and in remembrance of his many kindnesses and favours to me; verily I do not lie when I say that I was unconscious for more than twenty-four hours, for it would have been sinful for me to have been otherwise. This monarch brought our country into equality with others;

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he taught us to know that we, too, are men; in a word, whatever you look upon in Russia was all begun by him, and whatever will be done in future will be drawn from the same source; as to me personally, above what I have already written, the sovereign was a good and merciful father. May the Lord grant to his soul, which laboured so greatly for the common good, rest with the righteous!"

Another person who was in close contact with Peter (Nartov) says: "If it should ever happen to a philosopher to look through the archives of Peter's secret acts, he would shudder with horror at what was done against the monarch. We who were the servants of that great sovereign sigh and shed tears, when we sometimes hear reproaches against the hard-heartedness and cruelty which were not in reality to be met with in him. If many knew what he endured and by what sorrows he was cut to the heart, if they knew how indulgent he was to the weaknesses of humanity and how he forgave crimes that did not deserve mercy they would be amazed. And although Peter the Great is no longer with us, yet his spirit lives in our souls, and we, who had the felicity of being near this monarch, shall die faithful to him, and the ardent love we had for our earthly god will be buried together with us. We are not afraid to proclaim the deeds of our father, in order that a noble fearlessness and truth shall be learned from them." <sup>i</sup>

#### KOSTOMAROV'S ESTIMATE OF PETER

As an historical character Peter presents an original phenomenon, not only in the history of Russia but in the history of all humanity, of all ages and all nations. The immortal Shakespeare by his artistic genius created in Hamlet an inimitable type of a man in whom reflection takes the ascendancy over his will and does not permit him to give substance or effect to his desires and intentions. In Peter not the genius of the artist, understanding the meaning of human nature, but nature herself created the opposite type — that of a man with an irresistible, indefatigable will in whom every thought was at once transformed into action. "I will it, because I count it good, and what I will must infallibly be" — such was the device of the whole life and work of this man.

He was distinguished by an aptitude and enterprise unattainable for ordinary mortals. Not having received any regular education, he wished to know everything and was obliged to study a great deal; however, the Russian czar was gifted with such a wealth of capacities that even with his short preparation he astounded persons who had spent their lives over what Peter only studied by the way. All that he learned he endeavoured to apply in Russia in order to transform her into a mighty European state. This was the thought that he cherished sincerely and wholly during the continuation of his entire life. Peter lived at a time when it was impossible for Russia to remain in the



A KABARDINTIAN

same beaten track, but must necessarily enter upon the path of renovation. Being gifted with mental clear-sightedness, he recognised this necessity of his fatherland and set about the task with all the force of his gigantic will.

Peter's autocracy, inherited from his forefathers, helped him more than anything. He created the army and the fleet, although for this was required an innumerable multitude of human sacrifices and the fruits of many years of national labour. All was offered by the people for this object, although the people itself did not clearly understand it and therefore did not desire it; but everything was given because the czar wished it. Incredible taxes were imposed, hundreds of thousands of the healthy young generation were sent to the war or to hard and painful labour never to return again. The people were ruined and impoverished in order that Russia might gain the sea, that she might extend her frontiers and organise an army capable of being measured against its neighbours. The Russians had grown attached to their ancient manners and customs, they hated everything foreign; immersed in outward forms of piety, they showed an aversion to the sciences. The autocratic czar compelled them to adopt foreign dress, to study foreign sciences, to disdain the customs of their forefathers, and to forswear their most sacred traditions. And the Russians mastered themselves; they were obedient because it was the wish of their autocratic sovereign.

During the whole of his reign Peter struggled against the prejudices and evil nature of his subjects and dependants; he prosecuted embezzlers of the public funds, takers of bribes, imposters, and lamented that things were not done in Russia as he could have wished. His partisans sought and even now seek to find in all this the cause of the obdurate vices and defects of the ancient Russian. But looking into the matter dispassionately, it follows that much must be ascribed to the character of Peter's action. It is impossible to make a man happy against his own will or to force his nature. History shows us that, in a despotically ruled society, the vices that chiefly hinder the fulfilment of the most laudable and salutary preconceived designs of the power are most frequently and saliently manifested. What were the measures that Peter employed for bringing his great reforms to fulfilment? The tortures of the Preobrajenski Edict and the secret chancery, sentences of a painful death, prisons, the galleys, the knout, the tearing of the nostrils, espionage, the encouragement by rewards of informers. It is comprehensible that by such means Peter could inoculate neither civil courage, nor the feeling of duty, nor that love for one's neighbour which is above all material or intellectual forces and more powerful than knowledge itself; in a word, although he established a multitude of institutions and created a new political organisation for Russia, yet Peter was not able to create a living, new Russia.

Possessed by the abstract idea of the state and sacrificing to this idea the temporary prosperity of the people, Peter did not act sincerely by the people. For him they only existed as the ciphers in a total — as the material good for the construction of the edifice of the state. He valued the Russian people as far as they were necessary to him in creating soldiers, masons, excavators, sailors; or, by their laboriously earned kopeck, in furnishing him with means for the maintenance of the state mechanism. Peter himself by his personality might serve as a model for the people he ruled over and transformed only in his boundless, untiring love of work; but in nowise by the moral qualities of his character. He did not even endeavour to restrain his passions, which not unfrequently led him to furious outbursts and bloody actions, although he severely punished like actions in those he ruled over. Peter allowed drunkenness and double dealing in himself, yet he prosecuted these



[1725 A.D.]

same vices in his subjects. Many shocking actions that he committed have been justified by the sophisms of political necessity. To what an extent his ferocity and bloodthirstiness were carried is shown by the fact that he was not afraid to lower his royal dignity by taking upon himself the office of hangman during the time of the savage execution of the strelitz. Throughout his reign a bloody vapour arose from those who were tortured and put to death in accordance with the Preobrajenski Edict and contaminated the air of Russia, but it evidently did not trouble the slumbers of her sovereign.

Peter himself justified his cruel punishments by the requirements of justice, but facts prove that he was not equally inflexible in his justice to all and did not set an example to others in the indulgence he showed to his favourite, Menshikov, at whose hands such iniquities were committed as would have cost others their lives. His own outward political actions were not distinguished by irreproachable integrity and rectitude: the Northern War can never be justified from the point of view of justice. It is also impossible to call honourable the expedient Peter made use of with the English king George when, in spite of the clearest evidence, he assured him of his devotion and non-participation in the pretender's designs. How far Peter respected the rights of neighbouring foreign nations when he had no reason to fear them is shown by his savage behaviour to the unit monks of Polosk — an action for which he himself would have probably punished by death any one of his subjects who had thus dared to take the law into his own hands in a foreign land.

All the dark sides of Peter's character may of course be easily excused by the features of the age in which he lived; it may justly be pointed out to us that for the greater part such traits are also to be found in the characters of his contemporaries. It remains indubitable that Peter surpassed the sovereigns contemporary with him by the vastness of his intellect and by his untiring love of work; but in moral respects he was not better than many of them; and it was for this reason that the society which he wished to re-create did not rise superior to those societies which were governed by Peter's contemporaries. Until Peter's reign Russia was plunged in ignorance; and, boasting of her bigoted, ceremonial piety, glorified herself with the name of the New Israel, whilst in reality she was by no means a "new Israel." By his despotic measures Peter created out of her a monarchy that was a terror to foreigners by her army and fleet; he communicated to the upper class of her people the outward marks of European civilisation; yet Russia after Peter did not in reality become the "new Israel" that she had desired to be before his time.

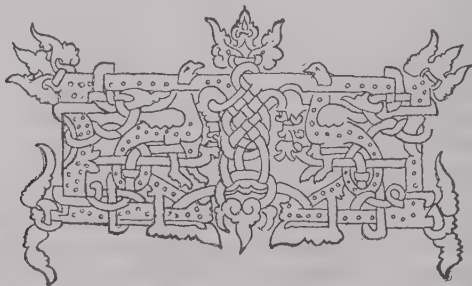
All Peter's pupils, the men of new Russia who outlived him, were entangled in their own snares; following their own egotistical aims, they perished on the scaffold or in exile, and the Russian public man adopted in his conscience the rule that he might do anything he found profitable, although it might be immoral, justifying himself by the fact that other nations did the same. Yet, in spite of all this, as a historical royal worker Peter has preserved for us in his personality such an exalted moral trait that it involuntarily draws our heart to him; this trait is his devotion to the ideal to which he wholly consecrated his soul during all his lifetime. He loved Russia, loved the Russian people, loved it in the sense of the mass of Russian men who were his contemporaries and subjects in the sense of that ideal to which he desired to bring his people; and this love constitutes in him that great quality which incites us, beyond our own will, to love his personality, setting aside both his bloody tribunal and all his demoralising despotism reflecting a baneful influence even on posterity. Because of Peter's love for the ideal of the Russian people, the

Russians will love Peter until he himself loses the national ideal, and for the sake of this love they will forgive him all that a heavy burden has laid upon his memory.<sup>d</sup>

#### HAXTAUSEN'S ESTIMATE OF PETER'S INFLUENCE

From the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries a national spirit dominated entirely. Moreover, Russian sovereigns had, for many years, perceived that the people were behind other nations who had sprung into being as late as themselves or who were inferior either in origin or in physical or intellectual faculties. To remedy this tardy growth they conceived it necessary to put themselves into direct contact with the west in order to borrow its light and imitate its progress. The best way of accomplishing this was, they thought, to get as many foreigners as possible into the country to train the young; to give the state new institutions, and remodel the old on western principles. Ivan Vasilievitch had already drawn a crowd of foreigners, and particularly Germans; had even tried to put his army on a European footing. The successors of the Romanov branch followed zealously in this path, but no prince felt more strongly than Peter I the necessity of letting Russia take a foremost place in Europe. His quick impetuous nature detested slow and incomplete measures. To him, to sow without reaping, or prune without tasting the fruits, was labour provoking all his repugnance.

The impetus he gave Russia is that in which she still continues. Everywhere in the public and social life of this people is to be noticed the impulse he gave. It is an accomplished fact that no human power can annul; so all inquiry to find out if this impetus was necessary and favourable to Russia would be inopportune and sterile. There is, however, no doubt that in Peter's haste in his work of reform he did not sufficiently consider national things both great and good; that he introduced a crowd of foreign innovations, some mediocre, some positively bad, without pausing to think whether they were suitable to the climate, the established order of things, or if they would fit in harmoniously with Russian nationality.<sup>i</sup>





## CHAPTER VII

### CATHERINE I TO PETER III

[1725-1762 A.D.]

CATHERINE I (1725-1727 A.D.)

At the death of Peter the Great two powerful parties were arrayed against each other, one supporting his youthful grandson Alexievitch, and the other advancing the claims of Catherine, the Livonian. The Galitzins, the Dolgoruki, Repnins, and all Old Russia wished to crown Peter's son, Alexis; but those who owed their elevation to Peter I, or had been involved in the suit against his son, as well as the members of the tribunal that had condemned the czarevitch, felt that their only hope of safety lay in raising Catherine to the throne. This party, counting among its numbers the most capable and enlightened men, still held the highest authority in the administration and in the army, and its adversaries felt that a compromise was the most that they could expect. Dmitri Galitzin proposed to proclaim Peter II, but only under the guardianship of the widowed empress.

Tolstoi combated this proposition by showing that it was the surest method of arming parties against each other, of furnishing hostile factions a pretext for inciting the people to rebellion against the regent. He demonstrated that in the absence of the testamentary disposition she had the best right to succeed Peter I; furthermore, she had been solemnly crowned, had received the oath of allegiance from her subjects, had been initiated into all the state secrets, and had learned from her husband the art of reigning. The officers and regiments of the guards declared energetically in favour of the heroine of Pruth, and it was finally decided that she should reign alone, with an authority as absolute as that of her dead husband. This was a greater novelty in Russia than the regency of Sophia; Catherine was not only a woman, but a foreigner, a captive, and a second wife, scarcely to be considered as a wife at all. Many were the protests against a decision which excluded from the throne the grandson of Peter the Great, and certain of the *raskolniks* submitted to the torture rather than swear allegiance to a woman.

Menshikov, one of Catherine's earlier lovers, now became all-powerful. He stopped the suit for mal-administration that the late czar had commenced against him, and obtained for himself Baturin, the former capital of Mazeppa, which was equivalent to the principality of Ukraine. His despotic and evil character rendered him odious to his companions and discord everywhere



broke out among the "caglets" of Peter the Great. Iagushinski publicly lamented on the tomb of the czar, and Tolstoi was later exiled to Siberia. Catherine, however, restrained the ambition of her favourite and refused to sacrifice her other councillors to him.

Catherine's rule, which was a continuation of that of Peter the Great, gave the lie to the pessimistic predictions that had announced the abandonment of St. Petersburg and the fleet, and the return to Moscow. The greater part of the plans for reform entertained by the czar were put in execution. The Academy of Sciences was inaugurated in 1726, the publication of the *Gazette* was carefully supervised, the order of Alexander Nevski, originated by Peter, was founded, the Danish captain Böhling was placed at the head of the Kamchatka scientific expedition, Chasirov, recalled from exile, was commanded to write the history of Peter the Great, and Anna Petrovna was solemnly married to the duke of Holstein, to whom she had been affianced by her father. On the other hand the senate and the holy synod lost their title of Directors, and the affairs of state were given into the hands of the secret high council which sat under the presidency of the empress and was composed of Menshikov, the admiral Apraxin, the chancellor Golovkin, Tolstoi, Dmitri Galitzin, and the vice-chancellor Ostermann.

On her deathbed Catherine designated as her successor Peter Alexievitch, the grandson of her husband, and in default of Peter her two daughters Anna of Holstein and Elizabeth. Pending the majority of the youthful emperor the regency was to be conducted by a council composed of Anna and Elizabeth, the duke of Holstein, Menshikov, Apraxin, Golovkin, Ostermann, and others; but Menshikov after the first sitting took the duties of regent upon himself.

#### PETER II (1727-1730 A.D.)

The empress died on the 17th of May, 1727, and on the following day the nobility and clergy assembled in the palace to be present at the reading of the will by which Peter was made emperor of all the Russias. Menshikov had taken measures to retain his high position and even to increase his power under the new reign. With the design of removing all those who might be detrimental to him he banished Apraxin from court, sent Iagushinski to Ukraine and despatched Makaroy on a mission to the mines of Siberia. Menshikov had further obtained Catherine's consent to the betrothal of his daughter to the young prince. He gave his own palace as a residence for the emperor and surrounded him with men on whose devotion he could count. He assumed the title of generalissimo and signed his letters to his sovereign "your father." He caused the members of his own family to be inscribed in the almanac beside those of the imperial house, and had his daughters mentioned in the public prayers; he also planned to obtain the hand of Peter's sister, Natalia Alexievna, for his son in addition to marrying his daughter to the emperor.

Peter II soon began to chafe under the rule of the generalissimo. Menshikov had appointed Ostermann to be his tutor, but the young prince hated study and preferred to spend his days hunting with his favourite, Ivan Dolgoruki. The adroit Ostermann excused himself to the prince for the disagreeable nature of his pedagogic duties, and contrived to cast all the blame on Menshikov. The emperor one day sent a present of 9,000 ducats to his sister Natalia, and Menshikov insolently confiscated them with the remark that the "emperor was too young to know the proper use of money." Peter

[1728 A.D.]

II rebelled at this and it was with difficulty that the prince appeased him. The generalissimo had another enemy in the person of Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great and aunt of Peter II. She was seventeen years old at the time, gay, careless, and lively, with a bright complexion and blue eyes; her laughter drove the insupportable tutor from his office.

An illness which overtook Menshikov and kept him absent for a time from court prepared his downfall: Peter II accustomed himself to the idea of getting rid of him. When the prince returned and began again to oppose the young ruler's wishes the latter left Menshikov's house, caused all the crown furniture to be removed from it to the imperial palace, treated his affianced wife with marked coldness, and finally gave orders to the guards that they were to obey no commands save those given by their colonels. This was the prelude to an overwhelming disgrace; in September, 1727, Menshikov was arrested, stripped of all his dignities and decorations, and banished to his own lands.

The Dolgorukis profited by the revolution they had caused. They fell, however, into Menshikov's error and oppressed the prince with the same officious care. Like Menshikov they banished all who gave them offence, even Ostermann for whom Peter began to feel affection, and the old czarina, Eudoxia Lapukhin, who had been liberated from the prison in Ladoga. Advancing as a pretext certain placards in which the services of Menshikov were extolled, they exiled the latter to Berezhov, in Siberia, where he died in 1729. Taking no lesson by his example they imposed on the prince a new bride, Catherine Dolgoruki, sister of his favourite, Ivan. Their administration bore all the character of a reaction against the reforms instituted by Peter the Great.

In 1728, when the young emperor went to Moscow for his coronation, he was warmly received by the people. Ostermann, however, and all the other faithful servants of the "giant czar" were chagrined at the return of the court to Moscow and its indifference to European affairs in general. In order to gain more complete possession of their master the Dolgoruki encouraged his taste for dissipation and took him away on hunting expeditions that lasted weeks at a time. Peter would certainly have grown as weary of them as he had of Menshikov: and to the complaints of his aunt Elizabeth that she was left without money he had already replied: "It is not my fault: they do not execute my orders; but I shall find means to break my chains." The crisis came about in a different manner from what had been expected; the young emperor caught cold while attending the ceremony of the benediction of the waters, and died of small-pox at the age of fourteen years and four months. The two reigns of Catherine and Peter II, which lasted in all about five years, were peaceful.

In 1726 Russia had concluded an alliance with the court of Vienna and in 1727 it became involved in the war of the Quadruple Alliance. Despite the efforts of Camille de Camille and Kurakin the failure of the project of marriage between Louis XV and Elizabeth had brought about coolness between France and Russia. The most remarkable episode of the foreign relations was the attempt of Maurice of Saxony, illegitimate son of King Augustus, to obtain possession of the duchy of Courland. The offer of his hand had been accepted by the widowed Anna Ivanovna, and he had been elected at Mittau by the deputies of the nobility. Disregarding the protestations of Prussia, Russia, and the Polish diet, he levied a body of troops with the money raised by the sale of the jewels belonging to an abbess of Quedlinburg, a certain French actress, his mother Aurora of Königsberg, and Adrienne Lecouvreur, and set

about putting his duchy in a state of defence. His father disavowed him and Cardinal Fleury did not venture to support him even indirectly. Menshikov, restored to greater liberty since the death of Catherine I, himself laid claims to the duchy. He despatched Lacy at the head of eight thousand men to drive out the Saxon adventurer. The future victor of Fontenoy could get together no more than 247, and was obliged to swim across an arm of the sea in his retreat. His election was annulled, his father publicly reviled him as a *galopin*, or rascal, and Courland came once more under Russian influence.

During the reign of Peter II a treaty was signed with Prussia by virtue of which the two powers pledged themselves to sustain, on the death of Augustus II, the candidate they might choose for Poland. The emperor Charles VI and the "sergeant king" sounded Russia as to the eventual dismemberment of the Polish Republic. This was not the first time that the question of partition was brought forward. In Asia, Iagushinski concluded on the Bura a treaty of commerce with the Celestial Empire in the name of Peter II, by the terms of which Russian caravans could journey to Peking every three years and could carry on their trade toll-free. Russia was also to have the privilege of keeping four priests and six young men in Peking to learn Chinese. Kiakhtha on the Russian territory and Maimatchin on the Chinese were to be the authorised depots.

The death of Peter II was universally regretted in Russia. During his reign, the empire enjoyed tranquillity at home and peace abroad; and he discovered such excellent qualities for government that the people looked forward to enjoying under his rule a period of freedom and prosperity such as



PRINCE ALEXANDER MENSHIKOV

they had never before experienced. There is no doubt, however, that if he had survived his own good intentions would have been perverted by those advisers who had obtained so strong a hold upon his mind. His predilection for Moscow had already produced serious injury to the maritime affairs of St. Petersburg: the fleet and the army suffered severely by his continued absence from the capital; and had he lived to complete the change by which he meditated Russia must have ultimately lost, by the neglect of her great station on the Neva, the national consequence she had maintained amongst the states of Europe during the two previous reigns. It was evident, also, that he would gradually have discouraged the residence of foreigners in his dominions; and that the old families were acquiring such power at court that they would finally have succeeded in restoring those national usages which had been set aside by Peter the Great. If the people, therefore, were deprived on the one hand of the temporary advantages of a tranquil reign, Russia on the other was preserved from the risk of permanent evils.

Disappointed in their expectations of an alliance with the emperor, the Dalgorki did not wholly relinquish their hopes of securing some advantage by their position. The young Dalgorki, impatient of delay, forged a testa-



[1730 A.D.]

ment in the name of Peter II, in which Catherine Dalgorki was named as the successor to the throne. With this instrument in one hand and a drawn sword in the other he rushed into the hall, where the senators were assembled in deliberation, and cried aloud, "Long live the empress Dalgorki!" But no voice seconding him in this wild and shallow trick, he sheathed his sword, and suppressed the fraudulent testament.

The question of the succession was now to be considered; and the only authentic document by which the proceedings of the council could be regulated was the will of Catherine I, which devised the succession to the princess Anna and her posterity, or, in failure, the princess Elizabeth. But Anna had died two years before, and her husband the duke of Holstein had retired into Germany. It was true that there was a young prince, the issue of this marriage; but the council were so averse to the introduction of foreigners into the state that they decided at once against any claim that might be set up in that quarter.

The princess Elizabeth, second in the order of nomination, exhibited no desire to avail herself of the testament of her mother, although she was strongly urged to do so by Lestocq, her physician, preferring to enjoy the ease of a life unburdened by the cares of the state. In these circumstances the council, the senate, and the great officers of state assembled to consult upon the election of a successor to Peter II. Although the male line of the Romanovs was extinct in that sovereign, yet the female line was preserved in the three daughters of Ivan, the stepbrother of Peter the Great, and for some time a partner with him in the government. The eldest was separated from her husband, the duke of Mecklenburg; the second, Anna, duchess of Courland, was a widow living at Mittau; and the third was still unmarried, residing at St. Petersburg. The objection that was entertained against foreign alliances determined the senate to reject the claims of the first, and the choice consequently fell upon Anna Ivanovna.

## ANNA IVANOVNA (1730-1740 A.D.)

From the time of the death of Catherine I the prejudice against foreigners had insensibly acquired weight amongst those influential persons who surrounded the throne. The Dolgoruki were the most active agents of this sentiment, through which they hoped at last to reap the largest share of profit themselves. Taking advantage of the jealousy in which the old aristocracy held their privileges, and apprehensive that the new sovereign might act upon the system of her immediate predecessors, they struck upon an expedient by which they hoped to deprive her of the power of exercising her own judgment, and to place her under the control of that irresponsible council which had been instituted by Catherine I. "The welfare of the nation," said Galitzin, in an address to the assembly, "demands that the supreme authority and the unlimited power of the sovereign, by which Russia has suffered so much and which has been sustained chiefly by the influx of foreigners, should be circumscribed, and that the crown should be conferred upon the new sovereign under certain conditions." This proposal was received with universal approbation, and the following conditions were unanimously agreed to:

That the empress should govern solely by the resolves of the high privy council; that she was not, of her own motion, either to wage war or make peace; that she could not, of herself, impose any new tax upon the people; that she could not dispose of any important office, nor inflict capital punishment on any nobleman, nor confiscate his estate, unless he had been previously

convicted of the crime laid to his charge; that she should not alienate any lands belonging to the crown; and that she could not marry, or nominate an heir, without obtaining, in the first instance, the consent of the council. A strange article was added to these conditions — that her chamberlain, von Biren, should not accompany the empress into Russia.

These conditions, which were apparently intended to curb the tyranny of the throne, aimed at nothing more than the abolition of one description of despotism, for the purpose of substituting a worse in its stead. If it abrogated the supreme and unlimited power of the sovereign, it transferred that power to the secret council, which was thus elevated above the sovereignty and the senate and invested with a complete control over the administration of the public affairs. The proposed change was from an unlimited monarchy to an irresponsible oligarchy.

The drift of this capitulation was speedily detected by those whose interests



ANNA IVANOVNA  
(1693-1740)

it affected — the aristocracy. They saw that it concentrated the power of the state in the hands of seven persons; that the Dolgoruki had already possessed themselves of the voice of the council; and that the issue would be the sacrifice of the empire to a family contract. The capitulation, therefore, was scarcely passed when a powerful opposition was raised up against it; and the people, accustomed to the despotism of an unlimited sovereignty, from which, amidst all its severities, they had derived many valuable safeguards and benefits, declared that they preferred rendering obedience to one master instead of seven. This feeling rapidly spread amongst the guards, who had good reasons for objecting to a clause which would throw the patronage of the army into

the hands of a few persons, who, instead of promoting the meritorious, would, as a matter of course, provide for their own friends and relatives.

Nor was the princess Anna insensible to the wrong which she suffered from this novel procedure; and, when the deputation from the council waited upon her to inform her of her election, and the conditions which were annexed to it, she would have refused to subscribe to the capitulation, had she not been already prepared by the advice of General Iagushinski as to the course she ought to pursue. That officer had previously recommended her to accept the conditions, but to revoke them immediately after she should be acknowledged as empress, assuring her, at the same time, that she would be powerfully supported in the proper quarter. She accordingly agreed to the demands of the deputation, and was crowned in the usual forms.

The empress Anna was no sooner established upon the throne, than her friends gave her an opportunity of carrying the advice of General Iagushinski into effect. A petition signed by several hundred noblemen was presented to her, in which she was entreated to abrogate the restrictions which the council had placed upon her authority, and to assume the unlimited power that had hitherto been exercised by her predecessors. Fortified by this requisition,

[1730 A.D.]

the empress presented herself before the council and the senate, and, reading the terms of the capitulation, demanded whether such was the will of the nation. Being answered in the negative by the majority of those who were present, she exclaimed, "Then there is no further need of this paper," and tore the capitulation in pieces. This act was ratified and published in a manifesto which declared that the empress ascended the throne not by election but by hereditary right, and which exacted from the people an oath of allegiance, not to the sovereign and the country, as had formerly been the case, but to the empress alone, as unlimited sovereign, including not only the rights of sovereignty already existing but those that might be asserted hereafter.

Anna was now empress without conditions, and her chamberlain, von Biren, was raised to that place in her councils which Menshikov filled during the reign of Catherine I. The first exercise she made of her power was to abolish the council of seven and to restore to the senate the privileges it enjoyed under Peter the Great. She appointed, however, a cabinet of three persons, with Ostermann at its head, whose duty it was to superintend the affairs of the most pressing importance, leaving to the senate the management of less momentous matters. When these arrangements were completed, the urgent attention of the empress was directed to the foreign relations of the empire, which, at this crisis, demanded serious consideration.

The struggle for the throne in Poland had entailed jealousies which threatened not only to involve the peace of Russia but to draw France and Sweden into the quarrel. The cause of Augustus, the elector of Saxony, which had originally been espoused by Peter I, was still maintained by the Russian cabinet; and, although France made strenuous exertions to reinstate Stanislaus, the father-in-law of Louis XV, yet, by the determined interference of his northern ally, Augustus was proclaimed king of Poland, and Stanislaus was compelled to fly. The mortification which France endured under these circumstances excited in her a strong feeling of hostility against Russia; but there existed still more cogent reasons why she should make an attempt to restrain the advances of that power.

It had long been a favourite point in the policy of France to secure upon the throne of Poland a monarch who should be devoted to her will, and although she had been hitherto defeated in that object, she did not relinquish the hope of its ultimate accomplishment. She saw also rising in the north a gigantic empire, which had already acquired extraordinary power in Europe, and which threatened at last to overshadow and destroy the influence which she had been accustomed to exercise in that part of the globe. Urged by these considerations, and knowing how important it was to Russia to be at peace with Sweden, she left no means untried to engage the court at Stockholm on her side. Her diplomacy succeeded even better than she expected and Russia was once more compelled to watch with vigilance the movements of a dangerous neighbour, who was still suffering under the disastrous effects of a war from which Russia had reaped all the benefits and she the misfortunes.

But affairs pressed with still greater energy in a more remote quarter. It was found by experience that the territories which Peter had acquired in Persia by the treaty entered into between him, the sultan, and the shah were exceedingly burdensome to the country. In his desire for the enlargement of his dominions, Peter overlooked the necessity of ascertaining whether the new provinces were likely to be productive of advantages, either in the way of revenue or as adding strength to the frontiers. In order to preserve the possession of those provinces, it was necessary to maintain a considerable



garrison in the interior, even in time of peace; they were also frequently exposed to scenes of warfare and devastation; and the climate was so injurious to the health of the Russians that in the course of a few years no less than 130,000 men perished there.

The great cost of these dependencies, and their uselessness in a territorial point of view, determined Anna to relinquish them upon the best terms she could procure from the shah. She accordingly proposed to that prince the restoration of the conquered provinces, upon condition that he would grant to the Russian merchants certain commercial privileges in the trade with Persia. To these terms the shah acceded, and in 1735 Russia made a formal surrender of her Persian possessions. This negotiation was connected with another of still greater importance — a defensive treaty between Persia and Russia, which was concluded at the same time. The motives which induced Anna to enter into this alliance require a brief recapitulation of preceding events.

The unfortunate situation in which Peter I was placed upon the banks of the Pruth compelled him to submit to the terms dictated by the Porte, by which he surrendered many important advantages which he had previously obtained by conquest. The principal sacrifices he had made upon that occasion were the evacuation of Azov and the destruction of the fortifications at Taganrog which had the immediate effect of shutting him out from the trade on the Euxine. The annoyances also to which the empire was subjected by the frequent incursions of the Crimean and other Tatars into the border lands, where they committed the most frightful excesses, and the haughty refusal of the Porte to acknowledge the imperial title which the people had conferred upon him, led Peter to meditate a new war against the Turks. He made ample preparations for the fulfilment of this design by fortifying the frontiers in the neighbourhood of Turkey; but his death arrested the execution of the project, which was entirely laid aside by Catherine I and Peter II.

Anna, however, relying upon the assistance of thirty thousand auxiliaries from Germany, considered this a favourable opportunity for reviving a stroke of policy which promised such signal advantages to the country, particularly as the Turk was at this period employed in hostilities against Persia. She did not long want an excuse for opening the war. The Tatars had of late made several predatory inroads upon the Russian territories, and laying waste the districts through which they passed carried off men and cattle on their return. These Tatars being under the protection of the Porte, the empress remonstrated upon the subject, and demanded satisfaction; but the sultan, in his reply, excused himself from interfering in the matter, upon the pretext that it was impossible to keep those roving bands under proper restraint. This evasive reply was precisely what Anna anticipated, and as the sultan declined to render her any atonement, she undertook to obtain retribution for herself. A force was immediately despatched into the country of the Tatars, which they overran, spreading ruin in their path, and destroying the marauders in great numbers. The expedition failed, however, in consequence of the incautious advance of the troops too far into the interior, where, not being prepared with a sufficient stock of provisions, they underwent severe privations, and sustained a loss of ten thousand men.

But this discomfiture did not divert the empress from her grand design; and in the year 1736 Count Munich, at the head of a sufficient force, was sent into the Ukraine, with a free commission to retaliate upon the Tatars. After a victorious course through that region, he passed into the peninsula of the

[1737 A.D.]

Crimea; the Tatars, unequal to contending with him in the open field, flying before him until they reached their lines, extending from the sea of Azov to the Euxine, behind the intrenchments of which they considered themselves secure. The lines were established with a view to protecting the Crimea from any attack on the land side; and, having been built with incredible toil, and being strongly fortified with cannon, the Tatars deemed them impregnable. They did not long, however, withstand the vigorous assault of the Russians, who speedily scaled them, and, driving the tumultuous hordes before them, soon possessed themselves of the greater part of the Crimea. But the same inconveniences were felt on this as on the former expedition. The Tatars on their flight laid the country in ashes, and it was impossible to provide sustenance for the troops without keeping up a constant communication with the Ukraine, where provisions at least were to be had, but which was attended with great difficulty. In this exigency, Count Munich was obliged to return to the Ukraine, to take up his winter quarters.

### *War with Turkey*

While Munich was thus engaged against the Tatars, a much more important movement, in which the real object of the Russian government was directly exhibited, was taking place elsewhere. General Lacy had laid siege to Azov, and reduced it to submission on the 1st of July, in the same year. This bold and decisive step forced the reluctant Divan to take into consideration the means by which the progress of the Russians could be most effectually stayed. The sultan was unwilling to commit himself in a war with Russia, content with the possession of the advantages he had gained by the Treaty of the Pruth: and even now that Russia had regained one of the ceded forts, and was manifestly prepared to follow up the victory, he preferred to attempt the negotiation of peace through the mediation of Austria, for the sake of avoiding hostilities as long as he could. Russia, however, would not agree to any accommodation; and, instead of being moved from her purpose by the representations of Austria, she demanded of that power the fulfilment of the treaty subsisting between them, by which, in case of need, she was bound to furnish thirty thousand auxiliaries. This demand placed the subject in a new light before the German cabinet. The required assistance would obviously have the effect of enabling Russia to extend her conquests without producing any benefits whatever to Austria; whereas, if Austria united herself with Russia in the war, she might derive some advantages from an alliance against which it appeared highly improbable that the Turks could make a successful stand. She decided, therefore, upon throwing the whole weight of her power into the scale, greatly to the consternation of the Turks, who had, in the first instance, solicited her friendly interference. The sultan, however, felt that, doubtful as must be the issue of a contest against such formidable enemies, it would be wiser to risk it than, yielding to intimidation, to make such sacrifices as would be inconsistent with the security and honour of the country. He accordingly lost no time in preparing for the campaign. He recruited the garrisons and forts, raised new levies, put his army into proper condition, and equipped a fleet for the protection of the Euxine; on the other hand, the combined forces rapidly prepared to act in concert.

The operations of the year 1737 were not followed by any important results. The Russian army, strengthened by forty thousand recruits, was separated into two divisions; one of which, under the command of Count Munich, proceeded to Otchakov on the Euxine, while General Lacy, with the

other, entered the Crimea. The objects proposed to be attained by these expeditions were not adequate to the expenditure that attended them. Otchakov submitted, and was garrisoned by the conquerors; and the Crimea was again desolated. This was all Russia gained by the sacrifice of about fifty thousand of her veteran troops. The blame of these barren and expensive victories was to be attributed to that very union of forces which ought to have been productive of increased strength. The most unfortunate jealousies existed, not only amongst the Austrian officers, but between Count Munich and the Austrians. To so extravagant a length was this dangerous feeling carried that, with the exception of the affair at Otchakov, Munich remained inactive throughout the campaign, from an obstinate determination not to act upon the same plan that was pursued by the Austrians.

Nor was this the only evil that these feuds produced. The Turks, taking advantage of the dissension, poured in with greater force upon the German ranks, which they broke through on several occasions, gaining frequent petty advantages, which, at all events, had the effect of rendering their movements in a great measure abortive. Constant complaints were now made alternately by the courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg, respecting the conduct of the officers at both sides; and, although Munich was especially accused of thwarting the efforts of the allies, he always had the address to escape from reprehension, by throwing the censure on his accusers.

These circumstances inspired the Turks with fresh courage. A congress had been appointed to be held at Nemirov, in Poland, but they withdrew their ambassador; signifying, however, that if Russia would evacuate Azov and Otchakov, and the rest of her conquests, they might be induced to entertain a treaty of peace. This insolent proposition was at once rejected by Russia, and the war was resumed. In the campaign of the following year, Munich appeared to be anxious to make amends for his former inactivity; but, although he made some vigorous marches and vindicated the character of the soldiery, he effected nothing of substantial importance. A similar fortune attended General Lacy in the Crimea, from which, after a disastrous progress through a desolated country, and after a great mortality amongst his troops, occasioned partly by fatigue and partly by the deficiency of provisions, he was ultimately obliged to withdraw.

The opening of the year 1739 promised to make amends for these successive failures. General Munich, whose ability in the field was admitted on all hands, collected a numerous army at Kiev, and, crossing the Bug, met the Turks in a pitched battle, near Stavutshan, in which he obtained a signal victory. Pursuing his success with vigour, he advanced and, passing the Pruth, he possessed himself of Jassi, the capital of Moldavia, the whole of which territory he subjugated in an incredibly short space of time. Retracing his march, after having achieved this important conquest, he made preparations for a descent upon Bender. These brilliant triumphs, accomplished with such rapidity that the couriers were kept constantly occupied in the transmission of despatches to the court of St. Petersburg, encouraged, for a brief season the flattering prospects of complete restitution which the unpropitious commencement of the war had almost annihilated.

But unfortunately the same evil spirit which had frustrated the former campaigns broke out just at the moment when Turkey was so discomfited that Russia, had she pushed her successes a little further, might have dictated a settlement upon her own terms. Envy at the progress of the Russian army was again exhibited in the ranks of the Austrians, who were suffering under a contagious disease that helped in a still greater degree to paralyse their



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activity. Unfortunately, too, the emperor Charles VI was afflicted with a dangerous illness; and his daughter, shrinking from the apprehensions of the future, was extremely desirous by any means to bring about a peace with Turkey. This disposition on the part of Austria was gladly seized upon by the sultan; and, before there was time to reconcile the unhappy differences that existed amongst the allies, a treaty of peace was drawn up and signed between Austria and Turkey, on the 1st of September, 1739. By this inglorious treaty, Austria escaped from all further responsibility in the war; but she purchased the peace at so enormous a price that it is difficult to comprehend the tortuous policy which led her to adopt so extraordinary a measure. The war, in which she had embarked in the hope of securing territorial advantages, had cost her a considerable expenditure in troops and treasure; and she not only did not obtain an indemnity for this outlay, nor acquire a single rood of ground by her participation in the campaigns, but by the conditions of the treaty she was compelled to relinquish Belgrade, her Hungarian rampart against the Turks, and all those conquests which she had formerly obtained under the victorious flag of Prince Eugene.

This peace produced great dissatisfaction at St. Petersburg; for, although Austria reserved to herself the right of fulfilling her treaty with Russia by succouring her in the field, it was not deemed prudent to prosecute a war single handed, which had been commenced with such a formidable display of power. The Turks, relieved from one antagonist, were now the better enabled to resist the other; and the empress conceived that the wisest course she could pursue was to negotiate her differences with the sultan, to which proposal he was not unwilling to accede. A peace was consequently entered into between the belligerents with such promptitude that it was concluded as early as the 18th of September. The conditions of this treaty involved compromises on both sides. It was agreed that Azov and its surrounding territory should be evacuated and remain uncultivated, as a neutral boundary between the two empires; a similar arrangement was guaranteed respecting Kabarda, both governments agreeing to retain in their hands a certain number of hostages from that province, for better security against an abuse of the stipulation. It was also settled that Russia should be at liberty to erect a fortress on the Don, and that the Porte should construct another in the Kuban. Some minor conquests of the Russians were surrendered: Russian fleets were not to be allowed to be kept in the sea of Azov or the Euxine; and in the latter sea the commerce of Russia was to be conducted only in Turkish bottoms.

### *Internal Administration*

The empress Anna, in thus suddenly concluding a peace with Turkey, was actuated by a still stronger motive than that which was supplied by the desertion of Austria. She justly apprehended that Sweden, influenced by the intrigues of France, who had now attained a decided ascendancy in the councils of Stockholm, would endeavour to distract Russia in the north, while the main body of her army was occupied with the Porte on the south. Secret negotiations, carried on between the three powers, appeared to confirm this suspicion. It was true that, at the conclusion of the last war, Russia and Sweden had entered into an amnesty for twelve years, which was renewed for a similar period, on its expiration in the year 1736. But this amnesty served only as a thin disguise for the rankling and bitter hostility which the Swedes entertained towards Russia. They had not forgotten the protracted and ruinous struggle between Charles XII and Peter I, which convulsed the whole

kingdom and exhausted its resources; nor the sacrifices which they were compelled to make at the Peace of Nystad. These feelings were assiduously cultivated by the French court, which found easy means of securing a strong party in the national council, which in fact was paramount in Sweden, the king being completely under its control. The empress, warned of this increasing desire for a rupture on the part of Sweden, was the more anxious to come to terms with Turkey, that she might be free to act in Finland and that neighbourhood, should it become necessary.

Anna was evidently guided in the whole course of her policy by the example of Peter I, whom she adopted as her model. Fortunate in the choice of at least two of her advisers — Ostermann in the council of state, and Munich at the head of the army — she persevered in her attempts to complete those projects of improvement which her great predecessor had left unfinished. The canal connected with the Lake of Ladoga, which was designed to facilitate the transport of provisions to St. Petersburg, was brought to a close by her in the year 1738. She also fitted out an expedition to sail from Kamchatka towards the north, for the purpose of determining whether Siberia was connected with North America.

The manufacture and commerce of Russia, too, commanded a large share of her attention. She instructed her ambassadors at foreign courts to make vigilant inquiries after the most skilful persons engaged in those trades in which Russia was most deficient; and by this means she was enabled to draw into her dominions a great number of artisans, particularly those who were experienced in the production of such fabrics as silks and woollen stuffs. In furtherance of these views she entered into a treaty of commerce with Great Britain, from which the industry of her people derived a fresh and invigorating stimulus. It may be observed, also, that she increased the numerical population by the return of the Zaporogian Cossacks to their allegiance, shortly after the opening of the campaign in the Crimea, which they had forfeited by the rebellion of Mazeppa; and that she enlarged her territories by the acquisition of the province inhabited by the Kirghiz, a nomad tribe, on the Chinese borders. This latter accession was of great importance, from the protection it afforded to the frontiers against the incursions to which they had hitherto been continually exposed: while it not only created a new trade with the Kirghiz themselves, but gave greater freedom to the commercial intercourse with China, which had been constantly interrupted by these hostilities.

### *Biron the Favourite*

Throughout her life Anna placed unreserved confidence in a favourite who, rising from a humble station in society to the first place in the councils of his sovereign, at last aspired to the illicit possession of her affections. John Ernest Biron, the son of a gamekeeper in Courland, happening to attract the attention of the duchess, was appointed her private secretary. From this post he was elevated to the more important office of chamberlain; and even then it was rumoured that he stood higher in her grace's favour than was consistent with the position which he nominally occupied. When the council elected his mistress to the imperial throne, it was stipulated that Biron should not be suffered to accompany her into Russia; and one of the conditions of the capitulation restricted her from marrying, or choosing an heir, without the consent of the council and senate. The empress, accepting the sovereignty under these limitations, left Biron at Mittau, when she came to St.

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Petersburg; but she had no sooner abrogated the stipulations within which her power was restrained, than Biron appeared at court, was created a Russian count, appointed first lord of the bedchamber, and raised at once to the same eminence which he had occupied before. Some years previously he had succeeded in prevailing on the nobility of Courland to confer upon him the title of duke; and when the Kettler family became extinct by the death of the duke of Courland, he procured that dignity from the hands of the electors for himself and his heirs in perpetuity.

Thus glittering with honours, which at best were but surreptitiously obtained, he took upon himself at once in St. Petersburg the character of one who wielded an absolute authority. He was careful, however, not to offend Ostermann or Munich, because, possessing no abilities for government himself, he was obliged to rely upon them as the instruments of his power. It was supposed that the Turkish war was undertaken at the instigation of this daring man, for the purpose of keeping Munich at a distance from the capital—that officer having attained in a high degree the confidence of the empress. By the most adroit measures Biron contrived to remove from a familiar intercourse at court everybody who might be likely to interfere with his ambitious designs. Apprehensive that the empress, freed from the control of the council, might entertain thoughts of marriage, he assiduously limited all opportunities that could lead to such a result; and even attempted to prevent a union between the princess Anna and Ulrich duke of Brunswick, the object of which had reference to the succession. In this scheme, however, the machinations of Biron were defeated, and the marriage was celebrated in the month of July, 1739. This event seriously interfered with the projects of the favourite; but his ingenuity was not exerted in vain in the attempt to derive profit from circumstances which at first seemed so discouraging.



RUSSIAN PEASANT WOMAN

### *Death of Anna (1740 A.D.); the Succession*

In the August following, the duchess of Brunswick became the mother of a prince, who was immediately taken by the empress under her own guardianship and nominated to be her successor. This proceeding, apparently founded upon some show of justice, was in reality the result of a deep-laid conspiracy. The empress was in a declining state of health, and it was felt that she could not long continue to exercise the sovereignty. In this state of things, it became necessary to provide a successor by an authentic act that



could not afterwards be called into question. Biron aimed at the concentration of the imperial power in his own hands; but as an open declaration to that effect would have provoked animosities dangerous to his safety, it was arranged that the young prince, then but a few weeks old, should be nominated to the throne, and that Biron should be appointed regent during the minority of Ivan. Ostermann and Munich, relying upon the future gratitude of Biron, favoured this crafty design. Biron coquetted for a time with the dignities which he was solicited to accept; and pretended at last that, in undertaking the toils of the regency, he yielded to the importunities of others at the sacrifice of his own private wishes.

The extent of the power thus delegated to him was specified in the provisions of the will of the empress, which ordained that he should be the administrator of government until the emperor Ivan had attained his seventeenth year; and that, should Ivan die before that time, Biron should continue guardian to Ivan's brethren, born after him, who should succeed him on the throne; but that, should neither Ivan nor any of his brethren survive, then Biron, with the concurrence of the state, should elect and confirm a new emperor as unlimited monarch. This was the final injunction of the czarina, who died in 1740.<sup>b</sup>

### *A Russian Estimate of Anna and of Biron*

Contemporaneous writers are unanimous in asserting that, during her entire reign, Anna Ivanovna was not only under the influence, but, so to say, under the domination of her favourite. On the basis of such authorities it therefore became customary to ascribe to Biron and the Germans who were grouped around him all the cruelties and coarseness that characterised her reign. But if we subject this question to a dispassionate and severe criticism it would appear that such an accusation of Biron — and in general of the Germans who governed with him — has no firm foundation. It is impossible to ascribe all the character of the reign to a German clique, because those Germans who were at the head of the government did not constitute a united corporation, but each of them followed his own personal interests; they were envious of one another and at enmity each with the rest.

Biron was a somewhat narrow-minded egotist, incapable of attracting any circle around him; his power rested exclusively on the personal favour of the empress; and therefore, as soon as Anna Ivanovna's eyes were closed forever, her former favourite had no sure ground to go upon, and although his deceased mistress had made his position secure yet he was not able to maintain it a month without her. There is no contemporary indication that the cruelties which signalised the reign of Anna emanated from Biron or that they were accomplished at his initiative.

Moreover, the cruelties and in general the harsh measures which signalised the reign of Anna Ivanovna were not an exclusive characteristic of that epoch; they did not begin to make their appearance in Russia with her and did not cease with her. The administration of Peter the Great was signalised by persecutions even more cruel and harsh of everything opposed to the supreme power. The actions of Prince Romodanovski in accordance with the Preobrazhenski edict were in no wise milder or more humane than those of Andrew Ivanovitch Usakov in the secret chancery. On the other hand, similar features of cruelty and contempt for human dignity are to be met with after Anna Ivanovna under Elizabeth Petrovna. Therefore we do not hesitate to say that all that disturbs us in the reign of Anna should not be ascribed to the

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empress herself, nor to her favourite, the duke of Courland, but to the whole age in which such occurrences took place. On the contrary, if we separate from that which belongs to the age what we may justly ascribe to the empress herself and the statesmen of her time, we come to a conclusion which is more to the advantage and credit of the government of the epoch than to its condemnation. Many dispositions of the government of that time in matters of interior policy were accomplished in the spirit of Peter the Great and it was not in vain that Anna Ivanovna confided the affairs of the state to the wise and gifted "fledgelings" of Peter. Thanks to them, in many respects the reign of Anna may be called a continuation of the glorious reign of her great uncle: in general the life of Russia moved forward and was not stagnant. The people of Russia suffered from bad harvests during the reign, besides other various accidental calamities, as for instance fires and robbers; for all such evils, of course, the governments of the period cannot be blamed, and there is no doubt that measures were taken to alleviate the distress of the people.<sup>c</sup>

## THE NOMINAL REIGN OF IVAN VI (1740-1741 A.D.)

For a short time after the death of Anna (1740) Biron maintained an autocratic rule, assuming the title of His Highness, Regent of the Russian Empire. But finally the people, jealous of seeing the administration of the imperial rule confided to the hands of a foreigner — and one too who, instead of exhibiting a sympathy in their interests, treated them with the most flagrant tyranny — betrayed universal discontent at the new order of things. It was held to be a direct act of injustice to debar the duke of Brunswick from the guardianship of his son; and a formidable party now rapidly sprang up, prepared to espouse the rights of that prince. The popular disaffection increased on all sides; but Biron had established his spies in every direction, and was unsparing in the punishments which he inflicted upon all those persons whom he had reason to believe inimical to his government. The streets groaned with the cries of the victims of the knout; the people fled before him, or, in an agony of fear, prostrated themselves upon the earth as he advanced; and the dungeons were filled with the unhappy objects of his suspicions. It was calculated that, throughout the period of his authority, including the reign of the empress Anna, no less than twenty thousand persons were exiled to Siberia.

At length the smothered flame broke out, and the demands in favour of Duke Ulrich took an affirmative shape. Count Munich, disappointed in his expectations by the hypocritical Biron, warmly embarked on the other side; and, by still affecting to be the friend of the regent, he was enabled to render essential service in the revolution which was now swiftly encircling the walls of the palace. The confidence which the military placed in Munich gave increased importance to his services; and, as he found that he had nothing to expect from the regent, he attached himself zealously to Duke Ulrich in the anticipation that he would ultimately be rewarded with the chief command of the army, which was the station he had long eagerly desired to obtain.

The revolution which was thus organised was promptly accomplished. The regent was arrested in the middle of the night, in his house, by a detachment of the guards; and the principal senators assembled in the palace before daybreak, and acknowledged the princess Anna as grand duchess of Russia, and guardian of her son the infant emperor. This proceeding was the work of a few hours. Biron was at first confined in the castle of Schlüsselburg,

whence he was removed as a prisoner and brought to trial for obtaining the regency by improper means, for squandering the imperial treasures, for treating with contumely the parents of the emperor, and for violating the statutes and ordinances so as to throw the empire into confusion. For these capital offences he was condemned to death; but his sentence was mitigated to perpetual banishment to the deserts of Siberia, where, in addition to the ordinary miseries of that forlorn region, he was compelled to associate in the labours of the numerous wretches whom he had himself condemned to the same fate. [He was, however, set at liberty by Peter III, and Catherine II ultimately restored to him the duchy of Courland.]

*Anna of Brunswick Assumes the Regency (1740 A.D.)*

The regency of the princess Anna was slightly perplexed at its opening, by the importunate demands of Munich to be placed at the head of the army — a post which Duke Ulrich appropriated to himself, and peremptorily refused to relinquish. As a compensation, however, to Munich, he removed Ostermann, and appointed his rival in his place as first minister of the government. Munich did not long hold this office: failing to accomplish a course of policy which he urged upon the regent, he tendered his resignation, which was unexpectedly accepted. Frustrated in his hopes, he lingered in St. Petersburg, anticipating that he would be recalled; but the period of his utility was past, and his anticipations were disappointed. The ground of his retirement involved a serious change in the foreign policy of the empire. Frederick II had just ascended the throne of Prussia, and, regarding with jealousy the alliance that had been formed between the courts of St. Petersburg and Vienna, endeavoured to accomplish a union with Russia through the agency of Munich, whose antipathy to Austria was notorious. Frederick did not find it very difficult to work upon the vanity and prejudices of the minister, who was easily brought to prevail upon the regent to enter into a defensive treaty with the cabinet of Berlin; both parties mutually binding themselves to furnish assistance, as occasion might require, to the extent of twelve thousand men. In consenting to this treaty, the regent mentally resolved to fulfil the stipulation it enjoined, only so long as Prussia should be at peace with Austria. An occasion soon offered which obliged her to act upon this secret resolution, Frederick having signified his intention of taking possession of Silesia as a part of the inheritance of Maria Theresa. In consequence of this proceeding, a new alliance was formed with Austria at the commencement of the year 1741, by which a fresh engagement to furnish auxiliaries was entered into. Munich in vain remonstrated against this measure; and at last, finding his influence at an end, he solicited permission to resign, which was granted to him at once. Notwithstanding the disposition thus manifested on the part of Russia, she did not take any part in the war between Prussia and Austria; particularly as the king of Poland and the elector of Saxony, who also raised pretensions to the patrimony of Theresa, protested against the progress of the Russian troops through Poland; Sweden at the same time threatening the empire on the borders of Finland.

*Sweden Renews the War*

The Swedes had long looked anxiously for an excuse to make war against Russia; and now that the government of that empire was, to a certain degree,



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unpopular, and likely from that circumstance to undergo an alteration, a favourable opportunity appeared to present itself for executing a project so gratifying to the whole nation. The ambassador of France at the court of Stockholm encouraged the council to prosecute this war; while the French minister at St. Petersburg demonstrated its facility by representing in strong colours the weakness and instability of the new administration. The Swedes, flattered by the hopes in which they were led to indulge, already calculated with certainty upon the results of the campaign; and the diet at Stockholm were so sanguine of success that they actually drew up no less than three sets of articles containing the conditions which they intended to dictate at the conclusion of the war, when they were assured Russia would be compelled to submit to any terms they might propose. By these articles, they made provision for the resumption of all the provinces that had been ceded to Russia by the Treaty of Nystad; and prepared arrangements, in the event of these not being quite so successful as they expected, by which certain terms, less humiliating but exceedingly extravagant, were to be forced upon their adversary. It was decided, at all events, that, in any case, Russia should surrender Karelia, Ingermanland, and Livonia; that she should not be permitted to keep a single ship on the Livonia or Esthonian coasts; and that she should be compelled to grant the free exportation of corn.

These plans of aggrandisement were deliberately settled by the diet, before any preparations were made for their execution. The Swedes were zealous enough in their desire to wrest from Russia her conquered territories; but they were lamentably deficient in the means by which that desire was to be accomplished. Their fleet was not seaworthy; and the army, brave to a proverb, was insufficiently furnished with provisions, and so destitute of skilful commanders that if it had achieved a victory it must have been by some miracle of good fortune, and not by its own prowess. The generals Levenhaupt and Buddenbrock were the most strenuous advocates of the war; yet, although its conduct was committed to their own hands, the sequel proved that the enterprise was as rashly conceived as it was badly conducted.

Russia was the first in the field; and General Lacy, advancing on the Swedes in August, 1741, before they had time to organise their forces, obtained a signal victory over them near Vilmanstrand. This fortress immediately surrendered to the Russians; but the Swedes collected in such superior numbers that no further progress was made by Lacy throughout the rest of the campaign.

When Sweden entered upon this ill-advised war, she acted under a conviction that serious discontents prevailed in Russia against the regency of the duchess of Brunswick. The sudden changes, succeeding each other with marvellous rapidity, that had taken place in the imperial government, justified, in some measure, the supposition that the present regency was as much exposed to revolution as the preceding administrations. The question of the succession had been treated so vaguely, and had been subjected to such fluctuating decisions, that it was believed some new theory would be set up to annul the last election, as others had been annulled before. There was no doubt that the division of parties in Russia afforded a reasonable ground for anticipating a convulsion. The supreme power had latterly become the prize for which base and ambitious men, without hereditary pretensions and destitute of personal merit, had struggled with various degrees of success. There was evidently no settled principle of inheritance; and even the dangerous principle sanctioned by the example of Peter the Great, which gave to one unlimited sovereign the right of choosing another to succeed him, was acted

upon capriciously, and appealed to or over-ruled as it happened to suit the exigency of the occasion.

The brief reigns of Catherine, of Peter, and of Anna, remarkable as they were for the confusion to which they led in the attempts to settle the crown, for the vicissitudes which they drew down upon persons who had previously enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity, and for the factious views which they extracted and condensed into conspiracies, might be referred to as furnishing the probabilities of the future, and confirming the hopes of those who desired, above all things, to see Russia once more broken up by civil commotions. The antipathy which existed against foreigners, and the objections of the old aristocracy to those European reforms that had been from time to time forced upon the people, were well known to the courts of Stockholm and Paris. The vulnerable point in the domestic concerns of the empire was laid bare; and Sweden, who anticipated a revolution from some cause or other, without being able to predicate from what precise ground of discontent it would spring, resolved, at all events, to expose to the Russians the permanent evil of their condition, leaving it to work its effects as it might. With this view she issued a manifesto, containing the following artful reasons, which were designed to draw with her the sympathies of the Russian population.

"The sole intention on the part of Sweden," observed the manifesto, "is to defend herself by arms against the oppressions exercised against her by the arrogant foreigners, the ministers of the Russian court; and at the same time to deliver the Russian nation from the yoke which these ministers have imposed on it, by assisting the Russians to regain their right of electing for themselves a lawful ruler." The foreigners particularly pointed at in this manifesto were Munich and Ostermann. The allusion, towards the close, of the design of Sweden to deliver Russia from the yoke of those ministers and to assist her in her right of electing a lawful ruler, touched upon topics which were well calculated to disturb the minds of the people, and to suggest to them notions of independence which they had been hitherto prevented by coercive institutions from entertaining. But there was either a stolid apathy on the part of the Russians, an indifference to or ignorance of the nature of liberty, or a national jealousy at the interference of other countries in their affairs, which rendered this ingenious and inflammatory document perfectly harmless. It was disseminated and forgotten; but, although Sweden could not create a revolution in Russia, there were elements of discord within which rendered revolution inevitable.

The assertion of the right of the sovereign to nominate his successor was productive of inconvenience in a variety of ways: (1) as it constantly brought the new monarch into collision with the authorities, who were thus deprived of the privilege of election; (2) as it was almost certain to dissatisfy some party, and to produce continual feuds; (3) as it led to dissensions and attempts to vindicate the ancient principle, whenever the sovereign, as we have seen, happened to die intestate; and (4) as it was calculated to perpetuate in particular families the inheritance of the patronage and the power of government. But the chief danger arose from the fatal precedent of its interruption, which was seized upon with avidity as a justification, on all future changes, of those revolutions which so frequently originated within the walls of the palace. Alterations had now followed each other so quickly in the persons to whom the administration of the government was committed, and they were conceived so rapidly, and executed with such suddenness and decision, that it was no longer surprising to find the imperial authority vested in the morning in different hands from those which exercised it the night before.

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These bold transactions were, of course, founded upon some plausible pretext -- the unpopularity of the late ruler, the more authentic claims of the new, the support of the army, or, perhaps, the rare argument of the national will, which it would be mockery to designate public opinion. The overthrow of Biron was effected by a combination of circumstances: the hatred in which he was universally held, his cruelty and rapacity, the obscurity of his origin, and the fact that he was an alien by birth. But the last of these objections lay with almost equal force against the young emperor Ivan, and might be employed with still greater truth against his father, the duke of Brunswick, who, as husband of the regent, exercised considerable influence at court. A stronger motive than this was not required to inflame the prejudices of a powerful section of the nobility, and to yield a satisfactory apology for removing the regent and her son, who was not considered a true Russian, from power. The project was not slow in arriving at maturity; and the term of authority permitted to the guardian of Ivan was, all circumstances considered, of little more duration than that extended to Biron, who held his perilous elevation only two-and-twenty days.

### *Successful Conspiracy against the Regent*

These designs against the throne were greatly facilitated by the strange conduct of the princess Anna and her husband. Since they had attained their wishes in the government, their behaviour towards each other had undergone a most remarkable change. Harmony and confidence seemed to have ceased between them; and, no longer acting in concert, but, on the contrary, opposing each other by conflicting views, the affairs of the state unavoidably fell into perplexity and confusion. The rivalry that had been produced between Ostermann and Munich in consequence of the favour shown, in the first instance, by the duke to the latter, contributed to increase that disagreement in action which was imperceptibly dividing the government into two parties. Ostermann, finding himself displaced to make way for Munich, attached himself still more closely to the duke, for the purpose of supplanting his rival upon the first opportunity; while Munich, on the other hand, smarting under the mortification he endured by the duke's repeated refusal of the office he solicited, sought to ingratiate himself in the good opinion of the regent. The consequence of this spirit of opposition, fed by the jealousies of those able ministers, was the daily counteraction by one party of the measures projected by the other.

The regent was a woman of serene temper and lenient disposition; she regarded severity with aversion, and always resorted to the prerogative of mercy where it was possible she could do so consistently with justice: but her desires were so completely thwarted by Ostermann that the public results of the administration bore a very different character from that by which they would have been distinguished had her own opinions been allowed their proper weight. Perhaps it was to this undercurrent of resistance that the indifference concerning the government into which she fell ought to be attributed. But, to whatever cause it might be referred, she gradually neglected the duties of her station, and suffered them to be discharged at hazard by the advisers of the duke. Totally estranging herself from her husband, she retired for weeks together from public affairs, and shut herself up with a Countess Mengden, who obtained so great an ascendancy over her mind as to withdraw her attention almost wholly from the responsibility of her position. This circumstance produced considerable dissatisfaction, and heightened the



antipathy with which the people regarded the German party that was now growing up at court. The aversion entertained towards foreigners now broke out with more violence than ever. It seemed as if the administration of affairs had completely passed out of the hands of the Russians. The convention that had been formed on the demise of Peter II, by which the supreme authority was vested in the council, which was composed almost exclusively of members of native families, would have had indirectly the effect of excluding strangers from the government; but the evils with which it was pregnant, and its immediate interference with the privileges of the empress, led to its abrogation. The ascendancy of foreigners was then resumed with greater force than ever. Biron the insolent guardian, Ostermann the experienced politician, and Munich the able commander rose to the summit and swayed the destinies of the empire.

Nor did Ivan himself possess a much better claim to be considered as a Russian. He was but a remote descendant of the house of Romanov; his father was a German prince, his mother the daughter of a German prince; and the only member of the imperial house to whom he could refer his lineal descent was his grandfather Ivan, stepbrother to Peter I. The family, therefore, that occupied the throne, was almost exclusively of German blood, which was rendered still more repugnant to the people by the fact that all the most important offices under government were filled by foreigners. There was in these circumstances, and in the desire to arrest finally the influence of strangers — which appeared to progress with increasing certainty in each successive reign — a sufficient ground for protest; and the extraordinary indolence of the regent, her utter neglect of state affairs, her discouragement of Russian customs, and her lavish patronage of her immediate adherents, who were all obnoxious to the people, furnished the ready pretext upon which a plot was formed to expel her from the throne.

The princess Elizabeth, daughter of Peter I, residing at St. Petersburg, was the person in favour of whose claims this conspiracy was got up. By birth, she was closer to the throne than either the young emperor or the regent; and the habits of her life were much more congenial to the feelings of the country. She might have preferred her pretensions on the death of Peter II, when there was a strong probability that they would have commanded the suffrages of the council; but at that time she expressed no desire to enter upon the cares of sovereignty, choosing rather to cultivate the repose of a retired and tranquil life. Throughout the reign of the empress Anna she observed the same quiet course, kept aloof from politics, and avoiding, as much as possible, all intercourse with the great men or distinguished families at court. Her conduct was so entirely free from suspicion that she enjoyed the closest intimacy with the empress, who, believing that the princess was averse to the toils of power, bestowed her full confidence upon her; and even Biron, who distrusted almost everyone about him, never contemplated any measure to her prejudice. She enjoyed the immunities of a private person; never made any display of her rank in public; and was in truth, as she was in appearance, without a party in the country. The only exception to the privacy of her life was the attachment she showed for the soldiery, particularly the guards; which she did not hesitate to exhibit by frequently standing sponsor for their children.

Yet, although her conduct was so exempt from reproach, the Dolgoruki were accused of an intention of placing her upon the throne — an intention which they might have entertained without her knowledge or sanction; for there was sometimes as much violence committed in forcing the dignity upon

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unwilling shoulders as in deposing the possessor. That aspiring family fell under the displeasure of Biron, and its members were put to the torture towards the close of the year 1739; when they confessed that they had planned an insurrection, the purpose of which was to carry off the empress, the princess Anna, and her husband, to expel the Germans from Russia, to proclaim Elizabeth empress, and to bring about a marriage between her and one of the Nariskins. This confession might be true, or it might have been wrung from the accused by torture, which, in those times, was too often persuasively employed to make its victims confess more than the truth; but it was satisfactory for the ends of Biron, who, proceeding to capital punishment at once, broke one of the victims on the wheel, decapitated three others, and sentenced two more to a dungeon for life.

There is no reason to believe that Elizabeth contemplated any designs upon the throne during the reign of the empress Anna, or that the simplicity of her general conduct was assumed as a disguise for secret intrigues. The project seems to have occurred to her for the first time, when she saw an infant emperor consigned to the regency of a foreigner; it was probably strengthened afterwards, when the guardianship of the child was transferred to its parents, one of whom was a German by birth, and the other by descent; and it reached its maturity when she heard it reported currently that the regent intended to have herself declared empress on her birthday in the following December, 1741, and to establish the succession in the line of her daughters. This intelligence, which every day obtained fresh credit at court, imparted a new aspect to the question. It was no longer to be considered a choice between lineal and indirect descendants of the house of Romanov, but between a sovereign who should be chosen by the electors and one who was resolved to usurp by force what she could not legitimately obtain.

The discontent of the people, the inconsistent bearing of the regent, and the favourable disposition for a change which began to be developed in influential quarters, seemed to sanction the act of revolution, and to invoke Elizabeth from her retirement to fulfil its ends. Personally, she stood alone; she had never drawn around her any powerful friends; she had never mixed in the court feuds; and her whole reliance was upon the temper and accidents of the time. But it was not forgotten in her calculations that the individual who is the representative of a principle acquires at once all the power which the cause he espouses can confer, and that he is sure to be sustained by a party for the promotion of their own objects, although he might be destitute of support in the attempt to advance his own.

Lestocq, the physician and favourite of the princess, was the mainspring of the plot. It was by his advice that the enterprise was undertaken, and it was almost solely by his perseverance that it was prosecuted. He first addressed himself to the guards, who were individually devoted to the princess. The earliest confidants of his schemes were Grünstein, a broken merchant, who was then a corporal in the Preobrajenski guards, and Schwartz, a trumpeter. Through the agency of these persons, to whom he promised large rewards, Lestocq succeeded in gaining over to his views a strong party of the soldiery. M. de la Chetardie, the French ambassador resident at St. Petersburg, readily engaged in the conspiracy, acting, no doubt, under the sanction of his court, whose policy it was to convulse the Russian government by any means in its power, in the hope of ultimately effecting a disunion between that cabinet and the Austrian emperor. From that minister Lestocq procured the sums of money that were necessary to carry forward his plans, which now proceeded with rapidity.

But Elizabeth, who had entered into the project with reluctance, regarded its progress with fear, and was as anxious to postpone the catastrophe as Lestoeq was eager for its accomplishment. This produced delays which were nearly fatal. The soldiers, entrusted with a secret of too much magnitude for persons in their condition, could not long preserve the confidence that was reposed in them; and at last the design began to be rumoured abroad. It even reached the ears of the regent, who, possessed by some unaccountable infatuation, treated it with the utmost carelessness. She either did not believe in its truth, or lulled herself into security by depending upon the fidelity of her friends. Unmoved by the danger that threatened her, she concealed from her husband the information she had received; for which, when it was too late to retrace her steps, he afterwards severely censured her. Ostermann, who was early made aware of the proceedings of the conspirators, warned the regent of her danger, and entreated her to take some decisive measures to avert it: and the British ambassador, detecting, probably, the insidious hand of France, predicted her destruction in vain. Her facile nature still lingered inactive, until at last she received an anonymous letter, in which she was strongly admonished of the perils by which she was surrounded. A more energetic mind would have acted unhesitatingly upon these repeated proofs of the approaching insurrection; but Anna, still clinging to the side of mercy, instead of seizing upon the ringleaders, who were known to her, and quieting at once the apprehensions of her advisers, read the whole contents of the letter in open court in the presence of Elizabeth, and stated the nature of the reports that had reached her. Elizabeth, of course, protested her ignorance of the whole business, burst into a flood of tears, and asserted her innocence with such a show of sincerity that the regent was perfectly satisfied, and took no further notice of the matter.

This occurred on the 4th of December, 1741. Lestoeq had previously appointed the day of the consecration of the waters, the 6th of January, 1742, for Elizabeth to make her public appearance at the head of the guards, to issue declarations setting forth her claims upon the throne, and to cause herself to be proclaimed. But the proceedings that had taken place in the court determined him to hasten his plans. Now that the vigilance of the court was awakened, he knew that his motions would be watched, and that the affair did not admit of any further delay. He applied himself, accordingly, with redoubled vigilance, to the business of collecting and organising the partisans of the princess; continued to bribe them with French gold; and, when everything was prepared, he again impressed upon his mistress the urgent necessity of decision. He pointed out to her that the guards, upon whose assistance she chiefly relied, were under orders to march for Sweden, and that in a short time all would be lost. She was still, however, timid and doubtful of the result, when the artful Lestoeq drew a card from his pocket, which represented her on one side in the habit of a nun, and on the other with a crown upon her head — asking her which fate she preferred; adding that the choice depended upon herself, and upon the promptitude with which she employed the passing moment. This argument succeeded; she consented to place herself in his hands; and, remembering the success that had attended the midnight revolution that consigned Biron to banishment, he appointed the following night, the 5th of December, for the execution of his plan — undertaking the principal part himself, in the hope of the honours that were to be heaped upon him in the event of success.

When the hour arrived Elizabeth again betrayed irresolution, but Lestoeq overcame her fears; and after having made a solemn vow before the crucifix



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that no blood should be shed in the attempt, she put on the order of St. Catherine, and placing herself in a sledge, attended by Lestocq and her chamberlain, she drove to the barracks of the Preobrajenski guards. When she arrived at this point, she advanced towards the soldiers on foot, holding the cross in her hand; and, addressing them in a speech of some length, justified the grounds on which she advanced her claims to the throne; reminded them that she was the daughter of Peter the Great; that she had been illegally deprived of the succession; that a foreign child wielded the imperial sceptre; and that foreigners were advanced, to the exclusion of native Russians, to the highest offices in the state. A considerable number of the guards had been previously prepared for this proceeding by bribes and promises, and inflammatory liquors were distributed amongst them to heighten their zeal. With the exception of a few, who would not violate their duty and who were, in consequence, manacled by the remainder, the whole body responded to the address with enthusiasm.

They now proceeded to the palace of the emperor and his parents, pressing into their train everybody they met on the way, to prevent their object from being betrayed; and, forcing the sentries at the gates, obtained easy admittance to the sleeping apartments of the regent and the duke, whom they dragged, unceremoniously, and without affording them time to dress, out of their beds, and conveyed to the palace of Elizabeth, where they confined them under a strong guard. The infant Ivan, unconscious of the misery that awaited him, was enjoying a gentle slumber during this scene of violence; and when he awoke he was carried, in a similar manner, to the place where his unhappy parents were immured. On the same night the principal persons connected with the government were seized in the same way, and thrown into prison. Amongst them were Lewis Ernest of Brunswick, the brother of the duke, Ostermann, and Munich.

This revolution was as rapid and complete as that which deprived Biron of the regency, and was effected by a similar stealthy proceeding in the silence of the night. Early on the following morning, the inhabitants were called upon to take the oath of fealty to Elizabeth. But they were accustomed to these sudden movements in the palace; and before the day was concluded the shouts of the intoxicated soldiery announced that the people had confirmed, by the usual attestation of allegiance, the authority of the empress.<sup>1</sup> A manifesto was immediately issued, which contained the following statement:

The empress Anna having nominated the grandson of her sister, a child born into the world only a few weeks before the empress's death, as successor to the throne; during the minority of whom various persons had conducted the administration of the empire in a manner highly iniquitous, whence disturbances had arisen both within the country and out of it, and probably in time still greater might arise; therefore all the faithful subjects of Elizabeth, both in spiritual and temporal stations, particularly the regiments of the life-guards, had unanimously invited her, for the prevention of all the mischievous consequences to be apprehended, to take possession of the throne of her father as nearest by right of birth; and that she had accordingly resolved to yield to this universal request of her faithful subjects, by taking possession of her inheritance derived from her parents, the emperor Peter I and the empress Catherine.

<sup>1</sup> It is said that when the infant Ivan heard the shouts of the soldiers in front of the palace, he endeavoured to imitate their vociferations, when Elizabeth exclaimed, "Poor babe! thou knowest not that thou art joining in the noise that is raised at thy undoing."

Shortly after this another manifesto appeared, in which Elizabeth grounded her legitimacy on the will of Catherine I. As the statements in this document respecting the right of inheritance are singular in themselves, and as they illustrate in a very remarkable degree the irregularity with which the question of the succession was suffered to be treated, the passage touching upon those points appears to be worthy of preservation. It will be seen, upon reference to previous facts, that these statements are highly coloured to suit the demands of the occasion. After some preliminaries, the manifesto proceeds to observe, that on the demise of Peter II, whom she (Elizabeth) ought to have succeeded, Anna was elected through the machinations of Ostermann; and afterwards, when the sovereign was attacked by a mortal distemper, the same Ostermann appointed as successor the son of Prince Antony Ulrich of Brunswick and the princess of Mecklenburg, a child only two months old, who had not the slightest claim by inheritance to the Russian throne; and, not content with this, he added, to the prejudice of Elizabeth, that after Ivan's death the princes afterwards born of the said prince of Brunswick and the princess of Mecklenburg should succeed to the Russian throne; whereas even the parents themselves had not the slightest right to that throne. That Ivan was, therefore, by the machinations of Ostermann and Munich, confirmed emperor in October, 1740; and because the several regiments of guards, as well as the marching regiments, were under the command of Munich and the father of Ivan, and consequently the whole force of the empire was in the hands of those two persons, the subjects were compelled to take the oath of allegiance to Ivan. That Antony Ulrich and his spouse had afterwards broken this ordinance, to which they themselves had sworn; had forcibly seized upon the administration of the empire; and Anna had resolved, even in the lifetime of her son Ivan, to place herself upon the throne as empress. That, in order, then, to prevent all dangerous consequences from these proceedings, Elizabeth had ascended the throne, and of her own imperial grace had ordered the princess with her son and daughter to set out for their native country.

Such were the arguments upon which Elizabeth attempted to justify her seizure of the throne. With what sincerity she fulfilled the act of grace towards the regent and her family, expressed in the last sentence, will be seen hereafter.

#### ELIZABETH PETROVNA (1741-1762 A.D.)

The revolution which elevated Elizabeth to the throne and the circumstances which preceded that elevation were in every respect remarkable. She had no claim to the dignity, either by birth or by the regulation in regard to the succession introduced by the innovating Peter. Elizabeth was the younger daughter of Peter: Anna, who had been married to the duke of Holstein, was the elder; and though this princess was dead, she left a son, the representative of her rights, who, as we shall hereafter perceive, did ultimately reign as Peter III. The right of primogeniture, indeed, had, in the regulation to which we have alluded, been set aside, and the choice, pure and simple, of the reigning potentate substituted; but the infant Peter had the additional claim of being expressly indicated in the will of Catherine I. These claims, however, had been utterly disregarded when Anna, duchess of Courland and daughter of Ivan, brother of Peter I, had been raised by a faction to the throne. On the death of this empress without issue, Peter, as we have seen, was again overlooked, through the ambition rather of an individual than of a faction — the bloodthirsty Biron.

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Ivan, the son of Anna, had been preferred to his mother, who had been married to Prince Antony Ulrich of Brunswick; and no doubt could be entertained that the object of Biron, in prevailing on the empress to nominate the child, was to retain the supreme power in his own hands as regent. We have seen by what means his ruin was effected; what circumstances accompanied the regency of the duchess Anna, mother of the youthful emperor; and how, by a similar revolution, Anna herself was replaced by the princess Elizabeth.

That Ivan had no other right to the throne than that conferred by the will of the empress Anna, was one of the pretexts which Elizabeth employed to prove the validity of her own title. That will, in the manifesto published three days after the revolution, was insinuated — probably with great truth — to have been irregularly obtained; but in either case it was of no validity, since the right of Elizabeth was asserted to be superior even to that of the former empress. But the instrument was a tissue of sophistry. Though she had been placed on the throne by about three hundred soldiers, she did not hesitate to affirm that the revolution had been effected at the demand of all her subjects. In ostentatiously displaying her clemency, in proclaiming that she had sent back the parents of Ivan to their own country, with all the honours due to their station, she was equally insincere. Both passed their lives in captivity, and were transferred from one fortress to another, according to her caprice or jealousy. Until his eighth year Ivan was permitted to remain with them; but, apprehensive lest his mind should be taught ambition, he was consigned to solitary confinement first in the fortress of Oranienburg, next in that of Schlüsselburg. In one respect his fate was worse than that of his parents: they died in the course of nature<sup>1</sup>; he, as we shall hereafter perceive, perished by violence.

One of Elizabeth's first cares was to punish the men who had, during the former reigns, kept her from the throne — those especially who had assisted the regent Anna in overturning the power of Biron, and had instigated her afterwards to seize the throne. All were condemned to death; but the new empress was not a woman of blood, and the sentence was commuted into perpetual banishment. Ostermann, Munich, Golovkin, Mengden, Löwenwold, driven from a power scarcely less than supreme and from riches almost inexhaustible, were forced to earn their own subsistence in the wilds of Siberia. Munich opened a school. The hand which had conquered the Turks, which had given a king to Poland, was employed in tracing mathematical figures for children.

If Elizabeth could punish, she could also reward. The surgeon, Lestocq, was made head physician of the court, president of the college of the faculty, and privy councillor, with a magnificent income. The company of grenadiers who had raised her to the throne were all declared noble; and the common



ELIZABETH PETROVNA  
(1709-1762)

<sup>1</sup> The mother died in childbed, 1746; the father survived until 1780.



soldiers ranked in future as lieutenants. But under a despotic government there is little security for the great, least of all for those whom capricious favour has exalted. Presuming on his services, the ambition of Lestocq urged him to demand higher preferment, and he had the mortification to be refused. Nor was this all: by his arrogance he offended the most powerful favourites of Elizabeth, especially the grand chancellor Bestuzhev, who had been the minister of Anna; and, in seven years after the revolution, he was exiled to a fortress in the government of Archangel. Exile, in short, was perpetual in this reign. The empress vowed that no culprit should suffer death; but death would often have been preferable to the punishments which were inflicted. Torture, the knout, slitting of the tongue, and other chastisements — so cruel that the sufferer frequently died in consequence — were not spared even females.

Soon after her accession a conspiracy was discovered, the object of which was the restoration of young Ivan. The conspirators, who were encouraged by a foreign minister, were seized, severely chastised, and sent into exile. Among them was a court beauty, whose charms had long given umbrage to the czarina, and we may easily conceive that the revenge was doubly sweet which could at once destroy the rebel and the rival. But the number of these victims was small, compared with that which was consigned to unknown dungeons, and doomed to pass the rest of life in hopeless despondency. With all her humanity, Elizabeth suffered that most inquisitorial court, the secret chancery, to subsist; and the denunciations which were laid before it were received as implicitly as the clearest evidence in other tribunals.

### *Foreign Affairs (1743-1757 A.D.)*

In her foreign policy this empress seems scarcely to have had an object. Averse to business, and fond of pleasure, she allowed her ministers, especially Bestuzhev, to direct the operations of the wars in which she was engaged, and to conduct at will the diplomacy of the empire. Her first enemy was Sweden. That power demanded the restitution of Finland, and was refused; hostilities which, indeed, had commenced at the instigation of France during the last reign, were resumed, but they were prosecuted with little vigour by the Swedes. The valour of the nation appeared to have died with their hero, Charles XII. So unfortunate were their arms that, by the Treaty of Nystad, in 1721, and that of Åbo, in 1743, Livonia, Esthonia, Karelia, Ingermanland, Viborg, and Kexholm passed under the domination of Russia.

Still worse than the loss of their possessions was the influence thenceforward exercised over the court of Stockholm by that of St. Petersburg. In vain did Sweden endeavour to moderate the exactions of the empress by electing the duke of Holstein, her nephew, successor to the throne of the Goths: the Treaty of Åbo was not the less severe. It is, indeed, true that the intelligence of this election did not reach St. Petersburg until Elizabeth herself, who was resolved never to marry,<sup>1</sup> had already nominated Duke Peter as her own successor; but she ought to have received in a better spirit a step designed as an act of homage to herself.

Had Elizabeth known her own interests, she would never have engaged in the celebrated war which during so many years shook all Europe to its centre. But, in the first place, she affected much commiseration for the Polish king, whose Saxon dominions were invaded by the Prussians, and whom she called

<sup>1</sup> She is said to have been privately married to a singer; but this is doubtful. What is certain is that her lovers were as numerous after as before the alleged union.

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her ally. In the second, she was evidently actuated by a personal antipathy to Frederick, and whoever were his enemies were sure to be her allies. It would, however, be wrong to suppose that personal feeling alone was her sole motive for interfering in a foreign war. There can be no doubt that even at this early period, and indeed long before this period, the ministers of Russia had cast a longing eye on the possessions of Poland.

Courland and Semigallia, though nominally dependent on the Polish crown, were in reality provinces of Russia. They had been lost to Poland through the marriage of Anna, niece of Peter I, to Kettler, sovereign of the duchy. Though she had no issue; though Ferdinand, the successor of Kettler, was also childless; though the Polish diet contended, with justice, that the fief was revertible to the republic, Anna was resolved that its future destiny should be changed. Under the pretext of certain pecuniary claims, the Russian troops overran the territory; and the states were compelled to elect Biron, the parent of the empress, to the vacant dignity. After the fall of that unprincipled adventurer, the states, disgusted with Russian preponderance, had ventured to unite their suffrages in favour of Charles, son of Frederick Augustus III king of Poland; but Frederick durst not sanction the election until he had obtained the permission of the empress Elizabeth. She could, for once, well afford to be generous; and Duke Charles was suffered to take possession of the dignity. And, while on this subject, we may so far anticipate events as to add that Peter III, successor of Elizabeth, refused to admit the rights of Charles, whom he expelled from the duchy; and that Catherine II incorporated it with her dominions. That Elizabeth herself had the ambitious views of her father, in reference not only to Courland but to other provinces, is certain; and, as we have already observed, one of her motives for engaging in the great European contest was the prospect of ulterior advantages. The pretext of succouring an ally was sufficient to justify, in the eyes of Europe, the march of her armies. In this respect, her policy was *macchiavellian* enough. But to her the war was an imprudent one; whatever her views, the time was not yet arrived when they could be fully executed. Nor were the events always honourable to the military glory of the empire. The reason is generally and, perhaps, justly assigned to the partiality of the grand duke Peter, the heir presumptive, for the Prussian monarch — a partiality so great as to be inexplicable. The Russian generals, however anxious to win the favour of their sovereign, still more the honours of successful warfare, were yet loth to incur the dislike of Peter: hence the operations were indecisive; and success, when gained, was not pursued.

### *Antecedents of the Future Peter III*

Charles Peter Ulrich, duke of Holstein Gottorp, whom Elizabeth had nominated her successor, who had embraced the Greek religion, and who, at his baptism, had received the name of Peter Fedorovitch, had arrived at St. Petersburg immediately after her accession. He was then in his fourteenth year. The education of this unfortunate prince was neglected; and the cause must be attributed alike to his own aversion to study and to the indifference of the empress. Military exercises were the only occupation for which he had any relish, and in them he was indulged. At the palace of Oranienbaun, with which his aunt had presented him, he passed the months of his absence from court — a period of freedom for which he always sighed. As his recollections were German, so also were his affections. He had little respect for those over whom he was one day to reign: instead of native, he

surrounded himself with young German officers. His addiction to such exercises became a passion, and was doubtless one of the causes that so strongly indisposed him to more serious and more important pursuits.

But it was not the only cause. In his native province he had probably learned to admire another propensity, common enough in his time — that of hard drinking; and it was not likely to be much impaired in such a country as Russia. His potations, which were frequent and long, were encouraged by his companions; and, in a few years, he became a complete bacchanalian. If we add that both he and they indulged in gratifications still more criminal — in licentious amours — we shall not hesitate to believe the charge of profligacy with which he has been assailed. Whether the empress was for some time privy to his excesses has been disputed; but probability affirms that she was, and that, by conniving at these ignoble pursuits, her policy was to keep him at a distance from the affairs of state. In this base purpose she was, from motives sufficiently obvious, zealously assisted by her ministers, especially by Bestuzhev. Profligate as was the grand duke, he was displeased with this state of restraint; and he sometimes complained of it with a bitterness that was sure to be exaggerated by the spies whom they had placed near him.

### *The Future Catherine II Appears*

The empress paid little attention to the reports concerning him. Her purpose was to disqualify him for governing, to render him too contemptible to be dreaded; nor was she much offended with his murmurs. That purpose was gained; for Peter had the reputation of being at once ignorant, vicious, and contemptible. In a country so fertile in revolutions, where unprincipled adventurers were ever ready to encourage the discontent of anyone likely to disturb the existing order of things, this reputation was one of the surest safeguards of Elizabeth's throne. She no longer feared that he would be made the tool of the designing, and she secretly exulted in the success of a policy which Macchiavelli himself would have admired. Nor did she prove herself unworthy of that great master in the refined hypocrisy which made her represent her nephew as a prince of hopeful talents. But even she blushed at some of his irregularities; and, in the view of justifying him, had furnished him with a wife. Her choice was unfortunate; it was Sophia Augusta, daughter of the prince of Anhalt-Zerbst, who, on her conversion to the Greek faith — a necessary preliminary to her marriage — had received the baptismal name of Catherine.

This union was entitled to the more attention as in its consequences it powerfully affected not only the whole of Russia but the whole of Europe. Shortly before its completion Peter was seized with the smallpox, which left hideous traces on his countenance. The sight of him is said so far to have so affected Catherine that she fainted away. But, though she was only in her sixteenth year, ambition had already over her more influence than the tender passion, and she smothered her repugnance. Unfortunately, the personal qualities of the husband were not of a kind to remove the ill impression; if he bore her any affection, which appears doubtful, his manners were rude, even vulgar; and she blushed for him whenever they met in general society. What was still worse, she soon learned to despise his understanding; and it required little penetration to foresee that, whatever might be his title after Elizabeth's death, the power must rest with Catherine. Hence the courtiers in general were more assiduous in their attentions to her than to him — a circumstance



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which did not much dispose him for the better. Finding no charms in his new domestic circle, he naturally turned to his boon companions; his orgies became frequent, and Catherine was completely neglected. Hence her indifference was exchanged into absolute dislike.

The contrast between their characters exhibited itself in their conduct. While he was thus earning contempt for himself, she was assiduously strengthening her party. She had the advantage — we should rather say the curse — of being directed by a wily mother, who had accompanied her into Russia, and whose political intrigues were so notorious that at length she was ordered by the empress to return into Germany. The grand duchess, however, had been too well tutored to suffer much by her mother's departure; and she prosecuted her purpose with an ardour that would have done honour to a better cause.

So long as the German princess remained at court, the conduct of Catherine was outwardly decorous; but now less restraint was observable in her behaviour. She was little deterred by the fear of worldly censure, in a court where the empress herself was anything but a model of chastity; and her marital fidelity soon came to be more than doubtful.

### *Court Intrigues; the Death of Elizabeth (1762 A.D.)*

That, in concert with several Russian nobles, of whom Bestuzhev was the chief, Catherine meditated the exclusion of her husband from the throne and the elevation of herself as regent during the minority of her son Paul, is a fact that can no longer be disputed. Hence the criminal condescension of the chancellor to the views of Catherine; hence his efforts to prevail on the empress to nominate the infant Paul as her successor. The indiscretion of the grand duke, who was no favourite with anybody; his frequent complaints of the tutelage in which he was held; his bursts of indignation at his exclusion from the councils of the empire — were carefully related to his aunt, with such exaggeration as were most likely to destroy the last traces of the lingering regard she bore him. All, indeed, who had been the friends of Catherine, all who had shared in the confidence of the minister, might well contemplate with alarm the succession of one that had vowed revenge against the partisans of both. Besides, the contempt which Peter felt, and which he seldom hesitated to express, for the Russian people, rendered his succession far from agreeable to them.

Thus, when, in 1757, Apraxin, field marshal of the Russian forces, invaded Prussia, took Memel, and, near Jägerndorf, obtained a brilliant victory over the troops of Frederick, yet, as if defeated, instantly fell back upon Courland, the cause was something more than the fear of offending Peter. This retrograde movement surprising, as well it might, both the empress and her people, Apraxin was placed under arrest, and the command of the army bestowed on another general. He was tried for the crime, but absolved — a result still more surprising to men who regarded merely the surface of things. The reason was that the grand-chancellor, Bestuzhev, had secretly ordered the marshal to retreat, and was, of course, his protector in the trial. It was not to please the heir-presumptive of the crown, whose blind adoration of the Prussian king was so well known, that Bestuzhev despatched the secret order for Apraxin to retreat: it was that the chiefs of the army, of whom many were his creatures, might be ready to join in effecting the revolution which was meditated. But the

ambitious minister, presuming on the distaste which his imperial mistress generally showed for affairs, and still more on her bodily indisposition, which at this time placed her life in danger, proceeded too rapidly. His intrigues were discovered; his letter to the marshal was produced; he was deprived of all his power; and Peter had the joy of seeing him exiled.

The general who succeeded Apraxin obtained advantages over the Prussian monarch, which had never been contemplated by his predecessor. But though he took Königsberg, placed most of Prussia under contribution, and defeated the Prussian army in a decisive engagement, he, too, was unwilling to irritate beyond forgiveness the heir of the empire, especially as the reports which daily reached him of Elizabeth's health convinced him that the succession was not far distant. Under the pretext of illness, he demanded leave to retire. His successor, Soltikov (not, we may be sure, the favourite of that name), was still more successful. Frederick was defeated in one of the best contested battles of this famous war; Berlin was taken, and Kolberg reduced after a vigorous siege. The news of this last success reached the empress, but she was no longer capable of deriving satisfaction from it. Much to her honour, she withstood all the solicitations of the intriguers who wished to exclude her nephew and to place Paul on the throne, under the regency of his mother. She died on the 5th day of January, 1762.<sup>b</sup>

#### *Spread of Art, Literature, and Education under Elizabeth*

The empress Elizabeth had a passion for building; Peter the Great's summer palace and even the empress Anna's winter palace appeared to her small and confined. Upon the site of the latter she began to build the present edifices; during her reign was also built the vast, elegant, and beautiful palace at Tsarskoi Selo; the palace of Oranienbaum was reconstructed, and the fine churches of the Smolni convent, of Vladimirskaia and of Nicholas Morskoi (in St. Petersburg) were also erected. Some handsome private houses were built by Elizabeth's noblemen, and in general St. Petersburg, which had not long before been a desert place, consisting chiefly of wooden houses, became greatly embellished; the palace quay, as may be seen from drawings and engravings of the time, already showed a continuous row of huge stone edifices.

Of course all these buildings cost enormous sums which led private persons into debt and the government into superfluous expenditure, but it is impossible not to observe that there was to be seen in this luxury an artistic quality which had never before existed. The finest edifices of that period form a special style, which after temporary neglect is now beginning to be imitated; the creator of this style in Russia was Count Rastrelli — a foreigner, of whom, however, Russia has the right to speak. The palaces and churches built by Rastrelli merit description, and although painting at that time did not represent a very high standard, yet the ceilings painted in accordance with the fashion of the day, with bouquets of flowers and mythological goddesses, even now attract the attention of artists. The grandees gave high prices for pictures by foreign masters; their houses became distinguished not only for their handsome façades but also for the comfort of their interior arrangements; it would hardly be possible, for instance, to imagine anything more nobly elegant than the house of the chancellor Vorontzov (now the *corps des Pages*).

All these beautiful architectural productions, and likewise those of music and painting, were for the greater part the work of foreign artists — visitors to Russia; but under their influence Russian artists were formed and taste developed. The church of Nicholas Morskoi was built by a pupil of Rastrelli.

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The almost daily theatrical representations produced at court gave rise to the idea of organising similar representations at the *corps des Cadets*. The empress took a lively interest in them; she often assisted at them and lent her diamonds for the women's costumes. In their turn these representations could not but assist the development of a taste for the stage, for dramatic art and literature in general and from amongst the number of cadet actors not a few became well-known writers, as for instance Beketov, Kheraskov, and Sumarokov.

We must dwell for a few moments on Sumarokov — a man who in his time enjoyed an extensive literary reputation and secured for himself the appellation of Father of the Russian Stage. The love of literature, and especially of the stage, was already developed in Sumarokov when he was in the corps des Cadets; when he was afterwards made aide-de-camp to Razumovski, he could almost daily assist at operas and ballets. At that period he read with avidity the dramatic authors then in fashion: Corneille, Racine, Voltaire, and Molière became his idols; he decided to try to imitate them in his own native language, then very undeveloped, and in 1747 he wrote a tragedy, the *Chorists*.

It was not the merits of this work, which were very insignificant, but the unwontedness of the appearance of an original Russian tragedy, and besides that the fact of its being in verse, that so astounded and enraptured his contemporaries that they proclaimed Sumarokov the "Russian Racine"; encouraged by such a success he wrote a second and yet, a third tragedy; he took up comedy (for which he had hardly any more vocation) and in fact wrote a whole repertory; there were, however, no actors; because neither in St. Petersburg nor in Moscow did there any longer exist such companies and such theatres as were begun in the time of Peter.

Meanwhile, far away from both capitals, in Yaroslav there was formed, almost of itself without any commands or even any encouragement being given, a Russian dramatic company which is indissolubly bound up with the name of Volkov. Theodore Volkov was the son of a merchant and had been educated in the Yaroslav seminary, where, following the example of the Academy of Kiev, and others, representations of a spiritual or religious character were given. They produced a great impression upon the young merchant; when later on he managed to get to St. Petersburg and saw on the stage of the corps des Cadets a dramatic representation given with scenery, lighting, and mechanical contrivances, Volkov was stupefied with rapture and astonishment. Being to the highest degree sensitive to every artistic impression, being a painter, a musician, and a sculptor — all self-taught — Volkov was also endued with that constancy and patience without which even gifted natures do not attain to any results. Volkov studied the material side of scenic art to the smallest detail — that is, the arrangement of the machinery, of the scenes, etc.; when he returned to Yaroslav he asked his parents, with whom he lived, to let him have an empty tanner's shed; there he arranged a pit and a stage, and making up a company of young merchants like himself, sons of citizens and clerks, gave representations which aroused the enthusiasm of all the spectators. The intelligent and practical Volkov, seeing how the population of Yaroslav flocked to his representations, named a price for them — a five kopeck piece for the first rows — and thus little by little he amassed a sum with which in 1752 he was able to build a general public theatre with room for one thousand spectators.

The taste for the stage had meanwhile greatly spread in St. Petersburg; in various private houses dramatic representations were given at evening par-



ties; it was therefore not surprising that the Iaroslav theatre soon began to be talked of. The empress invited Volkov to come to St. Petersburg with his company, as she wished to see his representations given on the stage of the court theatre. She was remarkably pleased with them, and four years later issued an ukase for the establishment of a public theatre. The first director of this theatre and almost the only dramatic writer was Sumarokov; according to the testimony of contemporaries Volkov was one of its most talented actors and his friend and fellow worker Dmitrievski a great artist.

We must here speak of another still more remarkable Russian native genius — Lomonosov. It is well known how, when he was a youth of sixteen, devoured by a thirst for knowledge, he secretly left the paternal roof and made his way on foot from Kholmogori to Moscow. How unattractive must life and learning have appeared to him in those early days! "Having only one altyn (a three-kopeck piece) a day for salary, it was impossible for him to spend more on food than a halfpenny a day for bread and a halfpenny worth of *kvass* (a kind of beer or mead); the rest had to go for paper, books, and other necessities." Thus he described his life in the Zaikonospaskvi Ecclesiastical Academy to Ivan Shuvalov and concluded with the following words: "I lived thus for five years and did not abandon science!" Theodore Prokopovitch, when he was already an old man, visited the Moscow academy a few years before his death; he noticed Lomonosov there and praised him for his laboriousness and learning. In 1737 Lomonosov was sent abroad to perfect himself and placed himself under the surveillance of the then famous scholar, Wolff, who, while despising him for his disorderly life, spoke with respect of his capacities and success in study. Lomonosov followed the lectures of the German professors and amused himself with the German students. The news of Minikh's great victories and the taking of Khotin reached him; his patriotic feelings were aroused, and he wrote an ode. When the verses were received in St. Petersburg everyone was struck with their harmony; and when Lomonosov returned from Germany in the beginning of Elizabeth's reign his reputation as a poet had already preceded him — the more he wrote the greater his fame became. Poetry, however, was not Lomonosov's strongest point, and verses do not occupy a quarter of his entire works. His mind worked even more than his imagination, and his scholarly writings are striking in their variety. He composed a grammar of the Russian language from which several generations have learned; he laid down rules of versification, the foundation of which are even now recognised by everyone; he wrote on chemistry, physics, astronomy, metallurgy, geology; he composed a Russian history, wrote a hypothesis concerning the great learned expeditions and memoranda bearing on questions of the state (as for instance measures for increasing and maintaining the population in Russia): in fact, Lomonosov's extraordinary intellect seemed to touch upon every branch of mental activity. He was made a member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences, but there the German element reigned supreme and Lomonosov was one of those who, while venerating the work of Peter the Great and the European learning introduced by him, yet was oppressed by foreign tutorage and took offence when the Germans put forward their own countrymen to the detriment of meritorious Russians. Continual disputes and quarrels arose between Lomonosov and his fellow members; nor, being of a very impetuous and obstinate nature, was Lomonosov always in the right. His rough and sharp measures frequently led him into quarrels even outside the academy, for instance with his literary brethren, Frediakovski and Sumarokov. All this might greatly have injured Lomonosov, but for-

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tunately for him he possessed powerful protectors in the persons of Count Worontzov and Count Razumovski, who liked to show favour to the first Russian scholar and poet.

But the strongest, truest, and most constant of his protectors was Ivan Shuvalov. Shuvalov had many defects — his character was weak, lazy, and careless; but he nevertheless represented one of the most consolatory types of his epoch: strong, energetic types were not uncommon in the first half of the eighteenth century, but gentle, benevolent, indulgent natures were rarely to be met with. Shuvalov was not captivated by clamorous deeds, like the men of Peter's time, but by the peaceful progress of science and art. Therefore if the weakness of his character made him an instrument for the ambitious designs of his cousin, his heartfelt sympathies drew him towards Lomonosov, of whom he naturally learned much and — what is of more importance — with whom he devised means for the spread of education in Russia. The result of these deliberations was a vast plan for the establishment of schools throughout the governments, and finally of a university in Moscow. The establishment of a university seemed of the first necessity, as it was to furnish Russia with teachers; this had been Peter's intention with regard to the academy, but it had not been fulfilled. In his report to the senate upon this subject, Shuvalov wrote that it would be desirable to appoint a "sufficient number of worthy men of the Russian nationality, acquainted with the sciences, to spread education in distant parts among the common people, so that thus superstition, dissent, and other like heresies proceeding from ignorance might be destroyed." The senate approved Shuvalov's proposition and in 1755 the University of Moscow was founded.

We have given as just and complete a picture of the period of the empress Elizabeth as is possible in view of the scarcity of information obtainable concerning many circumstances of that time. Elizabeth left behind her if not a great memory yet, broadly speaking, a good one. Her administration may be reproached with much: in its foreign policy it was not sufficiently independent; it was not sufficiently watchful in interior affairs, where oversights occasioned special evils; moreover examples of unlawful enrichment attained huge dimensions. But her reign may be said to have led Russia out of bondage to the Germans, while the level of education was not in the smallest degree lowered, but on the contrary considerably raised. Much that brought forth such brilliant fruits under Catherine II was sown under Elizabeth.<sup>d</sup>

### *Estimates of Elizabeth*

Bain<sup>9</sup> finds it a peculiar glory of Elizabeth Petrovna that she followed always in the footsteps of her illustrious father. Noting that Russia was the creation of Peter (before him there having been only Muscovy), he notes also that this new principality was many times in danger during the fifteen years following his death. And he sees in Elizabeth the power that sustained the empire. "Beneath her beneficent sceptre," he declares, "Russia may be said to have possessed itself again." He credits her with possessing her father's sovereign gift of choosing and using able councillors; and with having "an infinite good nature, radiant affability, and patriarchal simplicity, which so endeared her to her subjects as to make her, most deservedly, the most popular of Russian monarchs." In common with other critics, he feels that she laid the foundation upon which Catherine II was to build. He declares that all the great captains who were to serve Catherine with such effect—men like Rumiantsev, Suvarov, Riephin, Besborodko, the Panins and the Galitzins—were brought up in the school of Elizabeth.

Much of this is beyond controversy, but it is necessary to add that the private character of the sovereign was not such as to be spoken of with enthusiasm. Bell<sup>b</sup> defines its chief feature as voluptuousness. He notes with approval a certain sympathetic trait that led her to the abolition of capital punishment, but he declares that she was, on the whole, "no less feeble in mind than she was vicious in conduct." "Her superstition," he adds, "was equal to her lust; the sight of a person in mourning affected her more than a whole street of starving families; and her conscience reproached her more for violating a fast than for outraging the most sacred of moral virtues. While she encouraged a system of espionage destructive of all domestic freedom and happiness; while she punished with inexcusable rigour the crime of eating an egg on a day of abstinence, she was in no degree offended with the spread of the most baleful vices." But such contradictions as are here suggested between the public efficiency and the private character of a Russian sovereign are no novelty, as we shall have occasion to see in the succeeding pages. Moreover, it should not be forgotten that gossip is likely to exaggerate the frailties of a monarch situated as was Elizabeth. Circumstances that might have passed unnoticed in the history of an ordinary individual were sure to attain the widest publicity, and to be distorted with all the elements of exaggeration that characterise rumours of a disagreeable character. Making due allowance for this, however, there still seems little reason to doubt that Elizabeth's personal views of morality were curiously distorted. Still, in judging her, we may recall Bain's declaration that she had "passed through the bitter but salutary school of adversity." If she had "learnt the necessity of circumspection, deliberation, self-control," she had learnt also to hold in contempt certain of the elementary virtues. Meantime, her outlook upon the political world was wide and clear, and the tactfulness with which she approached her subjects and dealt with those with whom she came into personal contact, was of so subtle an order that her personal popularity was well earned. Her energy and firmness considerably facilitated the task of Catherine II.<sup>a</sup>

#### PETER III (1762 A.D.)

As Elizabeth, on her death-bed, had confirmed the rights of Peter III; and as the conspirators, deprived of Bestuzhev their guide, were unable to act with energy, the new emperor encountered no opposition. On the contrary, he was immediately recognised by the military; and the archbishop of Novgorod, in the sermon preached on the occasion, thanked heaven that a prince so likely to imitate his illustrious grandfather was vouchsafed to Russia. Catherine was present. She wore a peculiar dress to conceal her pregnancy, and her countenance exhibited some indication of the anxious feeling which she was obliged to repress. Compelled to defer the execution of her ambitious purposes, and uncertain what vengeance the czar might exert for her numerous infidelities, she might well be apprehensive.

But she had no real foundation for the fear. Of all the sovereigns of that or any age, Peter was among the most clement. Whether he thought that clemency might bind to his interests one whose talents he had learned to respect, or that her adherents were too numerous and powerful to allow of her being punished — whether, in short, he had some return of affection for her, or his own conscience told him that she had nearly as much to forgive as he could have, we will not decide. One thing only is certain — that, in about three months after his accession, he invested her with the domains held by the



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late empress. Certainly his was a mind incapable of long continued resentment. His heart was better than his head. Resolved to signalise his elevation by making others happy, he recalled all whom his predecessor had exiled, except Bestuzhev. Many he restored to their former honours and possessions. Thus the aged Munich was made governor-general of Siberia, restored to his military command; while Biron, who certainly deserved no favour, was reinvested with the duchy of Courland. He did more: he restored the prisoners made by the generals of Elizabeth, and gave them money to defray their passage home. And, as Frederick had always been the object of his idolatry, the world expected the armistice which he published, and which was preparatory to a peace between the two countries.

That declaration was an extraordinary document. In it the emperor declares that, his first duty being the welfare of his people, that welfare could not be consulted so long as hostilities were continued; that the war, which had raged six years, had produced no advantage to either party, but done incredible harm to both; that he would no longer sanction the wanton destruction of his species; that, in conformity with the divine injunction relative to the preservation of the people committed to his charge, he would put an end to the unnatural, impious strife; and that he was resolved to restore the conquests made by his troops. In this case he had been praised, and with great justice, for his moderation. We fear, however, he does not merit so high a degree of praise of humanity as many writers have asserted. At this moment, while proclaiming so loudly his repugnance to war, he was sending troops into his native principality of Holstein, with the intention of wresting from the king of Denmark the duchy of Schleswig, which he considered the rightful inheritance of his family. He even declared that he would never rest until he had sent that prince to Malabar.

Nor must we omit to add that from the enemy he became the ally of Frederick; that his troops joined with the Prussians to expel the Austrians from the kingdom. His humanity only changed sides; if it spared the blood of Prussians, it had little respect for that of Austrians. We may add, too, that there was something like madness in his enthusiastic regard for Frederick. He corresponded with that monarch, whom he proclaimed his master, whose uniform he wore, and in whose armies he obtained the rank of major-general. Had he been capable of improvement, his intercourse with that far-sighted prince might have benefited him. Frederick advised him to celebrate at Moscow his coronation — a rite of superstitious importance in the eyes of the multitude. He was advised, too, not to engage in the Danish war, not to leave the empire. But advice was lost on him.

In some other respects, Peter deserves more credit than the admirers of Catherine are willing to allow him. (1) Not only did he pardon his personal enemies — not only did the emperor forget the wrongs of the grand duke — but on several he bestowed the most signal favours. He suppressed that



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abominable inquisitorial court, the secret chancery, which had consigned so many victims to everlasting bondage, which had received delations from the most obscure and vicious of men, which had made every respectable master of a family tremble lest his very domestics should render him amenable to that terrible tribunal. Had this been the only benefit of his reign, well would he have been entitled to the gratitude of Russia. (2) He emancipated the nobles from the slavish dependence on the crown, so characteristic of that barbarous people. Previous to his reign, no boyar could enter on any profession, or forsake it when it when once embraced, or retire from public to private life, or dispose of his property, or travel into any foreign country, without the permission of the czar. By breaking their chains at one blow, he began the career of social emancipation. (3) The military discipline of the nation loudly demanded reform, and he obeyed the call. He rescued the officers from the degrading punishments previously inflicted; he introduced a better system of tactics; and he gave more independence to the profession. He did not, however, exempt the common soldier from the corporal punishment which at any moment his superior officers might inflict. (4) He instituted a useful court to take cognisance of all offences committed against the public peace, and to chastise the delinquencies of the men entrusted with the general police of the empire. (5) He encouraged commerce, by lessening the duties on certain imports, and by abolishing them on certain exports. (6) In all his measures, all his steps, he proved himself the protector of the poor. In fact, one reason for the dislike with which he was regarded by the nobles arose from the preference which he always gave to the low over the high.

### *Impolitic Acts of Peter III*

But if impartial history must thus eulogise many of this monarch's acts, the same authority must condemn more. He exhibited everywhere great contempt for the people whom he was called to govern. He had no indulgence for their prejudices, however indifferent, however inveterate. Thus, in commanding that the secular clergy should no longer wear long beards, and should wear the same garb as the clergy of other countries, he offended his subjects to a degree almost inconceivable to us. In ordering the images to be removed from the churches — he was still a Lutheran, if anything — he did not lessen the odium which his other acts had produced. The archbishop of Novgorod flatly refused to obey him, and was in consequence exiled; but the murmurs of the populace compelled the czar to recall him. Still more censurable were his efforts to render the church wholly dependent on the state — to destroy everything like independence in its ministers; to make religion a mere engine in the hands of arbitrary power for the attainment of any object. His purpose, in fact, was to seize all the demesnes of the church — its extensive estates, its numerous serfs — and to pension the clergy like other functionaries.

In the ukase published on this occasion, he expressed a desire to relieve ecclesiastics of the temporal cares so prejudicial to their ghostly utility; to see that they indeed renounced the world, and free from the burden of perishing treasures, applied their whole attention to the welfare of souls. He therefore decreed that the property of the church should in future be managed by imperial officers; and that the clergy should receive, from the fund thus accumulated, certain annual pensions, corresponding to their stations. Thus the archbishops of Novgorod, Moscow, and St. Petersburg were to have each

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2,500 rubles; and the same sum was to be allowed for the support of their households, of their capitular clergy, and for the sustentation of the sacred edifices. But the twenty-three other archbishops and bishops were to have only 3,000 rubles for both purposes. The salaries of the other ecclesiastics were carefully graduated. The inferior were divided into three classes — individuals of the first to receive 500, of the second 300, of the third 150 rubles per annum. The surplus funds were to be applied to the foundation of hospitals, to the endowment of colleges, and to the general purposes of the state.

Peter attempted these and other innovations in virtue of the two-fold character which, from the time of his grandfather, the czars had been anxious to assume, as supreme heads alike of religion and of the state. Not even the grand lama of Thibet ever arrogated a higher degree of theocratic authority. Indeed, our only surprise is that in addition to their other functions they did not assume that of bishops; that they did not array themselves in pontificals, and celebrate mass at the altar. But they certainly laid something like a claim to the sacerdotal character. Thus, on the death of the patriarch, Peter I opposed the election of another supreme head of the church; and when he found that the synod durst not venture on so far irritating the people as to dispense with the dignity, he insisted on being elected himself. If the sultan of Constantinople combined with himself the two-fold character, why should it be refused to him? The reign of Peter was too short to permit his designs of spoliation to be carried into effect; but, by confirming the dangerous precedent of his grandfather, he had done enough, and his successor Catherine was enabled to complete the robbery which he commenced.

But the most inpolitic measure of Peter — that which rendered those who might have defended him indifferent to his fate — was his conduct towards the imperial guards. Two regiments he ordered to be in readiness for the Danish war. This was contrary to custom. In the faith of remaining near the court, most of the soldiers had embraced the military life; and they were as indignant as they were surprised when told that they must exchange the dissipations of a metropolis for the fatigues and privations attending a distant campaign. They were offended, too, with the introduction of the Prussian discipline, which they found by experience to be far more rigid than that to which they had hitherto been subject; and they patriotically condemned the innovation as prejudicial to the military fame of the empire. Still more irritating was the preference which he everywhere gave to the German over the native troops. His most intimate friends were Germans; the officers around his person were of the same nation; Germans directed the manœuvres not only of his household but of all his regiments; and a German — Prince George of Holstein, his uncle — was placed at the head of all the imperial armies.

Couple these acts of imprudence with others of which he was hourly guilty. In his palace of Oranienbaum he constructed a Lutheran chapel; and though he appears to have been indifferent to every form of religion, he held this in much more respect than the Greek form, which in fact, he delighted to ridicule. If churchmen became his enemies, the people in general were not likely to become his friends when they heard of a boast — probably a true one — that in the last war he had acquainted the Prussian monarch with the secrets of the imperial cabinet. Lastly, he insulted men of honour by making them the jest of his buffoons.

Circumstances much less numerous and much less cogent than these would have sufficed so ambitious, able, and unprincipled a woman as Catherine to organise a powerful conspiracy against the czar. But he was accused



of many other things of which he was perfectly innocent. In fact, no effort seems to have been spared to invent and propagate stories to his disadvantage. In some instances, it is scarcely possible to separate the true from the false. Whether, for example, he, from the day of his accession, resolved to divorce his wife, to marry his mistress, to set aside Paul from succession, and to adopt Ivan, still confined in the fortress of Schlüsselburg, can never be known with certainty. That he secretly visited that unhappy prince seems undoubted; but we have little evidence for the existence of the design attributed to him. If, in fact, he sincerely contemplated raising the daughter of Count Vorontzov to the imperial throne, he would scarcely have adopted Ivan, unless he felt assured that no issue would arise from the second marriage. He could not, however, entertain any regard for a consort who had so grievously injured him, and little for a boy whom he knew was not his own. And, as there is generally some foundation for every report, there seems to be no doubt that Peter had promised to marry his mistress if she survived his wife. The report was enough for Catherine: on it she built her own story that her life was in danger; and that if her son were not designed for a similar fate, he would at least have that of Ivan.

### *Catherine Plots against the Czar*

The anxiety of the empress to secure adherents was continually active; and as her husband passed so much time in drunkenness, her motions were not so closely scrutinised as they should have been. Gregory Orlov, her criminal favourite, was the man in whom she placed the most reliance. Gregory had four brothers — all men of enterprise, of courage, of desperation; and none of them restricted by the least moral principle. Potemkin, afterwards so celebrated, was the sixth. This man was, perhaps, the most useful of the conspirators, as by means of his acquaintance with the priests of the metropolis he was able to enlist that formidable body in the cause. They were not slow to proclaim the impiety of the czar, his contempt of the orthodox faith, his resolution “to banish the fear of the Lord” from the Russian court, to convert churches into hospitals and barracks, to seize on all revenues of the church, and to end by compelling the most orthodox of countries to embrace the errors of Luther. The archimandrites received these reports from the parish priests, the bishops from the archimendrites; nor was there much difficulty in obtaining an entrance for them into the recesses of the neighbouring monasteries. The hetman of the Cossacks, an officer of great authority and of great riches, was next gained. Not less effectual than he was the princess Dashkov, who, though the sister of Peter’s mistress, was the most ardent of the conspirators: perhaps the threatened exaltation of that sister, by rendering her jealous, only strengthened her attachment to the czarina. Through the instrumentality of this woman, Count Panin, the foreign minister and the governor of the grand duke Paul, was gained over. Whether the argument employed was, as one writer asserts, the sacrifice of her sister, or whether, as another affirms, she was the daughter of the count, who notoriously intrigued with her mother, is of no moment. What is certain is, that the count was exceedingly fond of her; and one authority expressly asserts that he became acquainted with the details of the conspiracy before her, and admitted her into the plot. This, however, is less probable than the relation we have given; for the princess had long been the friend of Catherine.

Her activity was unceasing. A Piedmontese adventurer, Odart by name, being forced to leave his native country for some crime, and having tried in

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vain to obtain a subsistence in the neighbouring capitals, wisely resolved to try his fortune in St. Petersburg — a city where guilt might reside with impunity, and where it had only to be successful to win the applause of mankind. As he had a considerable knowledge of the fine arts, especially of music and painting, he had little difficulty in obtaining an introduction to the princess Dashkov. She, who had a shrewd insight into human character, soon perceived that this supple, crafty, active, sober, intriguing, unprincipled foreigner was just the man that was required to act as spy and confidential agent. He was introduced to Catherine, whose opinion confirmed that of her favourite. No choice could, indeed, have been better. Little cared he in what service he was employed. If a partisan were to be gained, no man could be more insinuating; if an enemy were to be removed, he had his pistols and his dirk, without which he never appeared in the street. His penetration soon enabled him to secure the aid of two other braves — the one, Possik, a lieutenant in the guards; the other, Globov, a lawyer in the employment of the senate. Of the character of these men, some notion may be formed from the fact that Possik offered to stab the emperor in the midst of the court. He knew how to ally duplicity with desperation; he was at once the hypocritical intriguer and the remorseless bravo.

Through the same Princess Dashkov, Volkonski, major-general of the guards, was won; and by Potemkin, or his ghostly allies, the archbishop of Novgorod was soon in the secret. The hetman of the Cossacks went further. Great as was the danger of entrusting that secret to many, he assembled the officers who served under him, assured them that he had heard of a conspiracy to dethrone the emperor, too irresistible to be appeased; and exhorted them to seize the favourable moment of propitiating the favour of the czarina, rather than, by remaining hostile or inactive, to bring down vengeance on their own heads. His advice had all the success that he could desire.

While these most vicious and in every way most worthless of men were thus employed in her behalf, Catherine was no less active. She knew that Count Panin espoused the cause of her son — less, perhaps, from affection to his charge, than from the hope of exercising more power under an infant emperor than under one of the mother's enterprising character. Her promise, that his influence should be second only to her own, made him her willing instrument. His defection constrained the rest of the conspirators: there was no more heard of a regency; and Catherine was to be proclaimed autocratrix of all the Russias.

Without increasing unnecessarily the number of the initiated, she yet prepared the minds of many for some impending change, and rendered them eager for its arrival by her artful and seasonable insinuations. If an officer of the guards stood near her, she whispered in his ear that the emperor had resolved on disbanding the present force, and exiling its chiefs; if an ecclesiastic, she bewailed the fate of the pure orthodox church; if a less interested person, she lamented her own misfortunes and those of her son — both doomed to immediate imprisonment, and she, at least, to an ultimate death. If a senator were near, she deplored the meditated destruction of the venerable and patriotic body to which he belonged; the transformation of the debauchees, perpetually around the emperor, into judges; and the substitution of the *Code Frédéric* for the ancient law of Russia.

By these means she prepared the minds of the people for the revolution: her affability, in fact, was the theme of their praise. But she did not trust merely to their good-will. She knew that, unless two or three regiments were secured, the insurrection might not find immediate supporters, and that the

critical moment might be lost. Without money this object could not be obtained; and though both she and her confidential agents voluntarily disbursed all that they could command, and converted their most valuable effects into coin, the amount was alarmingly inadequate. In this emergency she applied to the French ambassador for a loan; and when he showed less readiness to accommodate her than she expected, she addressed herself, we are told, to the ambassador from England, and with more success. But this statement is untrue: it was not the English ambassador, but an English merchant, who furnished her with the sum she demanded. With this aid, she prevailed on the greater part of three regiments to await the signal for joining her.

Though the conspirators were, in point of numbers, formidable, their attempt was one of danger. Peter was about to leave Russia for Holstein, to prosecute the war against the Danish king; and of the troops whom he had assembled, though the greater part were on their march, some were now with him, and might be induced to defend him. Besides, the two great divisions of his fleet were at Kronstadt and Revel, and nobody could foresee how they would act. The conspirators agreed that he should be taken by surprise; that midnight should see him transferred from the throne to a dungeon. The festival of St. Peter and St. Paul — one of high importance in the Greek church — was approaching: the following day the emperor had resolved to depart. It was to be celebrated at Peterhov; there it was resolved to arrest him.

But accident hastened the execution of the plot. Until the arrival of the festival, Peter left St. Petersburg for Oranienbaum, to pass in riot and debauchery the intervening time. Accompanied by the most dissolute of his favourites, and by many of the court ladies, he anticipated the excesses which awaited his arrival. That he had received some hints of a plot, though he was unacquainted alike with its object and authors, is exceedingly probable. His royal ally of Prussia is said to have advised him to be on his guard, and several notes are supposed to have been addressed to him by his own subjects. If such information was received, it made no impression on him; and indeed its vagueness might well render him indifferent to it. But on the eve of his departure, when the superior officer of Passik, who had accidentally learned that danger attended the steps of the emperor, denounced the lieutenant, and the culprit was arrested, he had an opportunity of ascertaining all the details of the conspiracy. He treated the denunciation with contempt; affirmed that Passik belonged to the dregs of the people, and was not to be dreaded; and proceeded to Oranienbaum. The culprit, though narrowly watched, had time to write a line to the hetman, whom he exhorted to instant action, if they wished to save their lives. The note fell into the hands of the princess Dashkov, who immediately assembled the conspirators.

Not a moment was to be lost: the presence of Catherine was indispensable; and, though it was midnight and she was at Peterhov, seven leagues distant from St. Petersburg, one of the Orlovs went to bring her. He arrived at the fortress, entered a private door, and by a secret staircase ascended to the apartments occupied by the empress. It was now two o'clock in the morning: the empress was asleep; and her surprise was not unmixed with terror, when she was awakened by a soldier. In a moment she comprehended her situation: she arose, called one of her women, and both, being hastily clad in a strange habit, descended with the soldier to one of the gates, passed the sentinel without being recognised, and stepped into the carriage which was waiting for her. Orlov was the driver, and he urged the horses with so much severity that before



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they had proceeded half way from Peterhov to St. Petersburg, they fell down from exhaustion. The situation of the empress was critical: she might at any moment be overtaken; and she was certain that with the dawn of day Peter would acquire some more definite intelligence of the plot. In a state bordering on distraction, she took refuge in the first house that she approached: it was a tavern, and here she burned the letters which had passed between her and the conspirators. Again she recommenced her journey on foot: by good fortune she met a countryman with a cart; Orlov seized the vehicle, the peasant ran away; Catherine ascended it, and, in this undignified manner, she, her woman, and Orlov entered St. Petersburg about seven o'clock on the morning of July the 9th.

*Catherine Usurps the Crown*

No sooner was Catherine in the capital than she was joined by the hetman; and, accompanied by him, she hastened to the barracks of the troops which he commanded. Four companies immediately declared for her; their example constrained the rest of the regiment; three other regiments, hearing the acclamation, and seeing the people hurry to the spot, joined in the cry; all St. Petersburg was in motion: a report was spread that she and her son had just escaped assassination by order of the czar; her adherents rapidly multiplied; and, accompanied by about two thousand soldiers, with five times that number of citizens, who loudly proclaimed her sovereign of Russia, she went to the church of Our Lady of Kazan. Here everything was prepared for her reception: the archbishop of Novgorod, with a host of ecclesiastics, awaited her at the altar; she swore to observe the laws and religion of the empire; the crown was solemnly placed on her head; she was proclaimed sole monarch of Russia, and the grand duke Paul her successor; and *Te Deum* concluded the eventful ceremony.

From the church she proceeded to the palace occupied by the late empress; the mob crowded to see her, and to take the oath of allegiance; while the more respectable portion of the citizens were awed into submission, or at least into silence, by a report that Peter had just been killed by falling from his horse. To gratify the populace, the taverns were abandoned to them: the same fate visited the houses of all who were obnoxious to the conspirators; intoxication was general; robbery was exercised with impunity; the palace, to which Catherine had hastened, was strengthened; a numerous guard was stationed in its defence; a manifesto was proclaimed; a notification was delivered into the hands of each foreign minister, and the revolution was complete.

One object of the conspirators had been to close every avenue of egress from the capital, that Peter might not be acquainted with the revolution until it was too powerful to be repressed. All the troops in the vicinity were called within the walls; but there was one regiment about sixteen hundred strong, which lay between the city and Peterhov, the conduct of which was doubtful. Without the slightest knowledge of what had taken place, the colonel arrived in the city, and was soon persuaded not only to declare for the new sovereign but to prevail on the regiment to follow his example. He was successful; and, with the whole body, he returned in triumph to the capital. On this very day Peter had promised to dine with Catherine: on reaching Peterhov he was surprised to hear of her flight. Vorontzov, the father of his mistress, the father also of the princess Dashkov, who had witnessed without repugnance the dishonour alike of his wife and daughter, proposed to the emperor to visit

St. Petersburg to ascertain the cause of her departure; and, if any insurrection were meditated, to suppress it. He arrived in the presence of the empress, was induced to swear allegiance to her, and was ordered to retire into his own house.

But Peter had already been informed of the revolution; and he traversed with hasty steps the gardens of Peterhov, indecisive and terrified. Yet he was not wholly deserted. The brave Munich, whose locks were ripened by age, and whose wisdom equalled his valour, advised him instantly to place himself at the head of his Holstein troops, march on the capital, and thereby enable all who were yet loyal to join him. Whether the result would have been such as the veteran anticipated, *viz.* a counter-revolution, may well be doubted; but there can be no doubt that a considerable number of soldiers would have joined him, and that he would have been able to enter into negotiations with the hostile party. He was too timid to adopt the suggestion: nothing, in fact, could urge him to decisive action. When informed that Catherine was making towards Peterhov, at the head of ten thousand men, all that he could resolve to do was to send messengers to her with proposals. His first was that the supreme power should be divided between them; the second, when no reply was deigned to his letter, that he should be allowed to leave Russia, with his mistress and a favourite, and pass the rest of his days in Holstein. She detained his messenger, and still advanced.

Munich now advised him to embark for Kronstadt, and join his fleet, which was still faithful; but unfortunately he delayed so long that one of Catherine's emissaries had time to corrupt the garrison of the fort: on arriving, he was prohibited from disembarking, and told that if he did not immediately retire his vessel would be sunk by the cannon of the place. Still he had a fleet at Revel; and if it were disloyal he might escape into Prussia, Sweden, or Holstein. With the fatality, however, which characterised all his measures on this eventful day, he returned to Oranienbaum, where he disembarked at four o'clock in the morning of July the 10th. Here he was soon visited by the emissaries of Catherine; was persuaded to sign an act of abdication; was conducted to Peterhov; was divested of all his imperial orders; was clad in a mean dress, and consigned, first to one of the country houses of the hetman, and soon afterwards to the fortress of Ropseha, about twenty miles distant from Peterhov. He was not allowed to see the empress; and his mistress and attendants were separated from him.<sup>b</sup>

### *Death of Peter III (1762 A.D.)*

What was to be done with Peter? At the deliberations on this question Catherine calmly listened to arguments as to the necessity of measures being taken in order that the former emperor should not injure her rule by disturbing weak minds; she clearly realised all the dangers that might be created for her, if not by Peter himself at any rate by his partisans. They were not numerous, yet they did exist and they might multiply in the future. It was necessary that Peter should be definitively made harmless, but how was it to be done? During the deliberations on the means to be taken, no restraint was imposed by Catherine's presence. The empress was not an Elizabeth Petrovna: she at once understood the uselessness of imprisonment at Schlüsselburg or any other place; she was not likely to fall into a fainting fit at any proposition made. The examples of Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great did not disturb her. Nevertheless, not one of those present, not even the persons nearest to her, reading in her eyes the secret desire decisively to finish once for all

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with this unbearable question, would have dared even to hint at an unnatural death — they knew Catherine, they might read her thought, but not aloud.

When the persons who surrounded Catherine were definitively convinced that Peter's removal was recognised by her as indispensable, they decided to devise a means for it without her knowledge and to accomplish it without her consent. In this were interested all the personal partisans of Catherine, those "chosen sons of the people," who had stirred up the empress to put herself at the head of the movement. They were far more interested in the matter than Catherine herself: the change had been brought about by all classes of society, by the whole nation, not by her; no one could even think of the detested Peter ascending the throne a second time — it was not on Catherine that the malecontents would revenge themselves, that is if there were or would be any, but on the "chosen of the people." Peter did not prevent a change being brought about; still, he might hinder not Catherine but many of the "chosen ones" from reaping the fruits of their labours. The Orlov brothers were above all interested in the matter; all of them, and especially Gregory, occupied important posts, which gave them the right to dream of great things; the realisation of these dreams could, it seemed to them, be prevented only by Peter's perpetual imprisonment. As long as Peter lived, Catherine was not free: it was now observed by everyone that in the manifesto of the 28th of June Peter was not once called the consort, the husband of Catherine; but such bonds imposed by the church are not broken either by manifestoes or imprisonment: Peter living, by the one fact of his being alive, prevented the Orlovs from attaining the final results of their efforts, their sacrifices. No matter by what means, somehow the Orlovs must guard not merely what was as yet only possible and cherished in their dreams, but the good fortune that had already been attained to; and, for this, haste must be made. The favour shown to them, especially to Gregory, was visible to every eye. At the court there were already snares laid for them, intrigues began to be carried on against them, endeavours were made to overthrow Gregory; if Gregory fell his brothers would fall with him. Haste must be made.

On Wednesday, the 3rd of July, on the fourth day after the appearance of the attacks of Peter's illness, in the evening the doctor, Leyders, came to Ropsha from St. Petersburg. On Thursday, the 4th of July, the former emperor probably grew worse: at any rate a second doctor came that day from St. Petersburg — the regimental surgeon Paulsen. The doctors did not observe any change for the worse, and according to the expressions of the language of contemporaries, the condition of the patient left nothing to be desired. Friday passed quietly. On Saturday, the 6th of July, in the morning while the prisoner was still asleep, the valet who attended on Peter went out into the garden, "to breathe the fresh air." An officer who was in the garden ordered him to be seized and the valet was put into a carriage which stood in readiness and removed from Ropsha. In the evening, at six o'clock, a messenger who had ridden from Ropsha gave to Catherine a packet from Alexis Orlov. On a sheet of soiled gray paper, in the ignorant handwriting of Alexis Orlov and by his own drunken hand was traced the following:

Merciful sovereign mother!<sup>1</sup>

How can I explain, how describe what has happened; you will not believe your faithful servant; but before God I speak the truth. *Matushka!* I am ready to go to my death; but I myself do not know, how this calamity happened. We are lost, if you do not have mercy. *Matushka*, he is no more on earth. But no one had thought of this, and how could we have

[<sup>1</sup> The exact expression in Russian is *Matushka* (little mother), a title of endearment given by the people to the sovereign.]



thought to raise our hands against the sovereign ! But, your majesty, the calamity is accomplished. At table he began to dispute with Prince Theodore ;<sup>1</sup> we were unable to separate them and he was already no more ; we do not ourselves remember what we did ; but we are all equally guilty and deserving of punishment. Have mercy upon me, if it is only for my brother's sake. I have brought you my confession and seek for nothing. Forgive or command that it may be quickly finished. The world is not kind ; we have angered you and destroyed our souls forever.

The news of death is a great matter. It is impossible either to prepare for it or grow accustomed to it. In the present case the death of Peter, doing away with many perplexities, and giving a free hand to many persons, appeared as the only possible and most desirable issue to the political drama which was agitating the people of Russia. Nevertheless the news of this death struck some, disturbed others, and puzzled all as an unexpected sudden phenomenon. On Catherine it produced the strongest impression, and (justice must be rendered to her) she was the first to control herself, to examine into the mass of new conditions, created by the death of Peter, and to master the various feelings which made their invasion together with the news of the catastrophe of Ropscha.

*"Que je suis affectée: même terrassée par cette mort"* (How affected and even overwhelmed I am by this death), said Catherine to Princess Dashkov. She was touched by it as a woman ; she was struck by it as empress. Catherine clearly recognised her position : the death of Peter, a death that was so sudden, would at such a time awaken rumours, throw a shadow on her intentions, lay a spot on the memory of those until then clear, bright ten days ; yet she did not hide from herself that it was only by death that the great undertaking "begun by us" could be entirely consummated. The tragedy of Catherine's position was still further increased by the circumstance of Alexis Orlov's having taken an active part in the catastrophe of Ropscha : she was under great obligations to the Orlovs as empress, while as a woman she was bound by the ties of affection to Gregory Orlov ; she loathed the crime, but she could not give up the criminal. "One must be firm in one's resolutions," said Catherine, "only weak-minded people are undecided." Even she herself, she must conceal the crime and protect the criminal, taking upon herself all the moral responsibility and political burden of the catastrophe. Catherine then for the first time showed a healthy political understanding of the widest diapason and played the rôle she had taken upon herself with the talent of a virtuoso.

The letter of Alexis Orlov, which entirely exculpated her from all suspicion was hidden in a cupboard, where it lay for thirty-four years, until the very death of the empress. With the exception of two or three persons in the immediate entourage of Catherine, who were near her at the moment when the letter was received besides Nikita Panin and the hetman Razumovski, no one ever read it, no one knew of it while the empress lived. Having decided upon the fate of the letter, she herself marked out the programme of her actions clearly and shortly : *"Il faut marcher droit; je ne dois pas être suspecte."* (I must walk uprightly ; I must not be suspected.)

The programme was exactly fulfilled. The letter of Alexis Orlov did not communicate the trifling details of the catastrophe, but the general signification of the narrative did not leave any doubts as to its chief features, and therefore Catherine considered it first of all necessary to certify whether poison had been employed ; the postmortem examination, made by order of the empress, did not show the least trace of poison. Neither the medical

<sup>1</sup> Prince Theodore Sergeivitch Bariatski.

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certificate as to the cause of death nor the act of death has been preserved; we can only guess that these certificates directed the composition of the following "mourning" manifesto:

On the seventh day after our acceptance of the throne of all the Russias, we received the news that the former emperor Peter III, by an attack of hemorrhage which was common and previously frequent to him, had fallen into a most dangerous condition. In order therefore not to neglect our Christian duty and the sacred command, by which we are obliged to preserve the life of our neighbour, we immediately ordered that everything necessary should be sent to him in order to avert consequences that might be dangerous to his health through this mischance, and tend to assist to his speedy recovery. But to our extreme grief and trouble of heart, we yesterday evening received news that, by the will of God, he had departed this life. We have therefore commanded that his body should be taken to the Nevski monastery to be there interred; meanwhile we incite and exhort all our true and faithful subjects by our imperial and maternal word that, without evil remembrance of all that is past, they should raise to God their heartfelt prayers that forgiveness and salvation of his soul may be granted to the deceased; this unexpected decree by God of his death we accept as a manifestation of the divine providence through which God in his inscrutable judgment lays the path, known to his holy will alone, to our throne and to the entire fatherland. Given at St. Petersburg on the 7th day of July, 1762.

CATHERINE.

The Russian made the sign of the cross as he read this manifesto. Yes, the judgments of God are indeed inscrutable! The former emperor had experienced in his last days so many sorrows, so many reverses — no wonder his feeble, sickly nature, which had already suffered from attacks of hemorrhage, could not withstand these shocks; in the matter of death nobody is free: he had fallen ill and died. To the common people his death appeared natural; even the upper classes, although they might hear even if they did not know something, did not admit any thoughts of Catherine's having had any share in his death. The empress "must not be suspected" and she remained unsuspected. On the night between Sunday, the 7th of July, and Monday, the 8th, the body was brought straight to St. Petersburg, directly to the present monastery of St. Alexander Nevski to the same place where the body of the princess Anna of Brunswick was exposed for reverence, and later on the body of the princess Anna Petrovna, Catherine's daughter.<sup>c</sup>

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## CHAPTER VIII

### THE AGE OF CATHERINE THE GREAT

[1762-1796 A.D.]

We must acknowledge that in many respects Catherine was far from irreproachable; her very accession to the throne casts a dark shadow on her moral image. But the reproaches that must be made to her on this account cannot but be counteracted by the thirty-four years of greatness and prosperity which Russia enjoyed under her and to which the popular voice has given the appellation of the Age of Catherine. — SHEHEBALSKI.<sup>b</sup>

THERE are few names so popular in Russia and so dear to her as that of Catherine II. The generation of men who belonged to her time spoke of her with the most profound emotion. Memoirs and reminiscences of her contemporaries breathe almost without exception the same ardent devotion — a sort of worship of her. In opposition to these feelings, foreign reports of her represent her as cruel, heartless, and unscrupulous to the last degree. Some authors represent her as a sort of monster. However strange such contradictions may appear, they can readily be accounted for. Foreigners view Catherine II more from the side of her external policy, which was certainly often unsparing and unscrupulous in the means employed; they refer caustically to her private life, which was certainly not irreproachable. Russians, on the other hand, felt above all the influence of her interior administration, which contrasted sharply from that of her predecessors by its mildness, and which was full of useful and liberal reforms. The Russians of her day could not remain indifferent to the glory with which Catherine surrounded Russia. And thus to the descendants of Catherine, acquainted as they are with the reports



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given of her both by Russians and foreigners, she appears as the two-faced god of antiquity; her visage when turned to the neighbouring powers is stern and unwelcoming; that, on the contrary, which is turned toward Russia is full of majesty and mildness.

The state of affairs was very much entangled when Catherine ascended the throne, both in the interior of the empire and in respect to exterior policy. One of the first acts of the new empress was the conclusion of peace with all those who had taken part in the Seven Years' War. Not seeing any advantage to Russia in helping the king of Prussia in his war against the German emperor and his allies, Catherine did not consider it necessary to assist the latter. "I am of tolerably martial tastes," said she, in the first days after her accession to the throne, to one of the ambassadors to the Russian court, "but I will never begin war without a cause; if I begin war, it will not be as the empress Elizabeth did — to please others, but only when I find it favourable for myself." These words are characteristic of all Catherine's further foreign policy; to listen to them was not without profit for foreign courts, which, during the preceding reigns, had certainly been over-spoiled by the complaisance of the Russians.

The next circumstance must have enlightened them still further as to how little Catherine had the intention of allowing herself to be restrained by considerations which did not tend to the furtherance of the glory and prosperity of her dominions. We have already seen by what persistency — sometimes even to the sacrifice of their dignity — the preceding governments had succeeded in obtaining the recognition of their right to the imperial title. France had recognised it only under Elizabeth, and that under the condition that at all foreign courts the Russian ambassador must, as previously, yield the precedence to the French ambassador; the late empress Elizabeth herself engaged that this should be done. When Catherine came to the throne, it was proposed to her to renew this engagement; she, however, very decidedly refused to do so, and commanded that it should be declared that she would break off all relations with those courts that did not recognise her in the quality of empress — a title, she added, which, however, was in no degree more exalted than that of the czars. Such were the first acts of the new empress in regard to foreign governments: they were bold, firm, and determined.<sup>b</sup>

#### CATHERINE'S OWN VIEWS ON RUSSIA

The interior condition of Russia and the position at that time occupied by Catherine are best described by herself, in her own words. In the very beginning of the year 1764 the procurator-general, A. I. Glebov, was removed from his functions. As his successor in this weighty and responsible office the empress named Prince A. A. Viasemski. The procurator-general had to superintend the finances of the empire, to direct the senate, and to govern all the interior affairs of the nation, thus uniting in himself the powers of minister of finance, of justice, and of home affairs. He was subordinate to none except the law, the good of the country, and the will of the empress. He was the right hand of the empress: "In cases where you may be in doubt," said Catherine to him, "consult with me, and put your trust entirely in God and in me; and I, seeing how gratifying your conduct is to me, will not forsake you." Prince Viasemski was still a young man — he was not yet thirty-seven years of age. A pupil of the land-forces cadet corps, he had taken part in the Prussian War — not, however, in the character of a brave soldier, but as the executor of "secret orders." At the accession of Catherine to the

throne he was already quartermaster-general. In 1763 he was entrusted with the pacification of the peasants in the eastern provinces of Russia. He was well educated, industrious, and was recognised by everyone as an absolutely honest man. It was this last circumstance that determined Catherine's choice. Having selected for herself her "closest helper," with whom she would have to be in constant relations, the empress considered it necessary once for all to have a clear explanation with him, and with her own hand wrote him "instructions" in which she expressed her own views on Russia, on the chief branches of the administration, and on herself personally, drawing her portrait for him as empress:

"The Russian Empire," wrote Catherine, "is so vast in its extent that any other form of government excepting that of an autocratic sovereign would be prejudicial to it; for any other would be slow of accomplishment and would include in itself a multitude of diverse interests and passions which tend to the weakening of the administrative power. No, there must be one sovereign, invested with authority to destroy evil, and who esteems the public welfare as his own. Other rulers are, in the words of the Gospel, hirelings."

The first institution in the empire is the senate. Catherine thus describes it to the young procurator-general: "In the senate you will find two parties, but in my opinion a wise policy does not require that much regard should be paid to them, lest too much firmness should thus be given them: in this manner they will disappear the sooner; I have only kept a watchful eye over them and have used men according to their capabilities for one object or another. Both parties will now try to catch you for their side. In one you will find men of upright character, although not of far-seeing intellects; in the other I think their views are wider, but it is not clear whether they are always advantageous. Some think that because they have been in one or another country for a long time, everything must be arranged in politics for the good of their beloved land, and everything else without exception meets with their criticism, in spite of the fact that all interior administration is founded on the law of the rights of nations. You must not regard either one party or the other, but be courteous and dispassionate in your behaviour to both, listening to everything, having only the good of the country and justice in view, and walking in firm steps to the shortest road to truth."

The senate "by its want of attention to the deeds of certain of my forefathers left its fundamental principles, and oppressed other courts through which the lower tribunals fell greatly into decline. The servility and meanness of persons in these tribunals is indescribable and no good can be expected until this evil is done away with. Only the forms of bureaucracy are fulfilled, and people do not dare to act uprightly although the interests of the state thus suffer. The senate having once passed its proper bounds, it is now difficult to accustom it to the necessary order in which it should stand. Perhaps for the ambition of some members, the former measures have some charm, but at any rate while I live, it will remain my duty to command."

The "servility" of the members of the government offices was ascribed to the senate, but the senate was not to repair the evil it had occasioned. By a ukase of the 19th of December, 1763, Catherine required that the "government offices should be filled by worthy and honest men." The motive of this ukase is explained in the above cited instructions to Prince Viasemski. In these instructions Catherine draws his attention to the great burdensomeness for the people of the duties on salt and wine, but she confides to his particular care the question of silver or copper money, which had long inter-

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ested her, as well as the position of trade and commerce. "This very delicate matter," she says, "of which many persons find it unpleasant to hear must however be looked into and examined by you." Catherine did not conceal from herself that the laws required amending. "Lack of time alone," she says, "has prevented the introduction of reforms."

Catherine did not forget to tell the young procurator-general what her views were on the frontier country of Russia: "Little Russia, Livonia, and Finland are provinces that must be governed in conformity with their privileges; to violate them by revoking them all suddenly would be quite unseemly, to call them foreign countries, however, and treat them on such a basis would be more than an error—it might rightly be called stupidity. These provinces, as also that of Smolensk, must by the lightest possible means be gradually russified so that they shall cease to be looked upon as wolves in the forest. The attainment of such an object is quite easy if sensible persons are chosen for the governors of these provinces. When there is no longer a hetman in Little Russia, we must endeavour to abolish even the appellation of hetman."

Having initiated Prince Viasemski into the most secret matters, having reminded him that a procurator-general in the exercise of his functions is obliged to oppose the most powerful personages and that therefore the sovereign power is his only support, Catherine in the following passage expressed her views on her own sovereign power:

"You ought to know with whom you have to do. Occasions will arise daily which will lead you to seek my counsel. You will find that I have no other aims than the highest welfare and glory of the fatherland and desire nothing but the happiness of my subjects or whatever condition they may be. My only aspiration is that both within and without my dominions tranquillity, contentment, and peace should be preserved. I love truth above all things, and you may speak it, fearing nothing; I shall encourage discussion, if good can be accomplished by it. I hear that all esteem you as an honest man; I hope to show you by experience that persons with such qualities can live happily at court. I will add that I require no flattery from you, but solely frankness and sincerity in your dealings, and firmness in the affairs of state." Such an administration programme and such political principles gave Catherine full right to look calmly towards the future.<sup>6</sup>



AN OLD MORDVINIAN WOMAN



## THE POLISH SUCCESSION; THE POLICY OF THE NATIONS

A subject of deep gravity soon claimed her attention — the approaching death of the king of Poland and the consequent opening of the succession. Two parties were contending for power in Warsaw — the court party with minister Brühl and his son-in-law Mniszek at its head, and the party which looked to Russia for support and had for chiefs the Czartoriski. The first-named faction wished to assure the succession to the prince of Saxony, an aim in which France and Austria shared, and the second, planning to elect a *piast* or native noble who should belong to their party, chose as candidate a nephew of the Czartoriski, Stanislaus Poniatovski. Thus France, which in 1733 had waged war in the cause of a *piast* against the Saxon candidate, now came to support the Saxon against Poniatovski. The face of affairs had completely changed, and the Polish monarchy, growing weaker day by day, arrived at the point where it could no longer stand erect save by the aid of Saxony, a German state. Frederick II had as much reason to dread an increase of power for Saxony as for Poland, since Saxony was an inveterate enemy of Prussia in the empire, as was Poland in the regions of the Vistula. Russia, which had formerly fought against Stanislaus Leszczynski, father-in-law of Louis XV, was now to oppose the candidate favoured by France and Austria; it was eager also to prevent the accession to the throne of any Polish noble wielding too much power of his own. The choice, therefore, of Stanislaus Poniatovski, a simple gentleman without personal following or influence, met fully the desires of Frederick II, the interests of the Russian Empire, and the private feelings of Catherine II, who was happy to bestow a crown upon one of her former lovers.

When Augustus III finally died, the diets of convocation and of election stirred up great agitation all over the country. The two rival parties waged fiercer strife than ever; at last the Czartoriski called upon the Russian army to help drive out their enemies, and it was under the protection of foreign bayonets that Poniatovski inaugurated that fatal reign during which Poland was to be three times dismembered and in the end wiped completely from the list of nations. Three principal causes were to bring about the ruin of the ancient royal republic:

(1) The national movement in Russia, which aimed to complete its territory on the west and recover, so said its historians, the provinces which had formerly been part of the domain of St. Vladimir, or White Russia, Black Russia, and Little Russia. With the national question was mingled another which had already led, under Alexander Mikhailovitch, to a first dismemberment of the Polish states. Complaints against the operations of the uniates had multiplied in Lithuania, and Russia had frequently attempted to intervene. Peter the Great protested to Augustus II against the treatment accorded to his co-religionists in Poland, and Augustus had issued an edict assuring free exercise of the orthodox religion; but this never went into effect owing to the inability of the monarchy to repress the zeal of the clergy and the Jesuits. In 1723 Peter begged the intervention of the pope, but his petition was refused and the abuses continued.

(2) The covetousness of Prussia. Poland being in possession of western Prussia, that is the lower Vistula including Thorn and Dantzic, eastern Prussia was completely cut off from the rest of the Brandenburg monarchy, which was thus made a divided state. The government of Warsaw committed, moreover, the serious error of confounding Protestant and orthodox dissenters and harassing them alike.

[1765 A.D.]

(3) The inevitable enkindling of Poland in its turn by the spirit of reform that spread abroad during the eighteenth century. Poniatowski and the most enlightened of his countrymen had long perceived the contrast presented by national anarchy as it prevailed at home and the order that was being established in neighbouring states. Nevertheless, while Prussia, Russia, and Austria were exerting every effort to re-form themselves into strictly modern states, Poland still clung obstinately to the traditions of the feudal ages, and allowed the other European monarchies to get so far ahead that when at last the impulse to reform did come it hastened the dissolution of the country.

From a social point of view Poland was a nation of agricultural serfs, above which had been superimposed a numerous petty nobility that was itself in bondage to a few great families, against whom even the king was powerless. There existed no third estate unless we can designate by that name a few thousand Catholic bourgeois and a million Jews, who had no interest in maintaining a condition of things that condemned them to everlasting opprobrium. From an economical point of view the country had only a limited agriculture carried on by serfs after the most primitive methods; but little commerce, no industries, and no public finances. From a political standpoint the "legal" nation was composed exclusively of gentlemen—rivalry between the great families, anarchy in the diets, the *liberum veto*, and the inveterate habit of invoking foreign intervention having destroyed in Poland all idea of law or even of state. From a military point of view Poland was still in the feudal stage of undisciplined militia; it had scarcely any organised troops outside the cavalry formed of nobles, no infantry, but little artillery, and no fortresses worthy the name on frontiers that were thus left open to the enemy. What means of defence had a nation divided against itself, guilty of having received gold from the enemy, against the three powerful monarchies which beset it on all sides, and whose ambassadors had more power than its own king in his diets?

Catherine and Frederick were agreed on two essential points: to vindicate the rights of dissenters and prevent any reform in the anarchical constitution which made Poland their easy prey. By affecting to espouse the cause of tolerance they could blind Europe to their real designs against the integrity of the country, and Poland's own noisy fanaticism would further enable them to conceal their object.

In 1765 Koninski, an orthodox bishop of White Russia, presented a memoir to the king of Poland in which were recounted all the vexations which the followers of the Greek religion had been made to suffer in his kingdom. "The missionary fathers," said the memoir, "were particularly remarkable for their zeal; upheld by the secular authorities they were in the habit of summoning all the Greco-Russian inhabitants of the villages and banding them together like a flock of sheep six weeks at a time, forcing them to confess, and displaying thorny rods and stakes to intimidate the rebellious, separating children from their parents and wives from husbands. In case of stubborn resistance the recalcitrant ones were severely beaten, their hands were burned, or they were confined in prison for several months."

Russia supported the dissenters in the Polish diet and Stanislaus promised to sustain them. To do this it was necessary to assure to the people the free exercise of their religion, and to the nobles the political rights of which they had been despoiled under preceding legislators. The diet of 1766 violently opposed this proposition, and the deputy Gourovski who had tried to speak in favour of the dissenters narrowly escaped assassination.

Repnin, Catherine's ambassador, urged the dissenters to resort to the

legal method of confederation. Those of the orthodox faith united at Sluth, the Protestants, under the patronage of the Prussian ambassador, at Thorn; even at Radom there was a confederation of Catholics and of all those who feared a reform in the constitution or the abolition of the *liberum veto*. Russia, which with Prussia had guaranteed the support of this absurd constitution, took these also under its protection. Such were the auspices under which was opened the diet of 1767; the Poles seemed insensible to the attack made on their independence and exerted themselves solely to maintain intolerance. Soltik, bishop of Cracow, Zaluski, bishop of Kiev, and two other of the pope's ambassadors were the most ardent in opposing the project of reform. Repnin had them seized and carried to Russia, and so persistently had Poland shown herself in the wrong that Europe applauded an act, in itself a violation of the rights of men, which seemed to assure liberty of conscience. The diet yielded and consented to the dissenting nobles being granted equal rights with the Catholics; in any case the state religion was to remain that of Rome.

#### POLAND IS DISMEMBERED

In 1768 a treaty was drawn up between Poland and Russia by the terms of which no modification could be made in the constitution without the consent of the latter power. This was equivalent to legalising foreign intervention, from the abuse of which Poland was to perish. The Russian troops evacuated Warsaw, and the confederates sent deputies to render thanks to the empress.

The Radom Confederation, the most considerable of the three, which had taken up arms solely to prevent reforms in the constitution, not to support the dissenters, was gravely dissatisfied with the result. On its dissolution another and still more numerous confederation was formed, that of Bar in Podolia, which had for object the maintenance of the *liberum veto* and the securing of exclusive privileges to Catholics. It sent deputies to the courts of Dresden, Vienna, and Versailles to awaken interest in its cause. In the west opinions differed; on which side were right, the Polish nation, the brightest promise for the future? Were they at Warsaw with the king, the senate, and all those who had striven for the enfranchisement of the dissenters and the reconstruction of Poland, or were they at Bar with the turbulent nobles who, guided by fanatical priests, had revolted in the name of the *liberum veto* and religious intolerance? Voltaire and most of the French philosophers declared for the king; but the minister of Louis XV, Monsieur de Choiseul, favoured the confederates, without taking into consideration that in weakening the power of the Polish king he was weakening Poland itself. The royal army consisting of only nine thousand men, the government committed the grievous blunder of calling upon Russia for aid, and the result was that the Muscovite troops succeeded in recapturing from the confederates Bar, Berdichev, and Cracow. The Cossacks of the Ukraine, the Zaparogians and the *kudamaks* or brigands were called to arms and a savage war, at once national, religious, and social, ensued, desolating the provinces of the Dnieper. The massacre of Ouman, a town belonging to Count Potocki, horrified the inhabitants of the Ukraine.

The confederates obtained the support of the Viennese court and established a council at Teschen, and their headquarters at Eperies, in Hungary. They were still in possession of three strongholds in Poland. Choiseul sent them money and commissioned successively De Taules, Dumouriez, and the



[1767-1768 A.D.]

baron de Viomesnil to assist in their organisation. From the memoirs of Dumouriez we learn that the forces of the confederation, distributed about over all Poland, consisted of sixteen thousand cavalry divided into five or six separate bands, each commanded by an independent chief. Dumouriez with his undisciplined troops was defeated at Landskron (1771); but Viomesnil, Dussaillans, and Choisy became masters of the château of Cracow (1772), which was finally recovered by Suvarov. An attempt made by certain confederates on the 3rd of November, 1771, to obtain possession of the person of the king, excited noisy but insincere indignation at the three northern courts, and increased Voltaire's aversion to the confederates.<sup>d</sup>

By the treaty of St. Petersburg (signed August 5th, 1772), the palatinates of Malborg, Pomerania, Warmia, Culm (except Dantzic and Thorn), and part of Great Poland was ceded to Prussia. Austria had Galicia, Sandomir, Cracow, and part of Podolia. Russia had Polotsk, Vitepsk, Mikislav, and Polish Livonia. The next point was to execute the treaty. A pretext could not long be wanting for the armed interference of all the three powers: each had been expressly invited by some one of the parties which divided that unhappy country, which were perpetually engaged in civil war. The three bandit chiefs despatched armies into Poland, and Europe waited with much anxiety the issue of this step. Its suspense was not of long continuance: the Treaty of St. Petersburg was presented to the Polish king and senate; and manifestoes, stating the pretensions of each power, were published.

Never were documents so insulting laid before rational men. King and senate could oppose little resistance to demands so powerfully supported; but their consent alone could not sanction the dismemberment of the republic. Hence the diet was convoked. That eight or ten members only should resist the destruction of their country, that all the rest should tamely sanction it, might appear incredible if it were not a matter of history. In this monstrous robbery the lion's share fell to Russia. She acquired an extent of territory estimated at 3,440 square leagues, with one million and a half of inhabitants: Austria had 2,700 leagues, but a greater population, *viz.* two millions and a half: Prussia had scarcely 1,000 square leagues, and less than a million of people.

As the three co-robbers were so courageous as to set at defiance both justice and public opinion, so magnanimous as to show themselves in their real character to all posterity, it may appear matter of surprise that they did not seize on the whole of the kingdom. But though they had resolved to seize the remainder, they were cautious enough to await the course of events—to take advantage of any favourable circumstance that might arise. The French Revolution furnished them with it. That event had many admirers in Poland, many who wished to imitate it at home. It was easy for the three neighbouring powers to take unbrage at the progress of republican opinions; to assert, as indeed truth authorised them to assert, that the Poles were in communication with the heads of the movement in Paris. In reality, in the year 1791 a new constitution was proclaimed, exceedingly like a republic. The reduction of Dantzic and Thorn, the two most important possessions in the north of Europe, convinced the Poles that they had been duped. Catherine was not a woman to let others derive the sole advantage where anything was to be gained. Preparatory to active operations, she declared war against Poland. The diet resolved to resist; but, as usual, the Poles were divided among themselves. One party declared for Russia; and though the greater number declared for independence, they could not be brought to combine. Success after success was obtained by the Russian general; the empress

negotiated the details of another partition with Prussia; and the king and the diet were, as before, compelled to sanction it. By it the Russian frontier was extended to the centre of Lithuania and Volhinia; while the remainder of Great and a part of Little Poland were ceded to Frederick William. Much to the honour of Austria, she had no hand in this second iniquity.

The territory of the republic was now reduced to about 4,000 square miles; and her army, by command of the czarina, was in future not to exceed fifteen thousand men. The Poles were never deficient in bravery; and they were, on this occasion, sensitive to the national shame. They felt that the narrow limits still allowed them would soon be passed, and that their remaining provinces were intended soon to be incorporated with the neighbouring states. A general insurrection was organised; an army voluntarily arose, and Kosciuszko placed himself at its head. For a time wonders were wrought by the patriots; though opposed by two great enemies — Russia and Prussia — they expelled the enemy from most of the fortresses; and even when Austria acceded to the coalition and took Cracow they were not desponding. To effect impossibilities, however, was an absurd attempt: the majority felt it to be so, and they sullenly received the foreign law. Kosciuszko was made prisoner; the last outworks of the last fortress were reduced; Warsaw capitulated; Stanislaus was deposed; and a third partition ended the existence of the Polish Republic. By it Austria had Cracow, with the country between the Pilitza, the Vistula, and the Bug. Prussia had Warsaw, with the territory to the banks of the Niemen. The rest, which, as usual, was the lion's share, fell to Russia.

#### *War with Turkey (1769–1774 A.D.)*

The wars with this power occupied a considerable portion of Catherine's reign; yet they were not originally sought by her. The Porte, at the suggestion of the French ambassador, whose master was anxious to divert her from her meditated encroachments on Poland, was, unfortunately for itself, induced to declare war against her. The Grand Seignior, indeed, was the ally of the republic; and he was one of the parties to guarantee its independence. But his dominions were not tranquil; the discipline of his armies was impaired, while that of the Russians was improving every day. Perhaps, however, he was ignorant of the disadvantages which must attend the prosecution of the war: certainly his pride was flattered by the insinuation that he held in his hands the balance of power in eastern and northern Europe. In 1769 hostilities commenced by the invasion of the Crimea, the khan of which was the vassal of the Porte. Azov and Taganrog were soon taken; Moldavia was entered; Servia was cleared of the Tatar allies. Before Kotzim, however, Prince Galitzin received a check, and was forced to repass the Dniester. A second attempt on that important fortress was equally unsuccessful. But the Turks, who pursued too far, were vanquished in some isolated engagement; and the campaign of 1769 ended by the acquisition of Kotzim.

The operations of the following year were much more decisive. Galitzin, disgusted by the arrogance of the favourite Orlov, resigned the command into abler hands than even his own — those of Count Romanzov. The reduction of Jassy and Brailov was preparatory to two great victories, which rendered the name of Romanzov forever memorable in the annals of his country. The first was on the banks of the Pruth. The Turks, in number eighty thousand, under the khan of the Crimea, were intrenched on a hill, in a position

[1769 A.D.]

too strong to be assailed. But after three weeks, they became wearied of their inactivity; and believing, from a feint of the Russian general, that he was about to retire, twenty thousand of them rushed down the hill. They were repulsed with terrible loss; the remainder carried dismay into the camp; and the Russians, taking advantage of the circumstances, ascended, forced the intrenchments, killed many, compelled the rest to flee, and seized considerable booty, with thirty-eight pieces of cannon. Retreating towards the Danube, the Turks effected a junction with the grand vizir, whose army was thereby increased to 150,000.

Unaware of its extent, Romanzov pursued with ardour, and was suddenly in the presence of his formidable competitor. His position was a critical one. The vizir was intrenched; and the khan, resolved to efface the shame of his recent defeat, wheeled round his left flank, and encamped behind him. Hence he could not move backwards or forwards. On the following day the vizir gave the signal of battle; and the contest raged for some hours with desperate fury. Annoyed at the perpetual discharges of the enemy's artillery, which alarmingly thinned his ranks, the count ordered his men to fix their bayonets and rush on the intrenchments. Here the struggle was more deadly than before; but in the end numbers yielded to discipline and valour. The Turks fled, the vizir with them, leaving immense stores (among which were 143 pieces of cannon) in the power of the victors, and nearly one-third of their number on the field. Romanzov now crossed the Dniester; one of his generals, Repnin, reduced Ismailov; the other, Panin, took the most important fortress, Bender, after a siege of three months; while a detachment from the main army seized the capital of Bessarabia.

Nor were these the only successes of the year. Not satisfied with warfare on land, Catherine resolved to try her fortunes on the deep; and to do what none of her predecessors had ever dreamed — to send a powerful fleet into the Mediterranean, for the purpose of assailing her enemy in Greece. Many new ships were built; many English naval officers persuaded to command them, and to teach her seamen the arts by which the superiority of England had been so long maintained. The Greeks were impatient for the arrival of their co-religionists; the czarina's gold had gained over the chiefs, and a general insurrection of the people was meditated. Her designs were truly gigantic — no less than to drive the Mohammedans from Europe. The fleet sailed, arrived in the Archipelago, disembarked both on the islands and the continent; and while the Turkish possessions were assailed on the Danube, they were equally periled in these southern latitudes.

A terrible warfare now commenced — the Greeks everywhere butchering the Mohammedans, the latter retaliating. A naval battle was inevitable; the hostile fleets met between Scio and Natolia: the engagement continued until night, to the manifest advantage of the Russians. That very night the Turkish admiral was so foolish as to run his ships into a narrow bay, in which he was instantly blockaded. Some fire-ships, sent by Vice-Admiral Elphinstone, a Scotchman in the service of the empress, set all of them on fire; and at sunrise the following morning not a flag was to be seen. This blow sensibly affected the Turks, especially as the appearance of the Russians in the Mediterranean had encouraged Tripoli, Egypt, and Syria to rebel against the Porte. Ali Bey, the governor of Egypt, an able, ambitious, and enterprising insurgent, was ready to assist his allies with all his might; but the incapacity yet egregious haughtiness of the Russian admiral, Alexis Orlov, prevented them from deriving much advantage from the union. The year, however, was one of brilliant success; and Catherine was so elated that she



built a magnificent palace, which she called after the bay in which the last victory was gained.

In the spring of 1771, Orlov again resorted to the Mediterranean, where the Russian fleet still lay, with the intention of forcing the Dardanelles; while the armies on the Danube renewed their operations. The position of Turkey was, indeed, critical: not only was one-half of the empire in revolt, but the plague had alarmingly thinned the population. Fortunately, however, for this power, the same scourge found its way into the heart of Russia: its ravages were as fatal at Moscow as at Constantinople; and it no more spared the Christians on the Danube than it did the Mohammedans. This calamity slackened, but did not suspend operations. If the Russians were sometimes repulsed, the balance of success was decidedly in their favour. The famous lines of Perekop, from the Euxine to the sea of Azov, were forced by Prince Dolgoruki, though they were defended by fifty thousand Tatars; the whole of the Crimea, one fortress excepted, was subdued; and the surname of Krimski, or Conqueror of the Crimea, was given to the victor. The country, however, was not incorporated with the empire: on the contrary, while it was declared independent of the Porte, it was proclaimed as merely under the protection of Russia. The khan, Selim Girai, being thus expelled, proceeded to Constantinople, where he died. The exertions of the fleet, however, did not correspond with those of the land forces: all that Orlov effected was to destroy the Turkish commerce on the Levant.

During the year 1772 no hostilities were committed, and negotiations for peace were undertaken. Though the two contracting parties, which sent their representatives to Bucharest, could not agree on the conditions, both were anxious to recruit their strength, after the heavy losses they had sustained both by the sword and the plague. Catherine too had another motive for temporary inaction; she was busily effecting the first partition of Poland. With the return of the following spring, however, the banks of the Danube were again the theatre of war; but this campaign was not destined to be so glorious as the one of 1771. Its opening was unfavourable for the Russians: while a body of fourteen thousand, under Prince Reppin, were crossing that river, they were surprised by one of the Turkish generals; many perished; about six hundred, with the prince himself, were made prisoners and sent to Constantinople. Shortly afterwards, Romanzov who had passed that river and was marching on Silistria, was compelled to retrace his steps. At Roskana a considerable body of his troops was defeated by the vizir. This harassing warfare—for the Turks carefully avoided a general action—thinned the ranks and, what is worse, depressed the spirits of the invaders. Romanzov was no less averse to such a risk. Nor did the fleet in the Mediterranean effect anything to counterbalance their indecisive yet destructive operations. What little advantage there was belonged to the Turks.

The campaign of 1774 promised to be more important than the preceding; and the Porte, from the rebellion of Pugatchev, was confident of success. Several actions on the Danube, which, however bravely contested, led to no result, were yet considered as indicative of a severe if not a decisive struggle. But the anticipation was groundless. Though several bodies of Tatars, who were to effect a diversion in favour of Pugatchev, were defeated; though the Danube was crossed; though twenty-five thousand of the Turks were repulsed by Soltikov, and another body still stronger by Suvarov, though the vizir himself was blockaded in Shumla—Europe was disappointed in its expectations; for negotiations were opened for a peace which was soon concluded.

[1774 A.D.]

*The Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji (1774 A.D.)*

By the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji (July, 1774) Russia obtained the free navigation of the Black Sea, the right of passage through the Danube, a large tract of land between the Bug and the Dnieper, with the strong fortresses of Azov, Taganrog, Kertch, and Kinburn. The rest of the Crimea was ceded — not, indeed, to the Turks, but to its own khan, who, though declared independent, must of necessity be the creature of the empress, in whose hands those fortresses remained. They were the keys to his dominions, and even to the command of the Black Sea. A sum of money sufficient to defray the expenses of the war was also stipulated; but it was never paid. The advantages which Russia derived from the other articles were ample enough: among them, not the least, was the commerce of the Levant and of the Black Sea.<sup>e</sup>

## THE MIGRATION OF THE KALMUCKS

It seemed as if Catherine's reign was destined to be marked by the most extraordinary events, and one of them was this simultaneous departure of [a horde variously estimated at from three hundred thousand] to six hundred thousand Tatars, an example at the end of the eighteenth century of one of those great migratory movements which history never expected again to record. Catherine was humiliated with having to furnish the example; it was in too striking contrast with that happiness which her philosophic friends said the human race enjoyed in her empire; and the peaceful migration of an indignant and angry people gave the formal lie to all the praises loud shouted by philanthropy. Our readers will not regret to find here were details of this unexpected event which suddenly made in the Russian Empire an empty spot, more than fifteen hundred versts in length, between Tzaritsin and Astrakhan. These Tatars, known under the name of Kalmucks, were originally included in three principal tribes. At first subject to China, they had been frequently at war either with it or with themselves. One of their khans, Amusaman, defeated and pursued by the Chinese, had taken refuge at Tobolsk in Siberia, where he died about 1757. These troubles, whose origin dated back more than sixty years, had in 1696 caused a great number of Kalmucks of the three tribes to reunite, quit a country devastated by constant war, and seek new homes at the eastern extremity of the Russian Empire.

They settled or located themselves in a vast stretch of territory close to the Caspian Sea, between the Ural and the Volga. The Chinese claimed that according to some ancient treaties Russia had to return all fugitive subjects, but received no reply except that there was nothing to prevent a wandering people from settling in waste places, a reply which seventy-five years later the Chinese made use of on their own part with advantage. Russia received these fugitive hordes and did not delay in getting service out of them. Another Tatar nation composed principally of Lesghians, who lived beyond Kisliar and were greedy for pillage, made frequent incursions into the empire and depopulated the border by the quantity of slaves they brought back with them. The new Kalmucks were charged with keeping them out and performed the duty if not with constant success, at least with a fidelity which did them great credit. The government felt that this permanent defence was more advantageous to it than a contribution necessarily small and hard to collect would be; and consequently, guided a long time by this wise principle, it contented itself with taking annually from the Kalmucks a certain

number of men and horses for the light cavalry; but when once it deviated from a rule which it should never have broken, troubles began and the cupidity of its agents multiplied particular iniquities under pretext of collecting for the public funds. The Russian governors and even the minor officials were confirmed in the belief that everything was permitted them because they were sure that everything would be ignored.

Several of the Kalmuck chiefs were treated with indignity. It was established as a state maxim that they had no right to complain against injustice; all protest was regarded as a crime. Finally the khan Ubashi, alive to his people's misfortunes and wretched himself through the pride and rapacity of his oppressors who had taken his only son from him, dared to draw a picture of his sad position and wished to present it at St. Petersburg. But all means of getting there were closed to him. This attempt only aggravated his fate and vengeance was now added to oppression. Here is exhibited a truly interesting spectacle. This numerous people who, by joining the Lesghians, could, especially in the condition that Russia then was, give it the greatest alarm and mete out terrible retaliation, had no thought of using force. They had come to seek peace and had been deprived of it, so they withdrew. They withdrew without making use of arms, at least none but what they were forced to by the necessity of defending themselves and of procuring what they stood in need of for themselves and their large herds in occupying a front about one hundred leagues wide over a route nearly twelve hundred leagues in length.

The preparations for this journey were made with a secrecy which concealed them from Russia's knowledge. A nomadic people travels with no other equipment than its herds, which furnish its drink and a portion of its nourishment. Obligated often to change locality in order to obtain graz-



A KALMUCK WOMAN

ing grounds, it might without arousing suspicion creep nearer and nearer the frontiers and even cross them without being stopped by detachments sent in pursuit. This is what happened. The preparations were furthered by the Ural Cossacks, who had experienced the same troubles with Russian officials and who were shortly to rise in open rebellion under Pugatchev. Furthermore the migration was carried out like all those of northeastern peoples—with this difference, however: the others came to Europe to invade realms and destroy and replace the inhabitants; while this one was returning to its ancestral home to reunite itself to the empire it had left at the end of the preceding century. In fact, while all known migrations have taken place



[1774 A.D.]

from the northeast and east to the west and south, this is the single exception which retrograded from west to east.

It divided itself into several columns in order to have sufficient stretch of territory to pasture the herds, and the first column left the Volga on the 16th of December, 1770. This prodigious assemblage of men, women, and children, formed of more than eighty thousand families and taking with it an immense number of cattle, was after a few days on the march vainly attacked by the Russians, continued its journey, was sometimes obliged to use force in making its way, and on the 9th of August appeared in the Elenth country on the borders of China near the river Obi. Its progress may be calculated at about five leagues per day, a rate that seems almost incredible when one thinks of all that composed the body. They also had with them as prisoners a hundred Russian soldiers as well as an officer named Dudun who had commanded them, who is believed to have been French. It was indeed a strange destiny for this officer to be brought to China as the slave of a Kalmuck!

### *The Kalmucks Reach China*

Ubashi, shortly after leaving the Volga, had informed the Chinese of the migration; and precautions were taken in advance that the arrival of such an enormous crowd should occasion no disorder. The emperor of China erected forts and redoubts in the most important places to watch the passing carefully and collect the necessary provisions. The Kalmucks, received like old subjects, found on arriving provision for clothing, food, and shelter. They were worn out by fatigue and in an extremely ragged condition. They had made their way north of the Caspian Sea, one division skirted the borders of Siberia to gain the fertile banks of the Irtysh, the other kept farther south near the Usben country in order to reach that of the Elents without crossing the Kobi desert, where no sustenance would have been found.

They lost on the way more than a third of their number by fatigue, by sickness, and in the battles they were frequently obliged to wage, especially against the wandering Tatars. They were but four hundred thousand on arriving. To each family was assigned a piece of ground suitable as much for pasture as for agriculture, to which the government desired that they should devote themselves—an efficient means of fixing a people and attaching it to the soil which it cultivates. Ubashi appeared at court and was received with honour. Twenty thousand other Tatar families who had accompanied Amusanan in his flight or were dispersed along the Siberian frontiers followed the example of the Tatars of the Volga, and returned to their old homes. The Chinese government seemed truly paternal in greeting these children whose long misfortunes finally brought them back to their ancestral homes.

Catherine on learning of their departure became justly indignant against the Russian officials who by force of bad treatment had pushed the Kalmucks to this extremity; but the wrong was done, and it was impossible to right it. As soon as she knew what route they had taken she took measures to have the Peking government send them back. The emperor replied that these people were returning to their old homes, that he could not refuse them an asylum, and for the rest if she wished to know the reason of their flight she had only to ask those who had overwhelmed these people, their chiefs, and even their khan with outrages and injustices. Catherine, despairing of bringing them back, was obliged to make use of several bodies of light troops to protect the frontiers the Kalmucks had recently left.

## INSURRECTIONS AND PRETENDERS

A riot in Moscow having clearly revealed the depths of barbarism in which were still plunged the lower classes of the capital — the domestic serfs, lackeys, and factory-workers; the insurrection headed by Pugatchev will show what elements of disorder were still fermenting in the most remote provinces of the empire. The peasants upon whom fell the whole burden of state charges, as well as the exactions of proprietors and functionaries, dreamed in their ignorance of all sorts of impossible changes, and were always ready to follow impostors; many were the false Peters and Ivans and Pauls who

started up with worthless claims to trade on the credulity of these simple minds, deeply imbued as they were with the distrust of "women on the throne." The raskolniks, made savage and fanatical by previous persecutions, remained in their forests on the Volga, irreconcilable enemies of this second Roman empire that was stained with the blood of so many martyrs. The Cossacks of the Don and the Zaporogians of the Dnieper chafed under a yoke to which they were unused, and the pagan, Mussulman, or orthodox tribes of the Volga were but awaiting an opportunity to regain their former liberty and retake the lands occupied by the Russians.

How little these various ungovernable elements could accomodate themselves to the conditions of a modern state has been shown, when, in 1770, three hundred thousand of the Kal-muck-Turguts abandoned their encampments. Add to these malcontents a crowd of vagabonds of all sorts, ruined nobles, unfrocked monks, fugitive serfs, and pirates of the Volga,

and it will be seen that Russia contained in its eastern portion all the materials necessary for an immense *jacquerie*, such as had before been unchained by the false Dmitri, or Stenka Radzin.

It was the Cossacks of the Jaik, cruelly repressed after their insurrection in 1766, who were to provide the rebel serfs with a leader in the person of Emilian Pugatchev, a raskolnik who had escaped from prison to Siberia. Passing himself off as Peter III, who had been rescued from the hands of the executioner, he raised the banner of the Holsteins and declared his intention of marching on St. Petersburg to punish his wife and place his son on the throne. With a following of but three hundred men he laid siege to the little fortress of Jaik. All the troops that were sent against him passed over to his side. He caused all the officers to be hanged, and put to death all the nobles in the towns through which he passed, capturing by means of such terrorisation several small fortresses on the steppes. By his intimates who knew the secret of his origin, he was treated in private as a simple Cossack, but the



A BOKHARIAN OF SIBERIA

[1775 A.D.]

populations were deceived and received him with the ringing of bells. Certain Polish confederates who were captives in these regions organised for him a body of artillery. For nearly a year he kept Kazan and Orenburg in a state of terror, defeating all the generals that were sent against him. Peasants began to rise against the nobles, Tatars and other tribes against the Russians, until the bitterest of social wars was unchained in the whole Volga basin. Moscow with its one hundred thousand serfs was thrown into agitation; among the lower classes there was talk of liberty and extermination of the masters. Catherine II charged Alexander Bibikov to check the progress of sedition.

Bibikov was aghast, on arriving at Kazan, to see the extent of the demoralisation. He set about reassuring the nobles and soothing the lower classes, but in letters to his wife he wrote: "Conditions are frightful, I fear all will go ill!" Without great confidence in his own troops he decided to attack the impostor, whom he recognised as merely an instrument in the hands of the Cossacks. He defeated Pugatchev twice, once at Tatistchev and once at Kargula, dispersing his army and seizing his cannon. Bibikov died in the full flush of victory, but his lieutenants, Michelson, Collongues, and Galitzin, continued to pursue the vanquished pretender. Hunted to the lower Volga, Pugatchev suddenly ascended the river and pillaged and burned Kazan, but was afterwards defeated on the Kazanka. Descending the river he entered Saransk, Samara, and Tsaritsin, and though hotly pursued by his enemies took time to establish there new municipalities. Meanwhile the populations on the route to Moscow were awaiting his coming, and to meet this expectation innumerable Peter III's and Pugatchevs arose, who at the head of furious bands went about assassinating proprietors and burning châteaux. It was high time that Pugatchev should be brought to justice. Tracked down between the Volga and the Jaik by Michelson and the indefatigable Suvarov, he was taken to Moscow, where the people were given the spectacle of his execution.

These troubles had been a warning to Catherine II, and she still bore them in mind when she destroyed the Zaporogian Republic in 1775. The valiant tribes of the Dnieper, expelled under Peter the Great and recalled under Anna Ivanovna, no longer recognised their former territory of Ukraine. Southern Russia, freed from the incursions of the Tatars, was rapidly being colonised; cities were springing up on all sides and the vast herb-covered steppes were becoming transformed into cultivated fields. The Zaporogians were highly displeased at the transformation, and wished to have their lands restored to them in their former condition. They protected the *haidamaks* who were constantly harassing the colonists, until Potemkin, the actual creator of "new" Russia, wearied of such uncomfortable neighbours, occupied on the empress' order the *sitcha* and destroyed it. The malcontents fled for refuge to the lands of the sultan; the rest were organised into the Cossacks of the Black-Sea, and in 1792 the island of Phanagoria and the southern shore of the sea of Azov were assigned to them as residence. Such was the end of the great Cossack uprising which is heard of to-day only in the songs of the *kobzars*.<sup>d</sup>

#### FAVOURITISM UNDER CATHERINE II

During the reign of Catherine favouritism attained a very wide development. In her *Mémoires* we meet with the following characteristic passage which is not devoid of interest: "I was endowed by nature with great sensitiveness, and an exterior which if not beautiful was, nevertheless, attractive:



I pleased from the first moment and did not require to employ for this purpose artifice or embellishments. By nature my soul was of such a sociable character that always when anyone had spent a quarter of an hour with me, he felt perfectly at ease and could converse with me as if he had known me for a long time. By my natural indulgence I inspired confidence in those that had to do with me; because everyone was aware that nothing was pleasanter to me than to act benevolently and with the strictest honesty. I may venture to say (if I may be allowed thus to speak of myself) that I was like a knight of liberty and lawfulness; I had rather the soul of a man than that of a woman; but there was nothing repellent in this, for to the intellect and character of a man was united in me the charm of a most amiable woman. I trust I may be pardoned these words and expressions of my self-love: I use them counting them as true, and not desiring to screen myself by any false modesty.

"I have said that I pleased; consequently half of the temptation that arises is already included in that fact itself; the other half in such cases naturally follows from the very essence of human nature, because to be subjected to temptation and to yield to it are very near to each other. Although the very highest principles of morality may be impressed on the mind, yet they soon become involved, and feelings appear which lead one immeasurably further than one thinks. For my part even until now I do not know how they can be averted. People perhaps may say that there is one means—flight; but there are cases, positions, circumstances where flight is impossible; in fact where can one flee to, where seek a refuge, where turn aside amidst a court that makes a talk over the smallest action? And thus if you cannot flee, then in my opinion there is nothing more difficult than to shun that which is essentially pleasing to you. Believe me, all that may be said to you against this is hypocrisy and founded on a want of knowledge of the human heart. A man is not master over his own heart; he cannot at his will squeeze it in his fist and then set it free again."

Both contemporaries and posterity have not without foundation harshly judged favouritism under Catherine. One-sidedness and harshness of judgment in this respect have however deprived both contemporaries and immediate posterity of the possibility of dispassionately estimating the personality of the empress in general. Taking into consideration Catherine's unusual capacities, the circumstances in which she was placed, and her temperament, it is impossible not to acknowledge that in accusing her we must not lose sight of the age in general and of the morals at the court in particular. Favouritism was no new apparition under Catherine. Almost the same state of things had arisen during the reign of Elizabeth Petrovna. A particularly unpleasant impression, however, is made by frequent changes of favourites. One after another in turn there were "in favour": Gregory Orlov, Vasilchikov, Potemkin, Zavadovski, Zoritch, Korsakov, Lanskoï, Ermolov, Mamonov and Zubov. Both Russians and foreigners have harshly censured Catherine for the rapidity of these changes, which were unexpected and sometimes without any visible cause. On the other hand, even writers who are unfavourable to Catherine have praised her for the fact that not one of the favourites banished from the court was ever persecuted or punished, while history presents a multitude of examples of cruelty and extreme arbitrariness on the part of crowned women in parallel cases.

It must be acknowledged, however, that favouritism, given the unbounded cupidity of Catherine's favourites and of their relations, friends, and acquaintances, cost the treasury and the nation very dear.<sup>h</sup>

[1775 A.D.]

Under the influence of new favourites and other confidants, the second half of Catherine's reign assumed an essentially different character as regards her actuating motives, although in the outward course of events a certain resemblance to the first half was preserved. When Catherine began to reign she had in mind a policy of peaceful splendour, advised also by Panin; she would willingly have secured the sovereignty of Poland by pacific means. It was only the force of circumstances which drew her into an undesired war.

Now her ambition assumed a different direction; we behold her recklessly bent on high-handed conquests, taking the initiative and deliberately making plans to bring about new wars. And, as this has often proved the case when government is vested in a woman, the change was caused by the most intimate personal circumstances. It would be out of place here to relate in detail the paltriness of all the court intrigues. It will suffice to recall the fact that Catherine, weary of the brutal tyranny of Gregory Orlov, tried to shake off his yoke and only succeeded with difficulty in wrenching herself free. She sent him at the time of the plague to Moscow, much against his will, and his numerous enemies hardly concealed their hope that he might never return. The empress endeavoured to keep him at a distance when he returned, but he struggled to remain master of the field and to stand his ground, although he saw himself supplanted in her personal favour by an insignificant young officer of the guards called Vasiltchikov.

### *The Rise of Potemkin*

When Catherine began after a time to feel ashamed of the insignificance of this young man, the much discussed General Gregory Alexandrovitch Potemkin, known to the empress in the days of her quarrels with her husband, knew how to take advantage of this favourable moment to force himself almost by violence into the long coveted position of her acknowledged and honoured favourite. The Orlovs tried for some time to wrest from him his sway over Catherine and over Russia, but they were obliged finally to give way, and retired to the ancient capital of the empire—which had remained the national capital, the capital of ancient Muscovy and the refuge of all who had reasons for avoiding the court.

There is much in this strife that is characteristic of time and place. When Gregory Orlov was forced to start on his dangerous journey to Moscow, many hoped, as already pointed out, that he would never return. When he reappeared safe and sound and in excellent health, and it was feared that he might regain his lost position in the favour of the empress, many a shrewd man was unable to conceal his vexation. The distinguished German doctor, Tode, to whom may be ascribed practically all the expedient measures taken in Moscow against the plague, remained not only unrewarded, but was unable for a long time to obtain compensation for the loss of his wardrobe. When he finally expressed his astonishment thereat, one of the senators is said to have solved the riddle with the dry remark: "Well, why did you bring the count back alive?" Then when Gregory Orlov got married in Moscow it was quite seriously proposed in the senate that the marriage should be dissolved as sinful, and that the fallen favourite and his wife should be shut up in penitential monasteries because they had married within the prohibited degrees. The empress, who had bestowed upon her former friend the title of prince as a consolation and a farewell, was angered by this decree and caused it to be revoked. However, in spite of the protection afforded him, Gregory Orlov came to a tragic end a few years later (1783). He died insane—as tradition

will have it, a violent death, one of the mysterious occurrences that will never be cleared up.

But the empress Catherine, generally so acute, was singularly deceived concerning Potemkin, the Prince of Darkness, as he was afterwards called from a play on his name. He was the son of an insignificant nobleman of Smolensk, a retired major, and bore a name till then unknown in Russian history; a man of doubtful capabilities, ignorant, and in fact distinguished by nothing but a boundless and unscrupulous egotism, by an immense craving for coarse, extravagant pleasures, and by the nefarious energy with which he pursued his selfish desires. The first condition for his enjoyment of life was the power to exercise a boundless autocracy and to be able to tread under foot not only those who bowed before him but also those who attempted to resist him.

The empress, however, as a woman and conscious of her unauthorised position, feeling the need of energetic support, saw in the man, whose almost gigantic frame seemed to betoken a titanic nature, something really extraordinary, and believed him destined to accomplish great deeds. Thus Potemkin retained his ascendancy even after he had withdrawn from her most intimate favours under the pretence of long-continued ill-health, and had thrust forward all sorts of handsome insignificant young men who were one after the other loaded with riches. Potemkin understood how to increase the distrust which the empress felt for her son, and to keep it constantly awake. He made her believe that she was continually surrounded by dangers; that he was the only one who would protect her, and more especially that he was the only one who would wish to so under all circumstances. On the other hand he flattered her vanity still more than her ambition by plans on an adventurously large scale, by fantastic pictures of fame and greatness which he suggested to her imagination. Thus, he pointed to the conquest of Constantinople, the expulsion of the Turks from Europe, the foundation of a Greek empire on the Bosphorus, not as triumphs which one might hope to see realised in the future but as deeds which might and should be accomplished within the next few years.

The general idea was not originated by Potemkin. Field-Marshal Munich had already pointed out to the empress that Constantinople was the necessary goal of Russian aspirations. But formerly an object so remote in time and place aroused but little interest. Now everything seemed to have advanced within grasp; the empress was to wear the crown of the new Greek empire during her lifetime; now the idea aroused in her the wildest enthusiasm. The very fact that no cautious statesman would consider these plans only made Potemkin appear all the greater in her eyes; his assurance raised him far above the everyday mediocrity of the others.

The eldest grandson of the empress received the name of Alexander, the second the no less significant name of Constantine. The former was in due time to inherit the Greek crown from his grandmother. They took care in a manner which bordered on exaggeration to make prophecies, or to announce to the whole world the vast schemes with which they deluded themselves. The young prince was not christened according to the Russo-Greek but the somewhat different oriental-Greek ritual, as it was practised in the churches of his future empire. They tried to procure a Greek nurse for him, but as that did not succeed they at least chose one called Helen. Greek playfellows were found for him, and he learned modern Greek as if it were his mother tongue.

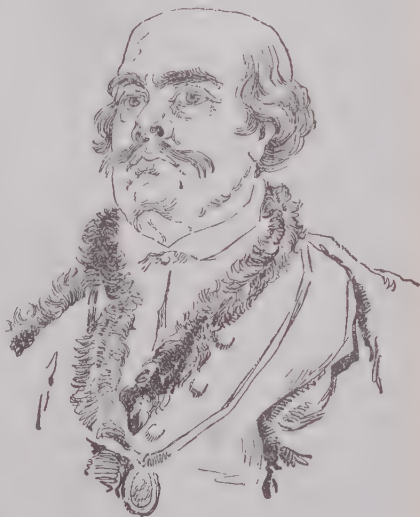
The fascination which Potemkin exercised over Catherine may be attri-



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buted to her feeling of insecurity, to the support Potemkin promised her, and to the vast prospects he opened out for her ambition. There is one thing calculated to astonish us and that is that neither the empress nor Potemkin was able to realise how insufficient was the actual might of Russia at that time to carry out these gigantic schemes. It was scarcely surprising that Potemkin should be unable to judge of this, for he was an ignorant man, who was wanting in the most elementary political foresight and was besides no thinker. But how came it that Catherine should be so deceived, who had studied earnestly and had by that time accumulated a varied experience? How could it escape her that the comparatively limited financial resources of the empire, more especially, would prove quite inadequate, particularly as they were anything but well husbanded? They gave themselves up lightly to the magic of the bank-note press and thus brought down untold calamities upon Russia, as has been the case also in other countries. But this calamity did not stand alone; it is in fact not to be regarded as an independent manifestation, but rather as one of a whole series of necessary consequences of a premature effort of Russia to lay claim to a world-power of such magnitude and importance, before her might was fully established at home or had attained sufficient maturity.

The fact that the forces of the empire must from that time be almost entirely devoted to the support of a foreign policy; that little, if anything, could be done for the development of culture and industry (and that only as a matter of secondary importance), that no consideration could be given to the most necessary reforms — none of these circumstances worked Russia such visible and tangible harm as the flooding of the country with unconsolidated paper money doomed in advance to depreciation; as matters stood, this was probably a greater evil. When Russia entered upon the grasping policy of Potemkin she began to lay out her future in advance, so to speak, and that on a scale utterly out of proportion to the actual gain which might be or which was in fact attained. The evils which resulted have continued to work themselves out down to the present day. As in this way the germs of a future power were constantly being sacrificed in order to conjure up power in the present by overdrawing the resources in hand, the real advancement of the empire was paralysed, and even the actual might in which they gloried remained partly a sham which certainly did not correspond with the reality. When later it became necessary for Russia to participate in the momentous struggles which involved the destiny of Europe, her power was not matured, concentrated, or husbanded at the decisive moment — as for instance the power of Prussia by Frederick William I; her future prospects were encumbered by a heavy burden and by manifold obligations, the inner development was behind the times, and her financial position was shaken. It became



GENERAL SUVAROV

(1729-1800)

necessary continually to make fresh, feverish efforts, which always overreached the possibilities of the present and which hindered the inner development afresh, involved the future deeper and deeper, and exhausted its resources.<sup>i</sup>

### *The Official Status of the Favourite*

It may be deemed necessary in this place to explain what were the duties expected from and the distinguished honours paid to the favourites of Catherine. When her majesty had made choice of a new favourite, she created him her general aide-de-camp, in order that he might accompany her wherever she went, without incurring public censure. From that period the favourite occupied in the palace an apartment under that of his royal mistress, with which it communicated by a private staircase. The first day of his installation he received a present of 100,000 rubles, and every month he found 12,000 placed on his dressing-table. The marshal of the court was ordered to provide him a table of twenty-four covers, and to defray all his household expenses. The favourite was required to attend the empress wherever she went, and was not permitted to leave the palace without asking her consent. He was forbidden to converse familiarly with other women; and if he went to dine with any of his friends, the absence of the mistress of the house was always required.

Whenever the empress cast her eyes on one of her subjects, with the design of raising him to the post of favourite, he was invited to dinner by some one of her female confidants, on whom she called as if it were by chance. There she would draw the new candidate into discourse, and judge how far he was worthy of her destined favour. When the opinion she had formed was favourable, a significant look apprised the confidant, who, in her turn, made it known to the object of her royal mistress' pleasure. The next day he was examined as to the state of his health by the court physician, and as to some other particulars by Mademoiselle Protasov, one of the empress' ladies, after which he accompanied her majesty to the Hermitage, and took possession of the apartment that had been prepared for his reception. These formalities began upon the choice of Potemkin, and were thenceforth constantly observed.

When a favourite had lost the art of pleasing, there was also a particular manner of dismissing him. He received orders to travel, and from that moment all access to her majesty was denied him; but he was sure of finding at the place of his retirement such splendid rewards as were worthy of the munificent pride of Catherine. It was a very remarkable feature in her character that none of her favourites incurred her hatred or vengeance, though several of them offended her, and their quitting office did not always depend on herself.

### *Potemkin's Schemes of Conquest*

Potemkin's rule commenced at the very time in which the Peace of Kutchuk-Kainardji was concluded (July, 1774). The disputes with Poland and the rebellion of Pugatchev were no sooner ended than he immediately violated every condition of that treaty, well knowing that the empress would approve of everything he might do. Dowlet Gerai, who was elected khan by the now independent Tatars, still remained much more favourably disposed to the Turks than to the Russians: the latter, therefore, by means of money and intrigues, raised up a pretender against him; and then, under pretence

[1775-1780 A.D.]

of an armed mediation, a Russian army occupied a part of the Crimea, and seemed disposed to make the khan a prisoner, and to seize the whole province. Dowlet Gerai took refuge with the Turks in April, 1775, and Sahim Gerai, who was a mere creature of Russia, was elected in his stead, to the great satisfaction of the Russians, who foresaw that the majority of the Tatars would oppose the new khan, and thus furnish them with another pretext for a renewal of hostilities. A war with the Porte appeared unavoidable, and Romanzov received commands to collect a considerable army on the Dnieper, whilst Repnin in Constantinople was endeavouring to deceive the sultan, and Potemkin betrayed the unfortunate Sahim Gerai.

By this time Potemkin had ceased to be the personal favourite of the empress; but he himself recommended his successors in that post to her notice. Potemkin was indispensable to Catherine in consequence of those colossal undertakings which procured her the name of Great; and because the fear with which he inspired all her enemies secured to her the possession of the throne, which she withheld from her son Paul. Zavadovski had become the occupant of the apartments of the royal palace in November, 1776, and been created a major-general; as soon, however, as he fell under Potemkin's suspicion, the latter authoritatively insisted upon his dismissal. Zavadovski had turned against his patron, and was an eager favourer of the Orlovs and Field-Marshal Romanzov. For this reason Potemkin succeeded in obtaining leave of absence for the favourite in July, 1777, in order to provide during his temporary retirement a substitute who should eventually displace him. Potemkin had long before selected a Major Zoritch for his adjutant, who was politically insignificant, but very attractive in his hussar uniform, with a view to present him to the empress. Zavadovski had no sooner left the palace than he carried his design into effect, and the empress made Zoritch a colonel adjutant-general and her companion. At the expiration of nine months, he too fell under Potemkin's displeasure, and was obliged to retire, for the empress was completely under the control of her minister. Next came Korsakov, a handsome sergeant in the guards, who was suddenly raised to the rank of aide-de-camp general. He too was indignant at Potemkin's unbounded pride and avarice, but attempted in vain to open the eyes of the empress; he was obliged to yield to the influence of the indispensable tyrant after he had enjoyed the favour of the empress for fifteen months.

The circumstances of the year 1778 were peculiarly favourable to the accomplishment of Potemkin's plans of conquest, for war had broken out in the spring between France and England, and both powers were so fully occupied in the west that they had no leisure to attend to the concerns of the east. Potemkin, therefore, sent an army, commanded by Suvarov, against the Kuban and Bedjiak Tatars, whilst other Russians penetrated into the Crimea and were guilty of the most cruel devastations. This led to the seizure of some Russian ships in the straits of the Dardanelles on the part of the sultan, who was, however, unable to commence a war without the aid and co-operation of France. But that power, unwilling to break with Russia, insisted on mediating, and the sultan was forced to acquiesce. The result was that the Russian ships were restored, and the sultan formally recognised Sahim Gerai as the rightful ruler of the Crimea.

Catherine was so pleased with the conduct of France on this occasion that she embraced with alacrity the plan of the armed neutrality, which was devised by the French minister Vergennes; and in 1780 she put herself at the head of that league which was joined by almost all the powers of Europe except Great Britain. It was formed for the purpose of resisting the right



asserted by the English navy to make prize of an enemy's goods, or of goods shipped for an enemy's port, wherever found, and even though covered by a neutral flag. The leading principle of the league was that free ships make free goods. Great Britain would not admit this; but at that time she did no more than expostulate with her good friend and ally the empress of Russia. It was not until the reign of Paul that she waged war for the maintenance of the opposite principle, which she later repudiated during the Crimean War.

From this time forward, as we have seen, Potemkin, Voltaire, and a host of flatterers amused the empress with dreams of the restoration of a Byzantine empire, and the erection of a new capital on the Black Sea. Sahim Gerai prized the slavish title of a lieutenant-colonel in the guards of a foreign empress more than that of prince of a nation to which the Russian czars for many years had been vassals, and he renounced the national costume of his people in order to glitter in a Russian uniform and wear the decorations of the order of St. Anne. Potemkin contrived every month to alienate him more and more from his people, till at last this miserable man was induced to lay down his khanate, from which he derived a revenue of three or four millions of rubles, in order, as he thought, to revel peacefully in the enjoyment of some hundred thousand rubles, which Potemkin was to pay him as the newly appointed Russian governor-general of Tauris, as the country was now to be called. Potemkin was too much accustomed to receive and not to give, and to contract debts without thinking of paying them, to give himself much concern about the payment of the promised salary, although the empress was led to believe that the yearly sum always charged to her was in reality regularly paid to the khan.

The shamelessness of the Russian government on this occasion fully equalled the audacity of their manifestoes respecting the partition of Poland, or that of the state-papers of a Genz and a Talleyrand. In the Russian manifestoes published in April, 1783, it was made as clear as the sun to the Tatars that the empress and Potemkin were really proposing to confer upon them the most signal benefits. It was stated that the Tatars, as Russian subjects, were in future to be delivered from all the evils of their internal disputes, and by the incorporation of the Crimea, the Kuban, and the eastern Nogaians an end was to be put to those oppressions from which they had hitherto suffered from the Turks and the Russians alternately. What the correspondence was between these promises and the subsequent reality may be learned from all the works of travellers who visited these districts, and gave accounts of the Crimea and the Tatars a generation or two later. That numerous, free, and rich race of people, clothed in silks and of noble appearance, had then dwindled into a crowd of starving beggars; their magnificent tented cities had become gipsy encampments, and their houses and palaces exhibited mere masses of ruin and decay.

These manifestoes, indeed, as is usually the case, were not intended for those to whom they were addressed, but merely to conceal in a cloud of words, from the eyes of those at a distance, the cruelties and bloodshed with which they were accompanied. The Tatars made an effort to defend their liberties, and their magnates made no secret of their dissatisfaction; Potemkin, therefore, had recourse to one of those heroic means which usually find defenders enough when they are applied for the support of the true faith and of autocratic government, and are only reviled and execrated in the hands of a Danton and a Robespierre. He proposed by a single massacre summarily to annihilate the malcontents, and to awe the rest into submission by the

[1783 A.D.]

dread of a similar fate. Posorovski received express orders to make himself master of the malecontents, their families, and adherents, and put them all to the sword: he, however, possessed moral courage enough to decline the business of an executioner. Potemkin's cousin was not so scrupulous. According to the accounts, whose unanimous testimony we are obliged to follow, even when it appears to us incredible, Paul Potemkin caused above thirty thousand Tatars, of every age and sex, to be massacred in cold blood, and in this way procured for his cousin the easily won title of the Taurian, and the place of grand-admiral of the Black Sea and governor-general of the new province of Tauris.

The massacre in Tauris took place in April, 1783, and the Turks were unable to render any assistance to the Tatars without foreign support. Among the European powers, however, England was at that time fully occupied with the disturbances which in the following year brought Pitt to the helm of affairs; France was glad to see an end to the American war; Joseph II was bound by the Treaty of Tzarskoi Selo; Frederick II hoped to become master of Thorn and Dantzic, if Russia was well-disposed towards him; and Gustavus III of Sweden was the only monarch who could have rendered any aid. In the very same year, however, Gustavus suffered himself to be induced to go to Friedrichsham, where he sold himself to the empress; nothing, therefore, was now left to the Turks but to yield to their destiny. The sultan did what had been done by the king of Poland a few years before; by his consent he changed that into a righteous and legal possession which, being seized in the midst of peace, was previously a robbery. The whole territory of the Tatars, the Crimea, the island of Taman, and a great part of the Kuban were ceded to Russia, and a treaty of commerce was forced upon the Turks, by virtue of which the Russian consuls in the various ports of Turkey were erected into a power wholly independent of the government of the country. This treaty of commerce had been drawn up by Panin before he had been obliged to yield to the superior influence of Potemkin and withdraw from public affairs; and it was now concluded on the 10th of June, 1783. By virtue of this treaty the Turks were obliged to submit the decision of all mixed civil cases in which a Russian and a Turk were the respective parties, not to the local tribunals, nor to the higher authorities, nor to a court of arbitration, but to the Russian consul; and in all pecuniary transactions the claims of a Russian against a Turk were urged with much greater strictness than in those cases in which the Turk was the claimant and the Russian the debtor.

In the eyes of the world, which regards only externals, Potemkin was now a great and admired statesman; and so absolute was his sway over the empress herself, that she not only tolerated his insolence, his total neglect of all pecuniary obligations, his tyranny over all classes, and his imperial expenditure and magnificence, but allowed him to help himself to an unlimited extent out of the coffers of the state. Potemkin on the one hand did homage to the empress as if she were a goddess, and on the other he suffered himself to treat her with the most insolent familiarity and rudeness. He would even saunter from his own apartments into hers in his dressing-gown and slippers, with his stockings hanging down and his legs bare. He went so far as to extort from those who enjoyed the empress' favour a part of the money which they received from her, and yet he allowed poor Sahim Gerai to starve. He never paid him the assigned pension of 100,000 rubles which was yearly debited to the empress' account, and even the displeasure of Catherine could not induce him to bestow upon this Russian *protégé* the simplest means of life.

The founding of a new Russo-Grecian capital, with which Potemkin now busied himself, was a magnificent piece of flattery for the empress, but for which she was unhappily obliged to pay too dear. Catherine indulged with Voltaire in those visionary schemes of a utopian Greece, of a civilisation of which she and not the people was to be the source, of an enlightenment, industry, and trade to be carried into these conquered deserts by ukases and courtiers; Potemkin acted according to this fancy. He first erected a city with buildings of every description, and then sought for inhabitants, or forcibly drove them for a time from all quarters, when he wished to make a court-spectacle of this theatrical city and to enchant the empress. It was of no consequence to him that his city fell to pieces and its inhabitants disappeared as soon as he turned away his eyes. The new city was called Kherson, a name long since obscured by that of Odessa; the empress granted 18,000,000 rubles, most of which, however, Potemkin diverted to his own private use. The situation was badly chosen, and yet this shadow of a capital was for a length of time charmed into existence by innumerable arts of fraud and open violence; and the deserts of which it was to be the metropolis were erected into a province, to which Potemkin gave the name of Catherine's Glory (*Slava Ekatharina*). Another province, somewhat farther to the north, near the celebrated falls of the Kaidak, was also honoured with the name of the empress, and called Iekatarinoslav.

#### GENERAL SUVAROV

The general to whom Potemkin at this time assigned the congenial task of havoc and destruction in the country of the Nogaian Tatars and in Kuban was Suvarov, a man who from that period till the end of the century had the misfortune to be continually employed as the instrument of a murderous military despotism. In Poland he executed three times those orders of annihilation which were issued from St. Petersburg. He destroyed the Turks and sacrificed the Russians by thousands at the will of Potemkin. He subsequently shared Paul's hatred against the French and every thought of civil freedom, and performed the same kind of heroic deeds for that madman's pleasure as he had previously done at the bidding of Potemkin. He was undoubtedly one of the greatest generals of modern times, but wholly destitute of humanity, for he sacrificed thousands without hesitation in order to secure a victory or storm a fortress, when either was calculated to produce a splendid effect though but for the moment. He not only flattered the empress, but even the common soldiers and their superstitions. Though he was a man of various knowledge, and had made himself master of all the arts of life as practised in the highest society, he assumed at court the character of a sort of court-fool, and acted often as if he were mad, merely in order to carry out some surprising piece of flattery. In the company of the common soldiers he affected the manners of the semi-barbarous Russian, lived as they did themselves, submitted to every privation which they might be called upon to endure, and knelt and prayed before every wayside image, often when the roads were deep with mud.

#### THE FAVOURITES LANSKOI AND IERMOLOV

At the time when a high-flown sentimentality was the fashion in Germany, and the empress was past fifty, she indulged in a fit of romantic love for the insipid and spiritless Lanskoï. This turn in her affections was very



[1785 A.D.]

agreeable to Potemkin, for Lanskoï neither took up the cause of the destitute khan, nor yielded to the allurements of the king of Prussia, the emperor Joseph II, or the English, when they were desirous of engaging him in affairs of state. Potemkin freely permitted the empress to indulge her visionary love for the wonderfully handsome and youthful face which captivated her affections, and did not grudge her, among the many gross and degrading scenes of her life, the enjoyment of one romantic passion, after the manner of Werther and Siegwart, from the year 1780 till July, 1784. Catherine's love for Lanskoï had been romantic in his life, and her sorrow at his death was not less extravagant; but notwithstanding all this ideality, she had been also careful to show him substantial proofs of her affection at the cost of the country. She bestowed upon him not only all possible titles, orders, and decorations — diamonds, plate, and collections of every kind, but he left behind him in cash a property of 7,000,000 rubles.

The fantastic mourning for Lanskoï was no sooner evaporated than the empress allowed Potemkin, who presented candidates for every office, to supply her with a substitute for her departed lover. In order to exclude all other pretenders, Potemkin on every such occasion was prepared to fill the vacancy; and with this view he had for some time made Lieutenant Iermolov one of his adjutants. In 1785 this man became the declared favourite of the empress, and soon ventured to pursue a course which Lanskoï would never have thought of. He directed Catherine's attention to the tyranny of Potemkin, and gave her some hints respecting his behaviour towards Sahim Gerai. The empress expressed her displeasure without naming the person who had made her acquainted with the unhappy fate of the khan; Potemkin, however easily guessed that no man in the empire would dare to speak ill of him to the empress except Iermolov. He therefore threateningly replied, "That must have been said by the White Moor," as he was accustomed to call Iermolov on account of his fair countenance and flat nose.

Catherine did not hesitate severely to reproach Potemkin for his harsh and unjust conduct towards the khan, and she even wavered for some months between her favourite and this son of the Titans, whom she regarded as her protector and the creator of her glory and her greatness. At the end of June, 1786, a fresh scene occurred, by which the empress was compelled to declare either for the one or the other. Iermolov had made a new attempt to alienate the empress from Potemkin; the latter, therefore, haughtily insisted that either Iermolov or he must retire from her service; Catherine felt herself constrained to adhere to Potemkin, and Iermolov went upon his travels. During the course of the year he had been loaded with riches, and on his departure he was furnished with 100,000 rubles and imperial recommendations to the Russian ambassadors at all the European courts. On the day after his departure Momonov, another adjutant of Potemkin, occupied his place.

#### JOSEPH II VISITS CATHERINE; A SPECTACULAR TOUR

About this period Potemkin repeatedly travelled from St. Petersburg to Tauris and back with all the expedition of a courier, whilst he was engaged in the building of Kherson, in order to prepare a splendid triumph for the empress. The neglected Sahim Gerai hastened thither to meet him and make him acquainted with the urgency of his wants; but Potemkin, instead of rendering him any assistance, banished him to Kaluga, where he fell into a state of the deepest poverty. He then conceived that he might find some relief from his fellow believers, and fled to Turkey, but the sultan caused him

to be arrested as a traitor and renegade at Khotin, to be conveyed to Rhodes, and there despatched by the bow-string (1787). The plan contemplated by Potemkin and the empress was to raise the grand duke Constantine, second grandson of the empress, to the dignity of emperor of Byzantium, at the expense of the Turks, and at the same time to incorporate the kingdom of Poland with Russia. The new city of Kherson was no sooner ready for this grand theatrical representation than the empress was to travel thither to receive the homage of her new subjects, and to deceive the world by an ostentatious display of magnificence and pomp.

Joseph II was invited to meet the empress in Kherson, in order to consult with her upon a partition of the Turkish Empire; but Constantine himself was in the first instance left at home. The luxury and extravagance exhibited by Potemkin during the empress' journey and the fêtes prepared for her reception and entertainment at Kherson were worthy of the heaven-storming characters of the pair. They remind us of the extravagance of the Abassides and the descendants of Timur, with this difference — that civilisation and the arts were strangers to the people of the caliphs and of the Great Mogul. Never perhaps was there seen in monarchical Europe, where such things are not rare, such a gross abuse of the wealth and well-being of the people, and such insult cast on public opinion by a contemptible comedy, as on the occasion of this imperial progress.

It began in January, 1787, and was continued night and day. To facilitate the journey by night, Potemkin had caused great piles of wood to be erected at every fifty perches, which were kindled at night-fall, and imparted to the whole district almost the brightness of day. On the sixth day the cortège reached Smolensk, and fourteen days afterwards Kiev, where the degraded Polish magnates, who made a trade of their nation, their honour, and their friendship, were assembled to offer their homage to the empress and join in the revelry of her court. Potemkin himself had gone forward in advance in order to arrange the side-scenes of the theatre which he erected from St. Petersburg to Kherson. Deserts were peopled for the occasion; and palaces were raised in the trackless wild. The nakedness of the plains was disguised by villages built for the purpose of a day, and enlivened by fireworks. Chains of mountains were illuminated. Fine roads were opened by the army. Howling wildernesses were transformed into blooming gardens; and immense flocks and herds were driven to the sides of the road in order to delight the eyes of the empress in her hasty transit. The rocks in the Dnieper were sprung, that the empress might descend the stream as conveniently as she had travelled thither in the chamber of her sledge. At the beginning of May the whole party embarked on the river in fifteen splendid galleys at Kremenchuk, and on the following day Stanislaus of Poland presented himself at Kaniev, in order, as it were, by his insipid and pitiful character to serve as a foil to the monarchial splendour of a woman. He accepted an alms of 100,000 rubles for the expenses of his journey, was very graciously received by Potemkin, treated with coldness and indifference by the empress, and as if his royal Polish income was simply a Russian pension he begged for an augmentation. He was not ashamed to acknowledge to all the courts whose ambassadors accompanied the empress that he regarded his kingdom as a Russian province, for he besought the empress to grant the succession to his nephew and to his nation the free navigation of the Dnieper. As is customary in such cases, there was no lack of promises; but none of his petitions were really granted, for it was impossible either to value or respect him, and in his situation he was incapable of inspiring fear.

[1787 A.D.]

The emperor Joseph, who had anticipated the arrival of his ally in Kherson, travelled to meet her as far as Kaidak, and returned with her. He soon perceived that she was shamefully deluded by the appearance of prosperity, civilisation, and population, and that soon as she had passed through all was again to become empty and deserted. Like the villages, flocks, and men by the wayside, the new buildings in which the distinguished travellers passed their nights and the houses and shops in Kherson all vanished again when they had served their temporary purpose. It will not be regarded as incredible that 7,000,000 rubles were expended on the journey, when it is known that the throne itself, which was erected for the empress in what was called the admiralty at Kherson, cost 14,000. Catherine made a magnificent entry into the new city, passing under a triumphal arch, on which was inscribed in the Greek tongue, "The way to Byzantium."

## OUTBREAK OF THE AUSTRO-RUSSIAN WAR WITH TURKEY

After the meeting at Kherson the two imperial allies prepared to direct their forces against the whole extent of the Turkish frontier, from the Adriatic to the Black Sea. Care was taken, however, to furnish an excuse for the participation of Austria, by inciting the Turks to make the first attack; for only in such a case was Austria bound to furnish auxiliaries to the Russians. To this end Bulgakov, Catherine's ambassador at Constantinople, was ordered by every means to excite commotions among the Greeks, Bulgarians, Wallachians, and Slavonians, as well as in Egypt and in Asia Minor. The Turks, justly incensed at these intrigues, insisted upon a distinct declaration of their views on the part of the Russians; and when they received for answer only the usual diplomatic subterfuge that the ambassador must wait for instructions from St. Petersburg, they immediately declared war, sent Bulgakov to the state prison of the Seven Towers, and nothing but the threatening interference of the English minister could have prevented them from inflicting summary vengeance upon him, to show their righteous displeasure at the conduct of his government. Catherine and Joseph had now gained their wishes. The Turks were the first to declare war, and a pretence was thus afforded to the Russians to call upon the Austrians for that aid which they were bound by treaty to render in case of an attack on the part of the Turks.

Catherine published a manifesto, in which after a long enumeration of the pretended wrongs ascribed to the Porte, she added that, provoked by a conduct, in itself so offensive, she had, very unwillingly, been obliged to have recourse to arms, as the only means left her for the support of those rights which she had acquired at the price of so much blood, and to avenge her wounded dignity, suffering from the violence that had been used towards her minister at Constantinople; that entirely innocent of all the calamities inevitably engendered by war, she relied with confidence, not only on the Almighty protection and the assistance of her allies, but on the prayers of the Christian world, for triumph in a cause so just as that which she was obliged to defend. This manifesto was soon followed up by a second, which declared that the Porte had arrogantly presumed to insist on a categorical answer to its absurd demands; and that the empress, forced to repel the aggression of the enemy of the Christian name, armed herself with confidence, under the protection of that just God who had so long and so powerfully shielded the Russian Empire.

Had Potemkin been as great a general as he was capable of devising magnificent plans and playing the Russian tyrant, great things would have been accomplished in 1787, for all the preparations for the war had been made long



beforehand. Field-Marshal Romanzov was to share the command of the army with Potemkin; that is to say, he was to do all the work, and the other was to engross all the merit. Romanzov declined this thankless office, and Potemkin stood alone at the head of the army; but he did not succeed in deceiving posterity, for no one has ever ascribed to him what was effected by the officers under his command — by Repnin, Paul Potemkin, Suvarov, Kamenskoi, Galitzin, and Kutusov, all of whom became more or less renowned in later wars. Potemkin found in Suvarov precisely such an instrument as he needed; for to that general the will of the empress or her favourite was in all cases a law paramount to all moral obligations, or any feelings of humanity. He was sent to Kinburn, the chief object of the campaign being apparently the siege of Otchakov, by the main body under Potemkin, whilst other divisions were despatched to observe the movements of the Tatars in the Kuban.

Kinburn was a small fortress occupied by the Russians, and situated upon a promontory directly opposite to Otchakov, in and around which the Turkish army was stationed. The object of Suvarov's mission was to frustrate the efforts of the Turkish fleet to land a division on the promontory of Kinburn; and he executed the task in a masterly manner. At first he remained perfectly quiet in the fortress, after having erected a battery at the extremity of the promontory, in order to cannonade the Turkish ships from the land, at the same moment in which they might be attacked by the Russian fleet. He allowed the Turks to proceed without molestation till they had disembarked from six thousand to seven thousand men; he then sent a few regiments of Cossacks against them, and at the same time charged them at the head of two battalions of infantry with fixed bayonets, and exterminated them all. Immediately afterwards he employed his battery against the Turkish fleet. The prince of Nassau-Siegen, who had the command of the Russian gunboats of Niolaiev, attacked the Turkish ships at the very entrance of what is called the Liman, and within range of Suvarov's guns, to whose well-directed fire he was indebted for a great share of the advantages which he gained.

The whole remaining part of the year 1787, as well as the spring and a great part of the summer of 1788, elapsed without anything important having been undertaken; the whole of the Russian land-forces were, however, directed towards the Bag, in order to push forward with the greatest expedition to the Danube. The Turks had already suffered defeats at sea and in the Caucasus. The Russian fleet in the Black Sea, which was almost wholly commanded by foreigners, nearly annihilated the Turkish navy; generals Tallitzin and Tekeli massacred the Tatars of the Kuban, and Tamara reduced Georgia and Lesghistan. In August, Potemkin at length marched against Otchakov, but very wisely left the whole conduct of the military operations to Suvarov, the victor of Kinburn. The Russian operations were delayed in expectation of an Austrian army, which, in connection with a Russian force under Soltikov, was to make an incursion into Moldavia. This delay was protracted till King Gustavus began to exhibit symptoms of making an attack on the provinces contiguous to Sweden, which were now deprived of means of defence. He had to revenge on Russia a long series of wrongs, crowned by the intolerable conduct of Catherine's ambassador Razumovski, whom she had sent to form conspiracies against him, and to persecute and insult him in his own capital.

#### THE SWEDISH WAR (1788-1790 A.D.)

Gustavus III would also willingly have induced Denmark to take part in the movement against Russia; in this, however, he was unsuccessful, although

[1788 A.D.]

supported by England and Prussia. Razumovski, the Russian ambassador, was ordered to leave Stockholm on the 23rd of June, and went to the army in Finland. The king appeared as if he designed immediately to march against St. Petersburg, which excited no small concern in the minds of the government, because, in confident reliance on the king's misunderstanding with the Swedish nobles, the whole of their good troops had been despatched to the frontiers of Turkey.

The king of Sweden was acquainted with the feelings of his nobles, consequently with those of the generals and officers of his army; he therefore endeavoured to deprive the malcontents of the apparently legal point of a refusal to serve, by changing the offensive war which he contemplated into a defensive one, and for this purpose had recourse to a very childish subterfuge. There had been a long-existing dispute between the two countries respecting the bridge over the small river Kimmene, the boundary between the two states, whether it should be painted in Swedish or Russian colours; he provoked the Russians to maintain this disputed right by force of arms, and then proclaimed that he had been attacked by them, and was therefore justified in carrying on a defensive war without consulting the estates. We leave it undecided whether he took possession of the bridge by force, and thereby compelled the Russians to resist force by force; or whether, as the best accounts allege, he caused some Swedes to be clothed in Russian uniforms in order to attack his own soldiers, and in this way to justify an offensive war.

The distance from the river Kimmene to St. Petersburg is less than 150 miles. There would have been no difficulty in storming the small fortresses of Viborg and Friedrichsham, which lay upon the route, and an unexpected attack from the sea might probably have led to the surprise and capture of Kronstadt and Kronsnot, the former of which is less than twenty miles from the open waters, and the latter is situated on a sand-bank in the sea.<sup>1</sup> The favourable moment, however, for an attack by sea had been already allowed to pass by the king's brother Charles, duke of Södermanland, who commanded the Swedish fleet, and by land the king was precipitate when he ought to have delayed, and hesitated when everything depended on rapidity.

On the 22nd of June Duke Charles, with fifteen ships of the line and five frigates, had fallen in with three sail of Russian ships, to the north of the island of Gothland, which he ought to have captured, but was restrained by a feeling of reluctance to begin the war (which was then actually commenced), and immediately a superior Russian fleet appeared. Admiral Greig, an Englishman, commanded it; his fleet outnumbered the Swedish by two ships of the line and two frigates, and therefore the issue of the engagement between the two fleets which took place on the 17th of July was the less inglorious for the Swedes. They fell in with the Russians off the island of Hogland, and fought with great skill and courage; they lost, it is true, one of their line-of-battle ships, but took one of the Russian fleet in its stead; at length, however, they were compelled to seek for safety in the harbour of Sveaborg, where they were kept in a state of blockade by the Russians during the whole of the campaign.

<sup>1</sup> The Swedes were not aware of the fortuitous advantage then offered them by a singular incident. Just before the Russian admiral received orders to weigh, the empress had given the command of a ship to the famous Paul Jones. As soon as the British officers in the Russian service heard of this appointment, they repaired in a body to the admiralty, and announced their determination to quit the squadron to which that pirate had been attached. By this act on their part seven or eight ships were left without officers, until the empress, smothering her resentment, withdrew Paul Jones from the squadron, under pretence of sending him to the Black Sea; but, fearing a repetition of so unpleasant a scene, she contrived to get rid of the daring adventurer altogether.

The secretary of the king's embassy in St. Petersburg delivered such an extremely absurd ultimatum that no other answer was given than an order from the commandant to take his departure from the capital. Gustavus commanded armaments to be prepared and a commissariat to be provided, but left the whole superintendence to others, who neglected everything, and instead of preparing means to oppose entered into secret correspondence with the Russians. All this immediately appeared when the king at length resolved to storm the fortress of Friedrichsham. He found himself destitute of heavy artillery and other materials of war, which he supposed were all in readiness, and whilst the artillery was being slowly brought up by land, the nobles were devising the most shameful treason.

It was arranged that Friedrichsham should be at once attacked both by sea and by land; and Siegeroth had actually landed his troops and commenced operations when he suddenly received counter orders, because the troops which were with the king refused obedience. In these circumstances, Gustavus had no other alternative than to return to Stockholm, in order there to recover his royal dignity and power which he had lost at Friedrichsham. He entered Stockholm in September, and thenceforth occupied himself in preparing a *coup d'état*, which he accomplished on the 17th of February in the following year. Meanwhile, his traitorous nobles had concluded a truce with Russia, which was so far advantageous to Gustavus that it liberated his fleet from its captivity in the bay of Sveaborg. He was now dictator and autocrat; he had at command the means of prosecuting the war with Russia: but the favourable moment was past, and the Russians had already completed all their preparations by land and sea for the defence of their provinces bordering upon Sweden. Gustavus' project of burning the Russian fleet in the harbour of Copenhagen was discovered beforehand, and brought him nothing but disgrace. When he again joined the army in Finland, his Swedes gave evidence of their attachment and courage; but he himself again contrived to injure the success of the war by his interference in its conduct. In the murderous fights which ensued from the middle of June till the end of July, both the Russians and Swedes lost great numbers of men, without any other gain on either side than military renown. The Swedes in the meantime were unfortunate at sea, and could not have profited by their success had they been victorious by land.

Admiral Ehrenswerd commanded the Swedish flotilla of flat-bottomed boats, constructed for navigating the rocky shallows of the coast, whilst the similar Russian fleet was under the orders of the prince of Nassau-Siegen, who had shortly before been commander of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea, and had fallen into disputes with Potemkin, which led to his being sent to the Baltic. The Russian ships of the line were under the command of Admiral Tchitchakov, and had on board a considerable number of British naval officers of experience. This fleet had on the 26th of June fallen in with that of the Swedes, which was so injured in an engagement between Bornholm and Gothland as to be obliged to return to Karlskrona. The unfortunate issue of the battle was generally ascribed to disloyalty on the part of some of the naval officers.

The king still persisted in his determination of opening up a way for himself to St. Petersburg, and therefore of storming Friedrichsham. He himself directed the execution of the project, although he was, properly speaking, merely a volunteer with his army. By his interference he exposed the Swedish army to considerable loss, on the same day (August 24th) on which the Russian flotilla gained an important victory over the Swedes at Rogensalm.



[1790 A.D.]

Friedrichsham, according to the king's command, was to be stormed by the three generals, Siegroth, Kaulbart, and Platen: the assault, however, failed of success, and the Swedes were obliged to retire: their flotilla was twice beaten. The first victory of the Russians at Rogensalm was attributed to the prince of Nassau-Siegen, who, however, was accompanied by three or four persons who rendered him the same service which the British officers did to Admiral Tchitchakov. On the 1st of September the Swedish flotilla experienced a defeat at Högfors, and the land army, commanded by the king, was there also compelled to retreat. The loss in human life was indeed great, but the real injury small, for the Swedish army continued till the beginning of winter to occupy its quarters on the frontiers of Russia.

*The Campaign of 1790; the Treaty of Værela*

During the winter, Gustavus withdrew from his army, but he resumed his duties as commander in March, 1790, and was now careful to supply all the deficiencies of the two previous years. On the 15th of April, in Finland, he reduced the two important posts of Kärnakoski and Pardakovski near Vilmanstrand; his Swedes were victorious at Valkiala; and on the 30th repulsed the Russians in their attempt to recover the two posts just mentioned. On the 4th and 5th of May the Swedes were afterwards beaten at Aberfors by the Russian general Numsen, and lost twelve pieces of cannon. The king having again taken Pardakovski, the key of Savolax, immediately caused a portion of his land forces to embark in the flotilla, of which he himself assumed the command, and ordered the remainder of the army to press forward by the shore towards St. Petersburg, relying on the assistance of the fleet, which was to receive them on board in case of a defeat. The fleet consisted of nineteen large ships, twenty-seven galleys, and a number of gunboats, which in all mounted about two thousand guns. It was absolutely necessary to the execution of this adventurous undertaking that Friedrichsham should in all haste be reduced by storm. The king, having been successful on the 15th in a naval engagement, made his third attempt at storming the fortress on the 17th and 18th of May, and notwithstanding a great loss in men failed in effecting his object. Although the way by land thus remained barred, he nevertheless persisted in his design of terrifying the empress in her capital.

Gustavus, having now embarked a greater number of Swedish troops than before, reached Viborg, and on the 2nd of June, 1790, disembarked a division of his army at Blörke, about forty miles from St. Petersburg. The whole success of this rash enterprise depended on his remaining master of the sea. In order to maintain this superiority, Duke Charles was to prevent the junction of the two Russian fleets, one of which was lying in Kronstadt and the other in Revel, and on the 3rd of June he was ordered to engage the division of the fleet in the former harbour. The Swedish fleet was no sooner thus withdrawn from its position than an opportunity was afforded to the Russians to form a junction between their two fleets, which actually took place on the day the duke entered the sound of Viborg (June 6th). The Swedish fleet was blockaded by the Russian squadrons, consisting, when united, of thirty ships of the line and eighteen frigates; the former, however, continued to keep up its connection with the flotilla. It appears that both the Swedish fleets would have been entirely lost had the two Russian admirals been qualified for such a command. Captain Péliissier, who had served in Holland, is said to have given Admiral Tchitchakov advice which he ought to have followed,

had he not been too obstinately attached to his own opinions; Pélissier even pointed out to generals Suchtelen and Soltikov the places where they ought to have erected their batteries in order effectually to bar the egress of the Swedish fleet from the bay; no attention, however, was paid to his advice. The prince of Nassau-Siegen proved himself to be in no respect superior as a commander to Tchitchakov. On the other hand, if the advice of Duke Charles had been adopted, the Russians would have been victorious without a battle; King Gustavus and Stedingk, however, rescued the honour of the Swedish name.

The Swedes had now been closely shut up in the bay of Viborg for three weeks, and at the end of June were reduced to extremities; in the beginning of July a grand council of war was held. Duke Charles and many other members of the council recommended a capitulation, but the king and Stedingk were in favour of making a desperate effort to force their way through the enemy's line. The attempt was accordingly made on the 3rd of July, and through Tchitchakov's neglect it was so far successful, as it enabled the Swedish fleet to bring the blockading squadron to an engagement. But the Swedes lost in it not only seven ships of the line, three frigates, and more than thirty galleys and gunboats, but almost the whole of the royal guards, the queen's regiment, and that of Upland, amounting to six thousand or seven thousand men, which had been put on board the fleet. Whilst the larger Swedish ships thus endeavoured to gain the open sea, the flotilla had withdrawn for safety into an arm of the gulf, which runs parallel to the shore and stretches towards Friedrichsham. This inlet, called the sound of Suenske, is extremely difficult of access on the side towards Friedrichsham, in consequence of a group of rocky islands at its mouth, but it may be safely reached through the open harbour of Asph. By this way the prince of Nassau-Siegen determined to pass into the sound with the Russian flotilla, and attack the Swedes in their place of refuge.

The latter were well protected from the attack of the Russian fleet by rocks, and when the prince gave orders for the assault, on the 9th, the sailors were so exhausted and his orders for battle were so unskilful that the king of Sweden gained a splendid victory on that and the following day. The loss of the Russians was so great as to have surpassed any which they had suffered since the Seven Years' War. Fifty-five vessels were captured, a number of others destroyed, and fourteen thousand Russians either taken prisoners or slain. In spite of this signal victory, the king of Sweden now awoke from his dream of humbling the pride and glory of Russia; already he began to cast his eyes towards France, and in the following year he dreamed his monarchical dream in favour of the French émigrés. The idea of becoming the Godefroy de Bouillon of the aristocratic and monarchical crusade, which Burke at that time proclaimed in the English parliament and in his work on the French Revolution, had been awakened in his mind in 1790, and the empress of Russia found means of confirming him in his visionary projects. Moreover his means were exhausted, and he therefore lent a favourable ear to the proposal of Galvez, the Spanish ambassador, who began to mediate for a peace between Sweden and Russia.

This peace, concluded at Varela on the Kimmene on the 14th of August, 1790, served to show how empty all Gustavus' splendour was, and how unreal and inefficient were all the efforts he had made. It was now seen that all the blood had been shed to no purpose, and all the treasures of his very poor kingdom mischievously squandered, for everything remained on the footing on which it had been in the spring of 1788.

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## PROGRESS OF THE AUSTRO-RUSSIAN WAR WITH TURKEY

We now return to the war in which Austria and Russia were jointly engaged against Turkey. The whole Austrian army was ready to take the field at the end of the year 1787: it formed an immense cordon stretching from the mountains on the coast of the Adriatic Sea to the Carpathians, and consisted of a main body and five divisions. Unhappily, the emperor Joseph was desirous of commanding the main army in person, under the unskilful direction of Lacy, his military Mentor, who, like his pupil Mack, was a good drill-sergeant, but no general. The main body consisted of 25,000 infantry and 22,000 horse, and the whole of the troops together amounted to 86,000 cavalry and 245,000 foot, accompanied by 898-pieces of artillery.

In February, 1788, Russia and Austria had simultaneously declared war against the Turks; but in August of that year England and Prussia entered into an alliance, the main object of which was to place Prussia in a situation to prevent the aggrandisement of Austria, if necessary, by force of arms. This, however, was superfluous in 1788, because the diversion effected by the king of Sweden prevented the Russians from proceeding with their usual rapidity, and the emperor Joseph by his presence with the army frustrated the effect of his immense armaments. The dissatisfaction with the whole conduct of the war became so general that Joseph was at length obliged earnestly to entreat Laudon, who had been the popular hero of the Austrians since the time of the Seven Years' War, and whom the emperor had hitherto neither employed nor consulted, to assume the command of the army in Croatia.

*Successes of Laudon (1788 A.D.)*

Laudon, having made an express stipulation that the emperor was not to interfere with his plans marched against the Turks, defeated them under the walls of Dubitza the very day after he joined the army, and reduced that fortress; then, pushing into the heart of Bosnia, he compelled Novi to surrender, whilst the emperor himself was obliged to hasten to the aid of the army in the Bannat, which was very hard pressed by the Turks. The division under Wartensleben, which should have supported it, had been driven back by the Turks, who succeeded, in consequence of an incomprehensible neglect on the part of the Austrians, in getting complete possession of the rocky bed through which the Danube has forced a passage at a distance of six-and-twenty miles above New Orsova. The pass, which is not more than a pistol-shot in width, is commanded by a fortified cleft in the rock, called Veterani's Hole, and this post the Austrians should and could have maintained when the main body of the Turks appeared at Old Orsova on the 7th of August; this, however, they neglected to do. The Austrian general suffered himself to be defeated and lost thirteen pieces of cannon, and as his communications with the main army were cut off, he was obliged to retreat so far that the garrison of this important post was left to its fate. The Turks sacrificed great numbers of men in order to seize this fastness, by the possession of which they immediately became masters of the whole navigation of the Danube as far down as Belgrade. As soon as the Danube was lost, the imperial army found itself threatened in the rear.

Nothing but disaster attended the operations of Joseph and Wartensleben. The army under the prince of Coburg was somewhat less unfortunate. Khotin, which the Russians had captured in the last war without firing a shot, was



reduced by it after a most heroic resistance of three months; and this was the last exploit of a campaign in which thirty thousand Austrians fell in desultory skirmishes, and forty thousand were swept off by pestilence — losses but poorly compensated by the capture of Szabatch, Khotin, Dubitza, and Novi. Circumstances, however, afterwards proved more favourable. Jassy was taken; in October, the Russians were in possession of five districts of Moldavia and of several passes in Wallachia, and the main army was again able to extend the limits of its operations. Wartensleben sat down with a part of the army before Mahadia; and the emperor kept possession of the country from Pantchova to Semlin.

*Victories of Suvarov (1788–1789 A.D.)*

After the massacre perpetrated by Suvarov upon the Turks on the promontory of Kinburn, the Russians had remained for a long time quiet; but by their possession of the coasts they effectually prevented the Turks from landing any troops, and by the capture of the island of Beresam wholly excluded them from the mouth of the Dnieper. It was not till late in the year 1788 that Potemkin summoned Suvarov from Kinburn to conduct the siege of Otchakov, where, however, he was wounded, and after his return to Kinburn the siege made very little progress. The avarice of Potemkin deprived the soldiers of the necessary supplies; and the dreadful cold and disease proved far more injurious to them than the attacks of their enemies.

At length the frost became so intense that the men were obliged to excavate pits for dwellings, but the same frost also opened up a means of attacking the fortress and reducing it after the Russian fashion, that is, without regard to the sacrifice of thousands of men, a few weeks earlier than they could otherwise have done. The city is completely protected on the side towards the Black Sea by a marshy lake called Liman; and now that the lake was frozen, Potemkin issued orders to storm the fortress from the sea side, where it was weakest. The Russians were cruelly sacrificed: one regiment was no sooner mowed down than another was compelled to advance, and above four thousand men were slain before the storming of Otchakov was effected (December 16th), an exploit which was afterwards extolled to heaven. The Russians, having at length borne down all resistance and forced their way into the city, were compensated for their losses and sufferings during the siege by three days' murder and pillage; they put citizens and soldiers, men, women, and children to the sword without mercy or distinction. It is said that twenty thousand Turks perished in this massacre; but this piece of Russian heroism, which was not performed by Potemkin himself but by others at his command, was also rewarded after the Russian fashion. Every soldier who had taken part in the siege received a medal of honour, whilst Potemkin, who had contributed nothing to its success, derived the only real advantage. The empress had previously deprived Razumovski of the office of hetman, which she now conferred upon Potemkin, who received in addition a present of 100,000 rubles, besides what he had appropriated to himself out of the moneys destined for the besieging army, and what he had seized out of the rich booty which fell into his hands after the capture of the city.

The death of the sultan Abd-el-Habed in April, 1789, made no change in the relations between the Turks and Russians. His successor, Selim, continued to prosecute the war, and Suvarov having recovered from the effects of his wound again joined Potemkin's army, and was put at the head of the division which was to co-operate with the Austrians. Laudon had now the

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command of the whole Austrian army; the prince of Coburg, however, retained that of the division which was to keep open the communications with the Russians; and again he gave such numerous proofs of his incapacity to conduct any great undertakings, or even to help himself out of trifling difficulties, that the history of the campaign of 1789 alone ought to have prevented the emperor Leopold from entrusting him with the command against the French, who possessed generals and soldiers of a very different kind from those of the Turks. Selim III had succeeded in getting on foot a very considerable force which was destined to operate on the extreme point of Moldavia, where that country touches upon Transylvania, and is separated from Wallachia by a small river, which also divides the little town of Fokshani into two parts, one belonging to Moldavia, and the other to Wallachia. Coburg was advancing thither slowly and methodically, when the Turkish army encamped in the neighbourhood of the town turned suddenly upon him, and filled him with such apprehensions of being completely shut in that, instead of boldly doing what Suvarov afterwards did, he anxiously besought that general's speedy assistance.

Suvarov's army was lying at Belat in Moldavia; when the news reached him he at once began a march of between forty and fifty miles in a direct line over mountains, across ravines and pathless wilds, and in less than thirty-six hours reached the Austrians on the 30th of July, at five o'clock in the evening. At eleven that night he sent the plan of the attack upon the Turks, which was to commence at two in the morning, to the astonished prince, who had never heard of such rapidity of movement, or seen it equalled even on parade. The bewildered prince went three times to Suvarov's quarters without having seen him; in the battle he made no claim to the supreme command, which should have belonged to him as the eldest general, but submitted as a subordinate to Suvarov's orders. The Turks, to the number of between fifty and sixty thousand men, were in position at Fokshani when the Russians and Austrians with forty thousand men passed the river Purna and stormed their fortified camp, mounting the ramparts and driving them in at the point of the bayonet, as if they were assaulting ordinary field-works. The camp was taken in an hour, with the loss of about eight hundred men; the whole body of the Turkish infantry fell into disorder, their cavalry galloped off, were scattered in all directions, and pursued for some miles with the greatest impetuosity and vehement zeal. The whole of the baggage and artillery, all the stores collected in Fokshani, a hundred standards and seventy pieces of cannon, fell into the hands of the victors; the Austrians exhibited the same zeal, perseverance, and courage as the Russians, and had they possessed such a commander as Suvarov, they would have reaped immense fruits from the victory, but they became sensible, as early as August, that they were in want of a proper leader.

Suvarov returned to Moldavia; Coburg looked quietly on whilst the Turks were collecting a new army, and suffered the grand vizir to advance without obstruction in Wallachia. The Turks directed Hassan Pasha, who lay in Ismail, to make an expedition against Repnin, whilst the grand vizir was to march against Prince Coburg, who had taken up a position at Martinesti, on the river Rimnik. The news of this fresh attack no sooner reached the Austrian camp than Coburg, instead of attempting to help himself, again had recourse to Suvarov, who had already drawn nearer to Coburg from Belat. The grand vizir's army, which had been estimated at one hundred thousand men, pushed forward rapidly by Braila (Ibrahim), and compelled the advanced posts of the prince to retire into their camp. Suvarov received the prince's

letter on the 16th of September, immediately gave orders to march, and two days afterwards succeeded in forming a junction with the Austrians, at the very moment in which they were to have been attacked by the Turks.

*Austrian and Russian Valour; Austria's Withdrawal (1789-1790 A.D.)*

The Austrians then proved anew that they were not to be surpassed when not commanded as usual by princes and privileged persons, who become generals whilst they sleep. Coburg, as he had previously done at Fokshani, totally relinquished the command at Martinesti to Suvarov, who immediately availed himself of the oversight of the Turks in not fortifying their camp before they offered battle, and attacked them by storm in their unfinished trenches. The issue was as glorious as it had been on the 31st of July at Fokshani; the contest, however, was more obstinately maintained. On this occasion the Russians formed the left wing, whilst the centre and right were occupied by the Austrians, whose admirably served artillery scattered the Turkish cavalry, which had made an attempt to surround and cut off the small body of the Russians. The victory in this dangerous and hard-fought battle was gained not merely by the courage, activity, and bayonets of the Austrian and Russian infantry, but especially by the great military skill of the commander. His orders to avoid the village of Boehsa, and first to drive the Turks out of the woods by which they were covered before commencing the main attack, have been greatly admired, and above all his prudence in not sacrificing the infantry in a blind storm, which was the more remarkable in a general accustomed to bring everything to a rapid determination.

The victory was splendid, the booty immense, the Turkish army a second time utterly dispersed — a necessary consequence of the nature of its composition — and the number of killed and wounded much greater than at Fokshani. Prince Coburg, on account of this victory, in which he was entitled to little share, was created a field-marshal; Suvarov received the dignity of a count of the empire from the emperor Joseph, and the empress of Russia for once gave an honourable surname to a man who had really earned it by his personal services; she raised him to a level with her Tchesmian Orlov and her Taurian Potemkin, and called him Rimnikski, from the name of the river on the banks of which he had been victorious.

The victory of Rimnik and the capture of Belgrade by Laudon on the 9th of October were the harbingers of greater success. Hassan Pasha, the Turkish high-admiral and celebrated conqueror of Egypt, whose confidence in his good fortune had encouraged him to assume the command of an army, was totally defeated at Tobak, in Bessarabia, by Prince Potemkin, and his discomfiture was followed by the surrender of Bender, Akerman, Kilia Nova, and Isatza, and by the investment of Ismail. At the same time the prince of Coburg took Bucharest and Hohenlohe, forcing the passes which lead into Wallachia, made himself master of Rimnik and Krajova. Laudon also reduced Semendria and Kladova, and blockaded Orsova, which, being situated in an island of the Danube, was inaccessible to regular attacks. By these conquests the allies became masters of the whole line of fortresses which covered the Turkish frontier; the three grand armies, originally separated by a vast extent of country, were rapidly converging to the same point, and threatened, by their united force, to overbear all opposition, and in another campaign to complete the subversion of the Ottoman empire in Europe.

But in the midst of this successful career, the increasing ferment in the hereditary states of Austria, the rebellion in the Netherlands, and, still more,



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the interposition of the maritime powers and Prussia, checked the hopes of Joseph at the very moment when his projects of aggrandisement seemed hastening to their completion. Justly alarmed at the successes of the two imperial courts, the three combined powers incited Poland to throw off the yoke of Russia, delivered the king of Sweden from Danish invasion, and laid the foundation of a general alliance for reducing the overgrown power of Austria and Russia. The king of Prussia even encouraged the rising discontents in Hungary, fomented the troubles which the impolitic innovations of Joseph had excited in the Netherlands, and, in the beginning of 1790, opened a negotiation with the Porte for the conclusion of an offensive alliance, intended not only to effect the restoration of the dominions conquered during the existing war, but even of the Crimea, and the territories dismembered by the two imperial courts from Poland.

The only power to which Joseph might have turned as a counterpoise to this combination was France, from whose recent change of system he had flattered himself with hopes of a cordial support, and from which he had even received private largesses to a considerable amount. But now France was in the throes of her great revolution, and Joseph was left without a resource. Worn down by innumerable calamities and disease, he died in February, 1790; and his successor, Leopold, was fortunate enough to conclude a separate peace with the Porte.

*Russia Prosecutes the War; the Storm of Ismail (1790 A.D.)*

Russia continued to prosecute the war against the Turks without the aid of Austria. Ismail still held out, and Potemkin, who had been besieging it for seven months, began to grow impatient. Living in his camp like one of those satraps whom he even surpassed in luxury, he was surrounded by a crowd of courtiers and ladies, who exerted every effort to amuse him. One of these ladies, pretending to read the decrees of fate in the arrangement of a pack of cards, predicted that he would take the town at the end of three weeks. Potemkin answered, with a smile, that he had a method of divination far more infallible. He instantly sent orders to Suvarov to come from Galatz and take Ismail in three days. Suvarov arrived and took such measures as would seem to indicate that he designed a renewal of the regular siege; he drew together the scattered divisions of the troops, formed them into a large besieging army of about forty thousand men, and ordered the small Russian fleet to come into the neighbourhood of the city; but his real design was to follow the course he had successfully pursued before Otechakov, take advantage of the frost, and reduce the fortress by storm.

Had not Ismail, according to ancient usage, been built without advanced works, even a general like Suvarov would scarcely have ventured on such an attack, which in the actual condition of the defences was attended by such murderous consequences. On the 21st of September the city was twice summoned, and on both occasions the garrison and inhabitants were threatened with the fate of Otechakov. The Turks, however, did not suffer themselves to be terrified into submission, and the fearful storm was commenced on the 22nd, at four o'clock in the morning. The wall was not mounted till eight o'clock, after an unexampled slaughter; but still the hottest part of the struggle took place in the city itself. Every street was converted into a fortress, every house became a redoubt, and it was twelve o'clock before the Russians, advancing through scenes of carnage and desperate resistance, reached the market-place, where the Tatars of the Crimea were collected.

The Tatars fought for two hours with all the energy of despair, and after they had been all cut to pieces the struggle was still carried on by the Turks in the streets. Suvarov at length opened a passage for his cavalry through the gates into the devoted city; they charged through the streets, and continued to cut down and massacre the people till four o'clock in the afternoon. At the conclusion of this dreadful butchery the Russians received the reward which had been promised them when they were led to the storm and to certain death, — the city was given up for three days to the mercy of the victorious troops.

Suvarov himself, in his official report of this murderous enterprise, states that in the course of four days 33,000 Turks were either slain or mortally wounded, and 10,000 taken prisoners. He rates the loss of the Russians at 2000 killed and 2500 wounded: a number which seems to us as improbably small as the usual accounts, which assign 15,000 as the Russian loss, seem exaggerated. There were two French émigrés present at this storm, one of whom afterwards became celebrated as a Russian governor-general and French minister, and the other as a Russian general in the war against his countrymen. The first was the duke de Richelieu, or as he was then called de Fronsac, and the second the count de Langeron. Kutusov also served in this affair under Suvarov and led the sixth line of attack.

*European Intervention; the Treaty of Jassy (1792 A.D.)*

About this time the whole diplomacy and aristocracy of Europe were busily employed in endeavouring to rescue the Turks, in order to check the dangerously rapid progress of the French and Polish revolutionists. There speedily grew up such a general desire as the English wished to promote — of two evils to choose the least — to secure and uphold the empire of the Turks and to let the nationality of Poland perish. Russia, however, declined the proffered mediation of England in the war with the Turks, as she had resolved for this time to give up her conquests in Turkey in order to indemnify herself in Poland: she accepted merely the intervention of the friendly Danes.

Potemkin and the empress were not unthankful for Suvarov's servility, since he threw himself and all his services at their feet, and ascribed everything to them alone. Repnin, whom Potemkin left at the head of the army when he went to St. Petersburg in October, 1790, pursued a very different course, doing more in two months than Potemkin had done in three years. He crossed the Danube with his army, pushed forward into Bulgaria, and caused the whole Turkish army to be attacked and beaten near Badadagh by Kutusov, after Gudovitch, the brother of him who had been the faithful aide-de-camp of Peter III, had completely put down the Tatars in the Kuban in January, 1791. At the head of forty thousand Russians, Repnin then advanced against one hundred thousand Turks, under the command of the same vizir, Yussuf, who had fought with such success against the emperor Joseph in the Bannat.

Potemkin eager to appropriate the impending victory, started with great expeditiousness from St. Petersburg when both armies were ready for battle (July, 1791). He took it for granted that Repnin would certainly await his arrival at the army; but he did no such thing. He offered battle before the arrival of Potemkin, whose custom it was to enjoy the fruits in the gathering of which he had no share. The victory which Repnin gained over the great Turkish army in July at Matchin led to a violent altercation between him and Potemkin, who came too late to have any participation in the honours

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of the day; Repnin, however, still remained in command of the army. Potemkin afterwards did everything in his power to prevent the peace for which Repnin was to negotiate, although he clearly saw that the course of events required the Russians to give up this wholesale conquest of Turkish provinces. Happily, his death left Repnin's hands free, and a treaty was concluded at Jassy on the 9th of January, 1792, between Russia and the Porte, by which the former acquired nothing more than the fortress of Otlchakov, the surrounding territory from the Dniester to the Bug, and the protectorate of Georgia.

## THE DEATH OF POTECHKIN (1792 A.D.); SÉGUR'S CHARACTERISATION

Not long after Potemkin's arrival at Jassy, where his headquarters or, to speak more properly, his capital and his court were established, he was seized with a malignant fever, and presumed to treat it with the same haughty contempt with which he had long been used to treat his fellow men: he laughed at his physicians, and ate salt meat and raw turnips. His disease growing worse, he desired to be conveyed to Otlchakov, his beloved conquest, but had not travelled more than a few miles before the air of his carriage seemed to stifle him. His cloak was spread by the road-side; he was laid on it, and there expired in the arms of his favourite niece Branicka. Catherine fainted three times when she heard of his death: it was necessary to bleed her; she was thought to be dying. She expressed almost as much grief as at the death of Lanskoï; but it was not the lover she regretted: it was the friend whose genius assimilated with her own, whom she considered as the support of her throne and the executor of her vast projects. Catherine, holding her usurped sceptre, was a woman and timid: she was accustomed to behold in Potemkin a protector whose fortune and glory were intimately connected with her own. The character of this Russian vizir has been thus sketched by Count Ségur, who, as ambassador to St. Petersburg, lived long in habits of intimacy with him:

"Prince Gregory Alexandrovitch Potemkin was one of the most extraordinary men of his times; but in order to have played so conspicuous a part, he must have been born in Russia and have lived in the reign of Catherine II. In any other country, in any other time, with any sovereign, he would have been misplaced; and it was a singular stroke of chance that created this man for the period that tallied with him, and brought together and combined all the circumstances with which he could tally.

"In his person were collected the most opposite defects and advantages of every kind. He was avaricious and ostentatious, despotic and popular, inflexible and beneficent, haughty and obliging, politic and confiding, licentious and superstitious, bold and timid, ambitious and indiscreet. Lavish of his bounties to his relations, his mistresses, and his favourites, yet frequently paying neither his household nor his creditors. His consequence always depended on a woman, and he was always unfaithful to her. Nothing could equal the activity of his mind or the indolence of his body. No dangers could appal his courage; no difficulties force him to abandon his projects. But the success of an enterprise always brought with it disgust. He wearied the empire by the number of his posts and the extent of his power. He was himself fatigued with the burden of his existence; envious of all that he did not do, and sick of all that he did. Rest was not grateful to him, nor occupation pleasing. Everything with him was desultory — business, pleasure, temper, carriage. In every company he had an embarrassed air,



and his presence was a restraint on every company. He was morose to all that stood in awe of him, and caressed all such as accosted him with familiarity.

"Ever promising, seldom keeping his word, and never forgetting anything, none had read less than he — few people were better informed. He had talked with the skilful in all professions, in all the sciences, in every art. None better knew how to draw forth and appropriate to himself the knowledge of others. In conversation he would have astonished a scholar, an artist, an artisan, or a divine. His information was not deep, but it was very extensive. He never dived into a subject, but he spoke well on all subjects.

"The inequality of his temper was productive of an inconceivable oddity in his desires, his conduct, and his manner of life. One while he formed the project of becoming duke of Courland; at another he thought of bestowing on himself the crown of Poland. He frequently gave intimations of an intention to make himself a bishop or even a simple monk. He built a superb palace, and wanted to sell it before it was finished. One day he would dream of nothing but war; and only officers, Tatars, and Cossacks were admitted to him: the next day he was busied only with politics; he would partition the Ottoman Empire, and put in agitation all the cabinets of Europe. At other times, with nothing in his head but the court, dressed in a magnificent suit, covered with ribbons presented to him by every potentate, displaying diamonds of extraordinary magnitude and brilliance, he was giving superb entertainments without any cause.

"He was sometimes known for a month, and in the face of all the town, to pass whole evenings at the apartments of a young woman, seeming to have alike forgotten all business and all decorum. Sometimes also, for several weeks successively, shut up in his room with his nieces and several men whom he honoured with his intimacy, he would lounge on a sofa, without speaking, playing at chess, or at cards, with his legs bare, his shirt collar unbuttoned, in a morning gown, with a thoughtful front, his eyebrows knit, and presenting to the view of strangers, who came to see him, the figure of a rough and squalid Cossack. These singularities often put the empress out of humour, but rendered him more interesting to her. In his youth he had pleased her by the ardour of his passion, his valour, and his masculine beauty. Being arrived at maturity, he charmed her still by flattering her pride, calming her apprehensions, confirming her power, and caressing her fancies of oriental empire, the expulsion of the barbarians, and the restoration of the Grecian republics.

"Potemkin began everything, completed nothing, disordered the finances, disorganised the army, depopulated his country, and enriched it with other deserts. The fame of the empress was increased by his conquests. The admiration they excited was for her; and the hatred they raised, for her minister. Posterity, more equitable, will perhaps divide between them both the glory of the successes and the severity of the reproaches. It will not bestow on Potemkin the title of a great man; but it will mention him as an extraordinary person; and, to draw his picture with accuracy, he might be represented as the real emblem, as the living image of the Russian Empire. For, in fact, he was colossal like Russia. In his mind, as in that country, were cultivated districts and desert plains. It also partook of the Asiatic, the European, the Tatar, and the Cossack; the rudeness of the eleventh century, and the corruption of the eighteenth; the surface of the arts, and the ignorance of the cloisters; an outside of civilisation, and many traces of barbarism."

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## THE QUESTION OF THE IMPERIAL SUCCESSION

Some time before the death of Potemkin, Catherine had begun proceedings intended to bar the czarevitch Paul from the imperial succession.<sup>a</sup> She was by no means the cruel, heartless mother that many writers are inclined to represent; but she knew her son thoroughly well, and foreseeing how destructive of all good his reign would be she could not think without fear of how the empire, which under her rule had made such rapid strides in the path of prosperity, glory, and civilisation, would after her remain without any guarantee for the stability and durability of its existence. With the intention of preserving the country from such a misfortune, Catherine wished to make over the throne to the grand duke Alexander Pavlovitch and therefore the setting aside of the czarevitch appeared in her eyes a state necessity. Meanwhile it is sufficiently well known that Catherine had long been accustomed to place the interests of the state above everything and to sacrifice to them all other considerations and feelings; therefore the difficulties with which so daring an administrative step was doubtless accompanied could not stop the creator of the changes of the year 1762. "Obstacles are created in this world," Catherine once wrote, "in order that persons of merit may set them aside and thus add to their reputation; that is the meaning of obstacles." Circumstances were also favourable to this new change contemplated by Catherine, for at that time no law existed that exactly established the order of succession to the throne. The statute of Peter the Great of the year 1722 was still maintained in full power, and by this statute the reigning Russian sovereigns had the right of naming anyone they liked as their successors to the throne according to their own judgment, without being restrained by any ancient right of primogeniture; and in cases where the heir already designated showed himself incapable, he could be removed from the throne.

The diary of Krapovitski can serve as a proof that in the year 1787, after Catherine's return from her travels in the south of Russia, the question as to the necessity of changing the succession to the throne had already matured in the mind of the empress; she entered upon the historical study of the matter and read "the right of will of monarchs." On the 20th of August, in connection with this same question, Catherine discussed with her secretary the extent to which the misfortunes of the czarevitch Paul Petrovitch had been caused by the false opinion that as eldest son the throne must belong to him. Further, on the 25th of August, Krapovitski writes: "Ukases as to the heirs to the throne, named since the time of Catherine I, have been asked for, and in the explanations a sort of displeasure was manifested." To what conclusions the historical study of the measures taken by Peter the Great led Catherine may be seen from the context of the following remarks, written by the empress' own hand:

"It must be acknowledged that the parent is unhappy who sees himself obliged for the safeguard of the public good to remove his offspring. This is a condition which accompanies or is joined to the autocratic and parental power. And thus I esteem that the most wise monarch Peter I had doubtlessly the strongest reasons for the removal of his ungrateful, disobedient, and incapable son, who was filled with hatred, malice, and viperous envy against him. He sought to find some particle of evil in his father's deeds and actions which were conceived in the spirit of good, he listened to flatterers, shut his ears to the truth, and nothing was so pleasing to him as to hear his most glorious father defamed and spoken evil of. He himself was a sluggard, a

coward, double-faced, unstable, gloomy, timid, drunken, passionate, obstinate, bigoted, ignorant man, of most mediocre intelligence and of weak health."

Independent of these remarks, Catherine's ideas are even more clearly expressed in other rough draughts concerning the Greek project and written in her own hand. She writes as follows: "Should the successes of the war give Russia the means and occasion to drive out completely the enemies of the name of Christ from the European frontiers, then Russia, in return for such an entirely Christian service rendered to the human race, would reserve to herself the restoration on the ruins of the barbaric power, of the ancient Greek Empire. Russia would promise to leave such an empire incomplete independence, to entrust and give it up to the young Russian grand duke Constantine Pavlovitch, who must then give his promise not to make in any case any hereditary or other pretensions to the succession of all the Russias, as equally his brother must do in regard to the Greek succession." All these writings clearly testify that at the time of the second Turkish war the empress Catherine had definitively come to the conclusion that the welfare of the state required the setting aside from the succession of the czarevitch Paul Petrovitch and his replacement by the grand duke Alexander Pavlovitch.

Meanwhile the czarevitch on his part did all that was possible to justify in the eyes of Russia Catherine's intentions to exclude him from the throne. A contemporary who was in close relations with him, T. V. Rostopschin writes as follows: "It is impossible to see without shuddering and pity what the grand duke's father does; it is as if he sought for every means of inspiring hatred and disgust. He has taken it into his head that disrespect and neglect are shown to him; therefore for this reason, he catches and cavils at everything and punishes without distinction. Every day one only hears of violence, of quarrels about trifles of which any private individual would be ashamed. He sees a revolution everywhere; he sees Jacobite in everything."

Catherine's correspondence shows that already in the year 1791 the plan of excluding the czarevitch Paul from the throne was no secret to those who were in her intimacy. On the 1st of September, 1791, the empress in a letter to Grimm expresses herself quite definitely on the matter; in relating her supposition as to the consequences of the French Revolution, she writes: "But this will not be in my time and, I hope, not in the time of Alexander." Finally on the 14th of August, 1792, Catherine communicates to Grimm considerations which allow the nomination of Alexander as heir to be regarded as a matter settled. "Why should the coronation be hurried on?" writes she; "in the words of Solomon there is a time for everything. First we will marry Alexander, and then we will crown him with all possible ceremonies, solemnities, and popular festivities. Oh, how happy he will be himself, and how happy others will be with him!" The following letter addressed by Catherine to Count V. P. Mussin-Pushkin on the 14th of September, 1792, written by the empress' own hand, is characteristic of the relations which subsisted at that time between the czarevitch Paul Petrovitch and his mother:

COUNT VALENTINE PLATONOVITCH:

I herewith enclose a copy of Kushilev's letter to the governor of this town in which he says that the czarevitch has been pleased to order that more than half of the Alexandrovski square, as the plan sent by him to the governor indicates, should be given up to a certain merchant. The order itself is a mad one and of the greatest insolence. Tell Kushilev to come to you and tell him in my name that if he again dares to send such letters anywhere I will send him where the ravens will not have to seek for his bones; and tell the grand duke that in future he is not to send any orders by you at anyone's request.

September 17th, 1793.

CATHERINE.

Find out beforehand if this was certainly written by the grand duke.



[1792 A.D.]

In the year 1794 the empress had recourse to decisive measures for the accomplishment of the projected change and notified to the council her intention of setting aside her son Paul as her successor giving as reasons his character and his incapacity. The entire council was ready to submit to this decision, but was stopped by Count V. P. Mussin-Pushkin, who said that the character and instincts of the heir might change when he became emperor; these remarks put a stop to Catherine's intention of declaring her grandson Alexander as her successor, and for a time the matter rested there. But the opposition that Catherine met with in the council naturally did not stop her in the pursuit of the aim she had in view. As has already been observed, obstacles, in her opinion, are only created in order that they may be set aside by persons of merit; guided by such principles, the empress remained true to herself and to the matter that was so close to her heart and continued to seek for fresh ways of carrying through her intentions.<sup>k</sup> Nevertheless all her efforts failed in the end, and, as we shall see, Catherine's son succeeded her in due course.<sup>a</sup>

## THE LAST OF THE FAVOURITES

Plato Zubov, the twelfth and last of Catherine's avowed favourites, succeeded in some degree to the position which Potemkin had held as a sort of vice-emperor. Zubov had superseded Momonov, who, soon wearying of the faded charms of a mistress of sixty, became enamoured of the young princess Sherbatov, and had the courage to avow it and ask permission to marry her. Catherine had pride and generosity enough to grant his request without any reproaches. She saw him married at court to the object of his affection, and sent him to Moscow loaded with presents. But it was currently reported that Momonov was so imprudent as to mention to his wife some particulars of his interviews with the empress, and that she divulged them with a levity which Catherine could not forgive. One night, when the husband and wife were gone to rest, the master of the police at Moscow entered their chamber; and, after showing them an order from her majesty, left them in the hands of six women, and retired to an adjoining room. Then the six women, or rather the six men dressed as women, seized the babbling lady, and having completely stripped her, flogged her with rods in the presence of Momonov, whom they forced to kneel down during the ceremony. When the chastisement was over, the police-master re-entered the room and said: "This is the way the empress punishes a first indiscretion. For the second, people are sent to Siberia."

It was in the spring of 1789, when the empress was at Tsarsko Selo, that Momonov was married and dismissed. Lieutenant Zubov commanded the detachment of horse-guards in attendance, and being the only young officer in sight he owed his preferment to that fortunate circumstance. Nicholas Soltikov, to whom he was distantly related, and who was at that time in high credit, took pains to promote his interest, hoping to find in him a protector against Potemkin, whom he heartily disliked. After some secret conferences in presence of the Mentor, Zubov was approved, and sent for more ample information to Mademoiselle Protasov and the empress' physician. The account they gave must have been favourable, for he was named aide-de-camp to the empress, received a present of a hundred thousand roubles (£10,000) to furnish him with linen, and was installed in the apartment of the favourites with all the customary advantages.

The next day this young man was seen familiarly offering his arm to his

sovereign, equipped in his new uniform, with a large hat and feather on his head, attended by his patron and the great men of the empire, who walked behind him with their hats off, though the day before he had danced attendance in their ante-chambers. His own were now filled with aged generals and ministers of long service, all of whom bent the knee before him. He was a genius discerned by the piercing eye of Catherine; the treasures of the empire were lavished on him, and the conduct of the empress was sanctioned by the meanness and the shameful assiduities of her courtiers.

### *Debaucheries at Catherine's Court*

The new favourite was not quite five-and-twenty years old, the empress was upwards of sixty. Yet even at this advanced period of her life she revived the orgies and lupercales which she had formerly celebrated with the brothers Orlov. Valerian, a younger brother of Zubov, and Peter Soltikov, their friend, were associated in office with the favourite. With these three young libertines did the aged Catherine spend her days, while her armies were slaughtering the Turks, fighting the Swedes, and ravaging Poland; while her people were groaning in wretchedness and famine, and devoured by extortioners and tyrants.

It was at this time she formed a more intimate society, composed of her favourites and most trusty ladies and courtiers. This society met two or three times a week, under the name of the Little Hermitage. The parties were frequently masqued, and the greatest privacy prevailed. They danced, played at forfeits, joked, romped and engaged in all sorts of frolics and gambols. Leov Narishkin acted the same part there as Roquelaure at the court of Louis XIV; and a fool by title, Matrona Danilovna, seconded him. This was an old gossip, whose wit consisted only in uttering the most absurd vulgarities; and as she was allowed the common right of fools, that of saying anything, she was loaded with presents by the lower order of courtiers. Such foreign ministers as enjoyed the favour of the empress were sometimes admitted to the Little Hermitage. Ségur, Cobenzl, Stedingk, and Nassau chiefly enjoyed this distinction; but Catherine afterwards formed another assembly, more confined and more mysterious, which was called the Little Society. The three favourites of whom we have just been speaking, Branicka, Protasov, and some confidential women and valets-de-chambre, were its only members. In this the Cybele of the north celebrated her most secret mysteries. The particulars of these amusements are not fit to be repeated.

Catherine survived Potenkin but four years. The last ten years of her reign carried her power, her glory, and her political crimes to their highest pitch. When the great Frederick, dictator of the kings of Europe, died, she remained the eldest of the crowned heads of the continent; and if we except Joseph, all those heads together were unequal to her own. If Frederick was the dictator of these kings, Catherine became their tyrant. The immense empire which she had subjected to her sway; the inexhaustible resources she derived from a country and a people as yet in a state of infancy; the extreme luxury of her court, the barbarous pomp of her nobility, the wealth and princely grandeur of her favourites, the glorious exploits of her armies, and the gigantic views of her ambition threw Europe into a sort of fascination; and those monarchs who had been too proud to pay each other even the slightest deference felt no abasement in making a woman the arbiter of their interests, the ruling power of all their measures.

[1793 A.D.]

## THE SUBJUGATION AND FINAL PARTITION OF POLAND (1796 A.D.)

The annihilation of Poland, long meditated, was now resolved on. The empress could never forgive that nation either for the act of the diet in 1788, which abrogated the constitution dictated by violence in 1775, or the alliance of Prussia accepted in contempt of her own, or, above all, the constitution decreed at Warsaw on the 3rd of May, 1791. Big with these ideas of revenge, she gave orders to Bulgakov, her minister at Warsaw, to declare war against Poland.

The diet being assembled received this declaration with a majestic calmness, which was rapidly succeeded by the generous enthusiasm of a nation roused to self-defence. The king himself pretended to share the feelings that animated his people; and the Poles had the weakness to believe that, having abandoned his former servility to Russia and his customary indolence, he was becoming the defender of their freedom. An army was collected in haste, and the command of it given to the king's nephew, Joseph Poniatowski, an inexperienced young man, all of whose efforts were obstructed or misdirected by his traitorous uncle.

The Poles could have opposed the designs of Catherine with an army of fifty thousand men; but they never yet could be brought to unite their forces; and their different corps were soon after pressed between an army of eighty thousand Russians, who fell back from Bessarabia upon the territory which extends along the Bug, another of ten thousand collected in the environs of Kiev, and a third of thirty thousand, which had penetrated into Lithuania.

We shall not here attempt to draw the picture of the various battles that drenched the plains of Poland with blood, and which, notwithstanding some advantages obtained by the Poles, consumed the greater part of their troops. It was then that the illustrious Kosciuszko, who as yet was nothing more than one of the lieutenants of young Joseph Poniatowski, displayed qualities that justly obtained him the confidence of the nation, the hatred of the Russians, and the esteem of Europe.

During all this time Catherine, not trusting alone to the power of her own arms, had been negotiating with unremitting assiduity. She proposed the definitive partition of Poland to Frederick William, who was undoubtedly no less desirous of it than herself. She secretly won over to her views the two brothers Kassakovski, the hetman Branicki, Rejevuski, and particularly Felix Potocki, who, while flattering himself perhaps with the hopes of mounting the throne of Poland, became only the slave of Russia. She even insisted that Stanislaus Augustus should make a public declaration that it was necessary to yield to the superiority of the Russian arms. He submitted to this indignity; but was not on that account treated by the empress with greater indulgence.

In 1793 the confederation of the partisans of Russia assembled at Grodno, where the Russian general proudly seated himself under the canopy of the throne he was about to overturn. The Russian minister Sievers, at the same time, published a manifesto (April 9th) in which he declared that his sovereign would incorporate with her dominions all the territory of Poland which her arms had conquered. The king of Prussia, in concert with Catherine, had already marched an army into Poland.

The Russians, dispersed about the provinces of that kingdom, committed depredations and ravages of which history furnishes but few examples. Warsaw became likewise the theatre of their excesses. The Russian general Igel-



ström, who governed that city, connived at the disorders of his soldiers, and made the wretched inhabitants feel the whole weight of his arrogance and barbarity. The defenders of Poland had been obliged to disperse. Their property was confiscated; their families were reduced to servitude. Goaded by so many calamities, they once more took the resolution to free their country of the Russians. Some of them assembled, and sent an invitation to Kosciuszko to come and put himself at their head. That general had retired to Leipsic, with Hugh Kolonti, Zajonchek, and Ignatius Potocki, a man of great knowledge and cagacity, a sincere friend to his country, and in all respects the opposite of his cousin Felix. These four Poles joined eagerly in the resolution adopted by their honest countrymen: but they were sensible that, in order to succeed, they must begin by giving liberty to the peasants, who till then had been treated in Poland like beasts of burden.

Kosciuszko and Zajonchek repaired, with all expedition, to the frontiers of Poland. The latter proceeded to Warsaw, where he had conferences with the chiefs of the conspirators. A banker named Kapustas, a bold and artful man, made himself responsible for the inhabitants of the capital. He saw likewise several officers, who declared their detestation of the Russian yoke. All, in short, was ripe for an insurrection, when the Russian commanders, to whom Kosciuszko's presence on the frontiers had given umbrage, forced him to postpone it for a time. To throw the Russians off their guard, Kosciuszko went into Italy, and Zajonchek to Dresden, whither Ignatius Potocki and Kolonti had retired, but all at once Zajonchek appeared again at Warsaw. The king himself impeached him to the Russian general Igelström, who had a conference with him, and ordered him to quit the Polish territory. No alternative now remained for him but to proceed immediately to action, or to abandon the enterprise altogether. Zajonchek resolved on the former.

In 1794 Kosciuszko was recalled from Italy, and arrived at Cracow, where the Poles received him as their deliverer. In spite of the orders of the Russians, Colonel Madalinski pertinaciously refused to disband his regiment. Some other officers had joined him. Kosciuszko was proclaimed general of his little army, amounting to three thousand foot and twelve hundred horse; and the act of insurrection was almost immediately published on the 24th of March. Three hundred peasants, armed with scythes, ranged themselves under the standard of Kosciuszko. That general soon found himself faced by seven thousand Russians, who were put to flight after a vigorous resistance.

On hearing at Warsaw of the success of Kosciuszko, the Russian general Igelström caused all those to be arrested whom he suspected to have any concern in the insurrection; but these measures served only the more to irritate the conspirators. The insurrection broke out on the 18th of April. Two thousand Russians were put to the sword. Their general, being besieged in his house, requested permission to capitulate; and profiting by the delay that was granted him, he escaped to the Prussian camp, which lay at a little distance from Warsaw. Vilna, the capital of Lithuania, followed the example of Warsaw; but the triumph of the insurgents was there less terrible. Colonel Iazinski, who was at their head, conducted himself with so much skill, that he took all the Russians prisoners, without shedding a drop of blood. The inhabitants of the cantons of Cheln and of Lublin declared themselves also in a state of insurrection, and were imitated by three Polish regiments who were employed in the service of the Russians. Some of the principal partisans of Russia, the hetman Kassakovski, the bishop his brother, Zabiello, Ozarovski, and Ankvitch were sentenced to be hanged, the first at Vilna, and the others at Warsaw.

[1795 A.D.]

Kosciusko exerted himself to the utmost to augment his army. He got recruits among the peasants; and to inspire them with more emulation he wore their dress, ate with them, and distributed encouragements among them; but those men too long degraded in Poland were not yet deserving of the liberty that was offered them. They distrusted the intentions of the nobles, who, on their side, for the most part lamented the loss of their absurd prerogatives. Stanislaus Augustus and his partisans augmented still further the ill-will of the nobles, by representing to them the intentions of Kosciusko as disastrous to their order, and by caballing continually in favour of Russia.

In the mean time, the empress, not satisfied with augmenting the number of her troops in Poland, had sent her best generals thither. After several battles, in one of which Frederick William, who had advanced to support the Russians, fought at the head of his troops against Kosciusko, who was striving to prevent the junction of the Russian generals, Suvarov and Fersen, the Polish commander was attacked by the latter at Macziewice on the 4th of October. His talents, his valour, and his desperation were unable to prevent the Poles from yielding to numbers. Almost the whole of his army were cut to pieces or obliged to lay down their arms. He himself, covered with wounds, was taken prisoner, ejaculating, "*Finis Polonie!*"

All who were able to escape from the conquerors went and shut themselves up in Praga, the eastern suburb of Warsaw, where 26,000 Poles and 104 heavy cannon and mortars defended the bridges over the Vistula and the approach to the capital. Suvarov was soon before the gates with an effective force of but 22,000 men and 86 field pieces; but even with such odds against him he resolved to do as he had done at Ismail, and carry the Polish lines at the point of the bayonet. After cannonading the defences for two days he gave the order for the assault at daybreak on the 4th of November. The trenches were carried after a desperate fight of five hours; the Russians swept into the town, murdering all before them, old men, women, and children; the wooden houses were speedily on fire; the bridges were broken down, so that the helpless crowds who attempted to escape into the city were remorselessly driven into the Vistula. Besides 10,000 Polish soldiers, 12,000 citizens of every age and sex perished in this wanton butchery.

Warsaw itself capitulated on the 5th of November, and was delivered up to the Russians on the 6th. Poland was now annihilated. One division of its troops after another was disarmed, and all the generals and officers who could be seized were carried off. The king, however, who could be induced to do anything if his comforts were spared, was used as an instrument to give to power the impress of right. He was again set nominally at the head of the kingdom till the robbers had agreed upon the division of the spoil, and had no longer need of him. Suvarov held a splendid military court for a year in Warsaw, far eclipsing the king, till at length the city was given up to the Prussians.

The whole of the year 1795 was spent in negotiations with Prussia, and the last treaty for the partition of Poland was not signed till the 24th of October, 1795. In December, Suvarov travelled from Warsaw to St. Petersburg, where the empress appropriated the Taurian palace for his residence, and nominated a special household for his service. On the 1st of January, 1796, Warsaw was first given up to the Prussians, and negotiations were carried on till the 21st of October, 1796, respecting the boundaries of the palatinates of Warsaw and Cracow. By virtue of this partition, first finally arranged in October, 1796, Austria obtained the chief parts of the waiwodeship of Cracow, the palatinates of Sendomir and Lublin, together with a portion of the

district of Chelm and portions of the waiwodeships of Brzesc, Podlachia, and Massovia, which lie along the left bank of the Bug. All these districts contain about 834 German square miles. Prussia received those portions of Massovia and Podlachia which touch upon the right bank of that river, in Lithuania those parts of the palatinates of Troki and Samogitia which lie to the left of the Niemen, and, finally, a district in Little Poland which belonged to the waiwodeship of Cracow, making in all about one thousand German square miles. Russia received the whole of what had hitherto been Polish Lithuania as far as the Niemen, and to the frontiers of the waiwodeships of Brzesc and Novogrodek, and thence to the Bug, together with the greater part of Samogitia. In Little Poland she obtained that part of Chelm which lies on the right bank of the Bug and the remainder of Volhinia, in all about two thousand German square miles. During the negotiations for the partition, Russia caused Stanislaus Augustus to lay down the crown. The three partitioning powers ensured him a yearly income of 200,000 ducats, and promised to pay his debts.

#### THE ANNEXATION OF COURLAND (1795 A.D.)

Catherine had now conquered, either by her arms or by her intrigues, almost one-half of Poland, the Crimea, the Kuban, and a part of the frontiers of Turkey. But she had no need of armaments and battles for usurping another rich and well-peopled country. Courland and Semigallia, where still reigned Duke Peter, the feeble son of the famous Biren, had long been prepared for that annexation, which was now effected almost without an effort. The flattering reception given to the Courish nobles in St. Petersburg by the empress, distinctions, honours, posts, and pleasures, rendering their abode in the imperial residence far preferable to continuing in Mittau, and made them desirous of being under the sway of the sovereign of a vast empire, rather than live in obedience to a duke the obscurity of whose origin they could not forget, and whom they regarded as their inferior. To bring the people to the same way of thinking as the nobles, Catherine artfully embroiled them with their neighbours, and created for them reasons of alarm.

She began by instigating the inhabitants of Livonia to insist upon the fulfilment of an ancient convention, by which the Courlanders were obliged to bring all their merchandises to Riga: certainly a very strange and hard condition, by which a nation, that had on its coasts excellent harbours happily situated, should be obliged to go, at a great expense, to embark the products of its soil in a foreign city. The quarrel between the Livonians and the Courlanders was not yet terminated, when the empress sent engineers into Courland, to mark out a canal, to facilitate the transport of the merchandises of that country into Livonia. The Courlanders seeing this, and fearing lest they should be soon forced to make use of this canal, thought it better for them to be protected than oppressed by the empress, and to be her subjects rather than her neighbours.

Catherine, being informed of these dispositions, called the duke of Courland to her, under the pretence of conferring with him on matters of importance. No sooner was that prince at the foot of the throne of the autocratrix of the north, than the states of Courland held an assembly, wherein it was proposed to put the country under the supremacy of Russia. The principal members of the grand council faintly opposed this motion, observing, that before they proceeded to a resolution it would be expedient to wait the return of the duke. The oberburgraf Hoven rose up, and spoke a long time



[1795 A.D.]

in favour of Russia. Some councillors expressed themselves of his opinion; others reproached him with treason. The dispute grew warm on both sides; challenges were reciprocally given and swords were about to be drawn, when the Russian general Pahlen appeared in the assembly. His presence restored tranquillity. No one presumed to raise his voice against Russia; and the proposal of the nobles was adopted.

The next day, March 18th, 1795, the act was drawn up, by which Courland, Semigallia, and the circle of Pilten made a formal surrender of themselves to the empress of Russia; and it was carried to St. Petersburg, where the duke of Courland learned, from the mouth of his own subjects, that they themselves had deprived him of his dominions. The empress immediately sent a governor thither. Some discontent, however, remained in Courland; discontent brought on proscription, and the possessions of the proscribed were given to the courtiers of Catherine. The favourite, Plato Zubov, and his brother Valerian obtained a great part of those rich and shameful spoils.

#### LAST YEARS AND DEATH OF CATHERINE

Before the breaking out of the French Revolution the governments of Louis XVI and Catherine II had entered into active negotiations for the formation of a quadruple alliance that should include Austria, Russia, and the two houses of Bourbon, and should have for its object the checking of England's maritime pretensions and the encroachments of Prussia. After the taking of the Bastille Catherine realised that she could no longer count upon the support of France, since that country was exclusively occupied with its own interior transformation. She kept anxious watch, however, upon the course of events in Paris, and manifested the liveliest antipathy to the new principles, falling ill at the news of the king's execution on the 21st of January. Led by fear into a violent reaction, the correspondent of Voltaire and Diderot set a close watch upon all Russians suspected of liberalism. She destroyed a tragedy of Kniaznin and exiled to Siberia Radichtchev, the author of a curious book entitled *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*, in which were many sharp reflections on serfdom; Novikov was confined at Schlüsselburg, his printing houses were closed and all his enterprises ruined. She dismissed Genêt, the French ambassador, refused to recognise either the constitution of 1791 or the French Republic, issued an ukase announcing the rupture of diplomatic relations with France, refused to the tri-colour admission



CATHERINE II  
(1729-1796)

to Russian parts, expelled all French subjects who refused to swear allegiance to the monarchical principle, extended a warm welcome to French refugees, and lost no time in acknowledging Louis XVIII.

In 1792 she published her famous note on the restoration of royal power and aristocratic privileges in France, asserting that only ten thousand men would be necessary to effect a counter-revolution. She encouraged Gustavus III, who was assassinated by his nobles at a masked ball (March 16th, 1792), to place himself at the head of a crusade against democracy. She further urged England to assist the count d'Artois in a descent he had planned upon the French coast, and stimulated the zeal of Austria and Prussia. Notwithstanding this, though she had repeatedly negotiated treaties for subsidies and promised troops, she took care never to become involved in a war with the west. "My position is taken," she said, "my part assigned; I shall watch the movements of Turkey, Poland, and Sweden."

The latter country became reconciled to France after the death of Gustavus III. The punishment of the Jacobins of Warsaw and Turkey was an easier and more lucrative piece of work. We should also take into account an admission that she made to her vice-chancellor Ostermann in 1791: "Am I wrong? I cannot avow all to the courts of Berlin and Vienna, but I wish to keep them engaged in these affairs so that I may have freedom to carry on my unfinished enterprises." She excused herself for not taking part in the anti-revolutionary crusade by alleging the war with Turkey; then when in consequence of the revolution of the 3rd of May she was obliged to hasten the Peace of Jassy, she made the Polish war her excuse; and when this was ended she affected to excite Suvarov and his soldiers against the atheists of the west, but in reality thought only of gaining her own ends in the east. Muhammed, the new king of Persia, had recently invaded Georgia and burned Tiflis, the capital of Heraclius, a protégé of the empress. Catherine summoned to her court an exiled brother of Muhammed's and charged Valerian Zubov with the conquest of Persia. [His armies were actually under way when the death of Catherine led to the abandonment of the enterprise.]

Without being aware of it Catherine II really performed greater service to France than to the coalition: By her intervention in Poland and her projects against the east she had excited the jealousy and suspicion of Prussia and Austria. She took care to pit them against each other; made the second partition with Frederick William in spite of Austria, and effected the third with Francis II to the extreme dissatisfaction of Prussia. She contributed indirectly to weaken and dissolve the coalition, being herself prevented from joining it by the Polish insurrection that received so much encouragement from France. She died on the 17th of November, 1796, at the age of sixty-seven. Since Ivan the Terrible no monarch had extended the limits of the empire by such vast conquests. Catherine made the Niemen, the Dniester, and the Black Sea the boundaries of Russia.<sup>d</sup>

#### A RUSSIAN ESTIMATE OF CATHERINE

The personality of the empress was as though created for a throne. We do not meet in history with any other woman so fitted to rule. On all and each she produced a profound impression. No one has spoken more harshly and disadvantageously of the empress' qualities than Masson, yet this pamphleteer-writer observes that during the space of ten years, having had occasion to see Catherine once or twice a week, he was always struck by her

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unusually attractive personality, by the dignity with which she held herself, and by the amiability of her behaviour to everyone.

In her *Memoirs* Catherine herself has left a detailed narrative of the course of her development, of her aspirations after power, and of her unscrupulousness in the means she used to attain her aims. The empress' frankness in this respect amounts almost to cynicism. In maturity she at last became an autocratic sovereign. After the terrible humiliations, the bitter trials she had endured in her youth, her delight when she found herself in the enjoyment of unbounded power was all the greater. The fact that the fundamental change in her surroundings, the rapid passage from entire dependency to entire potency, did not in any wise awaken in her any despotic inclinations testifies to the goodness inherent in her nature; when her son was subjected in his turn to a like change in outward circumstances his despotism knew no bounds.

We have seen that the unfavourable circumstances in which Catherine found herself until the year 1762 exercised a baneful influence upon her character; whereas the power and preponderance which she later acquired had an ennobling effect upon her nature. Until then she had been necessarily obliged often to have recourse to mean and trifling measures to better her position and to revenge herself on her opponents; when she was able to exert full power, to enjoy the advantages of her position, the respect of her contemporaries, the adoration of the persons that surrounded her, she no longer needed to employ those means which are generally made use of by the weak in their struggle against the strong. At the time when a sharp watch was kept over her, when she was not trusted by either Elizabeth or Peter, she understood how to dissemble, to play the hypocrite, to feign humility and modesty, whilst in her soul she was filled with arrogance and contempt for mankind. Now that she had surrounded herself entirely with persons devoted to her she could act openly and nobly. The grand duchess in her isolation had been remarkable for her coldness, her mistrust of mankind, her suspiciousness; the empress on the contrary gave full scope to the development of feelings of benevolence, condescension, indulgence, and sincere attention to the interests of the persons that surrounded her. It was not without reason that Peter and Elizabeth had mistrusted Catherine and been suspicious of her character; it was not without reason, either, that in after times many people highly esteemed Catherine's kindheartedness.

The history of the court under Peter I, under the empress Anna, and under Elizabeth is full of examples of tyranny, cruelty, and arbitrariness; all Catherine's contemporaries were astonished at the mildness of her behaviour to those around her and rejoiced at the absence of stiff formalities and hard measures in her intercourse with her subordinates. In spite of her quick temper and impulsiveness, Catherine had complete control over herself, and in her intercourse with her fellow creatures she was governed by principles of humanity. "I like to praise and reward loudly, to blame quietly," she once justly remarked in conversation with Ségur; she sought to avoid occasions of offending anyone, and was particularly careful in her intercourse with servants; "I will live to make myself not feared," she once said, observing that the stove-heater, who had deserved reproof for some neglect, avoided meeting her. Often when Catherine had given an order she would make excuses for the trouble and labour it occasioned. Krapovitski gives instances of such solicitude on her part; more than once the empress, when impatient or irritated, having expressed herself somewhat sharply, afterwards acknowledged her hastiness and endeavoured to repair her fault.



It is said that Catherine, who awoke early and usually rose at six in the morning, so valued the tranquillity of her servants that without requiring assistance she dressed herself, lit the fire, and without disturbing anyone sat down to her books and papers. Various anecdotes are to be found in the narratives of contemporaries testifying to her indulgence to her servants and her want of sufficient severity in her intercourse with them. When she was in a passion she turned up her sleeves, walked about the room, drank a glass of water, and deferred judgment. Her capacity for removing any misunderstanding that might have arisen between herself and others was particularly remarkable. In her letters to various great lords we meet with frequent exhortations not to give way to despair but to take courage, to believe in their own capacities, and to hope for success. In moments of danger she knew how to raise the spirits of those around her, inspiring them with firmness and courage.

The distinguishing features of Catherine's character were gaiety, humour, and an inclination for fun and amusements. She once remarked: "As to the gaiety of character of Frederick the Great, it must be observed that it proceeded from his superiority: was there ever a great man who was not distinguished by his gaiety and who did not possess in himself an inexhaustible store of it." She took the greatest pleasure in going to masquerades and, while preserving the strictest incognito, talking to various people; she herself related in detail how she had once gone to a masquerade in male attire and had made a declaration of love to a young girl who never suspected that it was the empress talking to her. It must not be regarded as a matter of chance or an act of complaisance that such a multitude of anecdotes testifying to the magnanimity of Catherine have been preserved; many contemporaries who do not unconditionally praise her maintain however that she was capable of listening to unpleasing truths, of recognising her faults and deficiencies, and of restraining her anger. Such assertions are to be met with in Razumovski, Derjavin, Mussin-Pushkin, and Teplov.

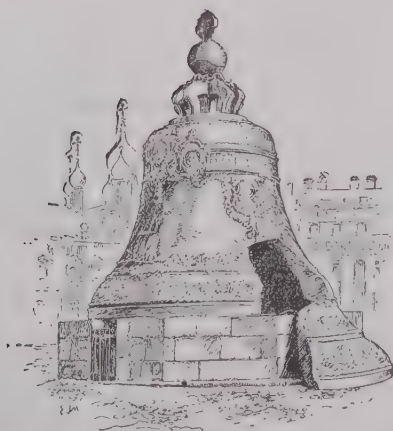
Of course traits are not wanting which show her obstinacy, self-will, and arrogance. Derjavin cites several circumstances to prove that in her actions Catherine was often governed by personal considerations and desires rather than the real good of the state and strict justice. It is also not without reason that she is reproached with the fact that, while protesting against the use of tortures and corporal punishment, she allowed full scope to the cruelties of Sheshkovski who frequently with his own hand tortured accused persons in the most atrocious manner; we cannot however determine how far the empress was cognisant of his barbarous treatment. Referring to some instances of arbitrariness and infringement of the law, Prince Scherbatov remarks that the empress held herself above the law and that she thus herself set a pernicious example to the great noblemen and dignitaries who imitated her in this respect.

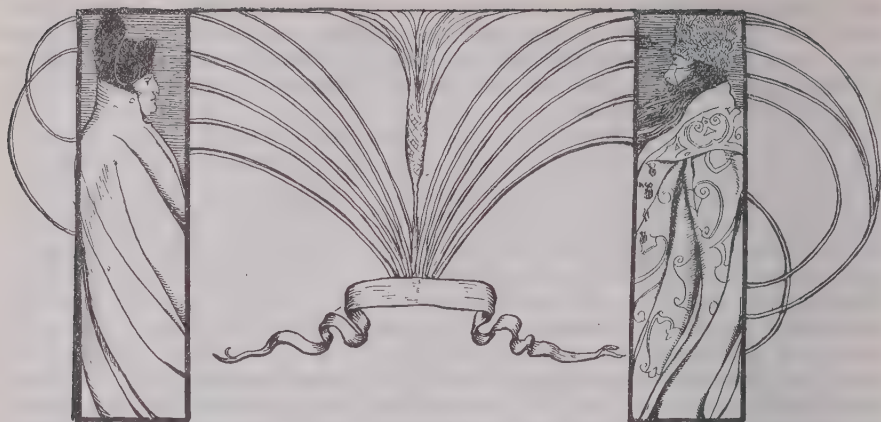
As to Catherine's piety, Frederick II plainly accused her of hypocrisy and bigotry. We bear in mind that it was not easy for her to adopt the orthodox faith, but that when she had adopted it she used outward piety as a means of strengthening her position in Russia. By strictly observing the rules of the church, and conscientiously fulfilling her religious duties, she endeavoured to produce a certain impression on her subjects. At the same time she remained true to the principles of toleration preached in the literature of enlightenment. When Voltaire reproached her, saying that she humiliated herself by kissing the priest's hand, she justified herself by replying that it was only an outward observance which would little by little become obsolete. There is no doubt

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that Catherine's piety did not spring from any deep feeling. In her letters to Grimm, sallies against Luther and the Lutherans are to be met with more than once; she despised Lutherans for their intolerance and several times praised the orthodox faith as the best in the world; she compared it to an oak tree with deep roots.

Side by side with such remarks we meet with bold sallies both from the lips and in the letters of the empress against excessive piety and fanaticism; such are certain caustic remarks referring to Maria Theresa and the queen of Portugal. In certain *jeux d'esprit* which she allowed herself in connection with questions of the church and religion in her letters to Grimm, the same rationalism is to be observed as that which distinguished the votaries of French literature of the time. Catherine praised the works of Nicholas Sebaldus Nothanker, especially, because hypocrisy was condemned in them. Deep religious and philosophical questions she did not like; her chief characteristic was a certain worldliness. Her point of view was optimistic and her principal rule of earthly wisdom, gaiety. She did not like to meditate on sad events, to give way to grief, to dwell upon gloomy subjects; and this partly explains her esteem for Voltaire, whom she called the "god of gaiety." This playfulness and vivacity, this freshness and gaiety she preserved to the end of her life.<sup>h</sup>





## CHAPTER IX

### RUSSIA IN THE NAPOLEONIC EPOCH

[1796-1815 A.D.]

Perhaps no sovereign since the days of the Antonines ever was called to higher destinies, or more worthily filled an important place in the theatre of the world, than the emperor Alexander I. Placed at the head of the most powerful and rising empire in existence, stationed midway between ancient civilization and barbaric vigour, he was called to take the lead in the great struggle for European freedom; to combat with the energy and enthusiasm of the desert the superiority of advanced information, and meet the condensed military force of a revolution, which had beaten down all the strength of continental power, with the dauntless resolution and enduring fortitude which arise in the earlier ages of social existence. Well and nobly he fulfilled his destiny. Repeatedly defeated, never subdued, he took counsel, like his great predecessor Peter, from misfortune, and prepared in silence those invincible bands which, in the day of trial, hurled back the most terrible array which ambition had ever marshalled against the liberties of mankind. — ALISON.<sup>f</sup>

#### EARLY MEASURES OF THE REIGN OF PAUL I

THE emperor Paul I, Catherine's successor, had been long known for his singularities, his great dislike of the French, and to everything which Catherine had done. He appeared desirous of proceeding directly on the very opposite course to that which she had followed. She had chiefly directed her attention to foreign relations and affairs, whilst he appeared to occupy his mind solely with the internal state of his dominions. His very first act was a proof that he was quite ready to go in opposition to all the ordinary rules of political prudence, and when under the influence of his humour to follow his views, reckless of consequences. He caused splendid funeral honours and services to be performed for his murdered father, and forced the audacious and godless, though clever criminals, who had helped to place his mother on the throne, to be publicly exposed to the gaze of the people. Notwithstanding this, he suffered them to remain in possession of their honours and



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estates, whilst he designated them as murderers, and reminded the people that his mother had taken part in the murder of his father. The body of Peter III, which had been deposited in the convent of Alexander Nevski, was by his orders placed beside that of his wife; and it was notified by an inscription in the Russian language that, though separated in life, in death they were united.

Alexis Orlov and Prince Baratinski, two of the murderous band, were compelled to come to St. Petersburg to accompany the funeral procession on foot, but they were not so treated as to prevent them afterwards from doing further mischief. Alexis obtained permission to travel in foreign countries. Baratinski was ordered never again to show himself at court; which, under existing circumstances, could not to him be otherwise than an agreeable command. Single proofs of tender feeling, of a noble heart, and touching goodness, nay even the emperor's magnanimous conduct towards Kosciuszko and his brethren in arms, combined with his sympathy with the fate of Poland, could not reconcile a court, such as that of Russia under Catherine II had become, and a city like that of St. Petersburg, to the change of the court into a guard-room, and to the daily varying humours of a man of eccentric and half-dereanged mind. Even the improvements in the financial affairs of the country were regarded as ruinous innovations by those who in times past had profited by the confusion. The whole of Russia, and even the imperial family, were alarmed and terrified; a complete flood of decrees, often contradictory, and mutually abrogatory, followed one another in quick succession; and the mad schemes of the emperor, who was, nevertheless, by no means wicked or insensible to what was good and true, reminded all observers of the most unhappy times of declining Rome.<sup>b</sup>

### *Imperial Eccentricities*

The guards, that dangerous body of men who had overturned the throne of the father, and who had long considered the accession of the son as the term of their military existence, were rendered incapable of injuring him by a bold and vigorous step, and treated without the least deference from the first day. Paul incorporated in the different regiments of guards his battalions that arrived from Gatchina, the officers of which he distributed among the various companies, promoting them at the same time two or three steps; so that simple lieutenants or captains in the army found themselves at once captains in the guards, a place so important and hitherto so honoured, and which gave the rank of colonel, or even of brigadier. Some of the old captains of the first families in the kingdom found themselves under the command of officers of no birth, who but a few years before had left their companies, as sergeants or corporals, to enter into the battalions of the grand duke. This bold and hasty change, which at any other time would have been fatal to its author, had only the effect of inducing a few hundreds of officers, subalterns and others, to retire.

Paul, alarmed and enraged at this general desertion, went to the barracks, flattered the soldiers, appeased the officers, and endeavoured to retain them by excluding from all employ, civil and military, those who should retire in future. He afterwards issued an order that every officer or subaltern who had resigned, or should give in his resignation, should quit the capital within four-and-twenty hours, and return to his own home. It did not enter into the head of the person who drew up the ukase that it contained an absurdity; for several of the officers were natives of St. Petersburg, and had families resid-

ing in the city. Accordingly, some of them retired to their homes without quitting the capital, not obeying the first part of the order, lest they should be found guilty of disobedience to the second. Arkarov, who was to see it put in force, having informed the emperor of this contradiction, directed that the injunction to quit St. Petersburg should alone be obeyed. A number of young men were consequently taken out of their houses as criminals, put out of the city, with orders not to re-enter it, and left in the road without shelter, and without any furred garments, in very severe weather. Those who belonged to very remote provinces, for the most part wanting money to carry them thither, wandered about the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg, where several perished from cold and want.

The finances of the empire, exhausted by the prodigalities and still more by the waste of Catherine's reign, required a prompt remedy; and to this



PAUL I  
(1754–1801)

Paul seemed at first to turn his thoughts. Partly from hope, partly from fear, the paper money of the crown rose a little in value. It was to be supposed that the grand duke of all the Russias, who for thirty years had been obliged to live on an income of a hundred thousand rubles (£10,000) per annum, would at least have learned economy per force; but he was soon seen to rush into the most unmeasured sumptuousness, heap wealth upon some, and lavish favours upon others, with as much profusion as his mother, and with still less discernment. The spoils of Poland continued to add to the riches of men already too wealthy. All he could do towards restoring a sort of equilibrium between his receipts and disbursements was to lay an exorbitant tax on all the classes of his slaves. The poll-tax of the wretched serfs was doubled, and a new tax was imposed upon

the nobles, which, however, the serfs would ultimately have to pay. After the first impressions which his accession caused in the heart of Paul, punishments and disgraces succeeded with the same rapidity and profusion with which he had lavished his favours. Several experienced the two extremes in a few days. It is true that most of these punishments at first appeared just; but then it must be allowed that Paul could scarcely strike any but the guilty, so corrupt had been all who were about the throne.

A whim which caused no little surprise was the imperial prohibition of wearing round hats, or rather the sudden order to take them away or tear them to pieces on the heads of those who appeared in them. This occasioned some disgraceful scenes in the streets, and particularly near the palace. The Cossacks and soldiers of the police fell on the passengers to uncover their heads, and beat those who, not knowing the reason, attempted to defend themselves. An English merchant, going through the street in a sledge, was thus stopped, and his hat snatched off. Supposing it to be a robbery, he leaped out of his sledge, knocked down the soldier, and called the guard. Instead of the guard, arrived an officer, who overpowered and bound him; but as they were carrying him before the police, he was fortunate enough to

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meet the coach of the English minister, who was going to court, and claimed his protection. Sir Charles Whitworth made his complaint to the emperor; who, conjecturing that a round hat might be the national dress of the English as it was of the Swedes, said that his order had been misconceived, and he would explain himself more fully to Arkarov. The next day it was published in the streets and houses that strangers who were not in the emperor's service, or naturalised, were not comprised in the prohibition. Round hats were now no longer pulled off; but those who were met with this unlucky head-dress were conducted to the police to ascertain their country. If they were found to be Russians, they were sent for soldiers; and woe to a Frenchman who had been met with in this dress, for he would have been condemned as a Jacobin.

A regulation equally incomprehensible was the sudden prohibition of harnessing horses after the Russian mode. A fortnight was allowed for procuring harness in the German fashion; after the expiration of which, the police were ordered to cut the traces of every carriage the horses of which were harnessed in the ancient manner. As soon as this regulation was made public, several persons dared not venture abroad, still less appear in their carriages near the palace, for fear of being insulted. The harness-makers availed themselves of the occasion to charge exorbitant prices. To dress the *ishroshtshiki*, or Russian coachmen, in the German fashion, was attended with another inconvenience. Most of them would neither part with their long beards, their kaitans, nor their round hats; still less would they tie a false tail to their short hair, which produced the most ridiculous scenes and figures in the world. At length the emperor had the vexation to be obliged to change his rigorous order into a simple invitation to his subjects gradually to adopt the German fashion of dress, if they wished to merit his favour. Another reform with respect to carriages: the great number of splendid equipages that swarmed in the streets of St. Petersburg disappeared in an instant. The officers, even the generals, came to the parade on foot, or in little sledges, which also was not without its dangers.

It was anciently a point of etiquette for every person who met a Russian autocrat, his wife, or son, to stop his horse or coach, alight, and prostrate himself in the snow or in the mud. This barbarous homage, difficult to be paid in a large city where carriages pass in great numbers, and always on the gallop, had been completely abolished under the reign of the polished Catherine. One of the first cares of Paul was to re-establish it in all its rigour. A general officer, who passed on without his coachmen's observing the emperor riding by on horseback, was stopped, and immediately put under arrest. The same unpleasant circumstance occurred to several others, so that nothing was so much dreaded, either on foot or in a carriage, as the meeting of the emperor.

The ceremony established within the palace became equally strict, and equally dreaded. Woe betide him who, when permitted to kiss the hand of Paul, did not make the floor resound by striking it with his knee as loud as a soldier with the butt-end of his firelock. It was requisite, too, that the salute of the lips on his hand should be heard, to certify the reality of the kiss, as well as of the genuflection. Prince George Galitzin, the chamberlain, was put under arrest on the spot by his majesty himself, for having made the bow and kissed the hand too negligently.

If this new reign was fatal to the army and to the poor gentry, it was still more so to the unhappy peasantry. A report being spread that Paul was about to restrict the power of masters over their slaves, and give the peasants



of the lords the same advantages as those of the crown, the people of the capital were much pleased with the hopes of this change. At this juncture an officer set off for his regiment, which lay at Orenberg. On the road he was asked about the new emperor, and what new regulations he was making. He related what he had seen, and what he had heard; among the rest, mentioning the ukase which was soon to appear in favour of the peasants. At this news, those of Tver and Novgorod indulged in some tumultuous actions, which were considered as symptoms of rebellion. Their masters were violently enraged with them; and the cause that had led them into error was discovered. Marshal Repin was immediately despatched at the head of some troops against the insurgents; and the officer who had unwittingly given rise to this false hope, by retailing the news of the city on his road, was soon brought back in confinement. The senate of St. Petersburg judged him deserving of death, and condemned him to be broken, to undergo the punishment of the knout, and if he survived this, to labour in the mines. The emperor confirmed the sentence. This was the first criminal trial that was laid before the public; and assuredly it justified but too well those remains of shame which had before kept secret similar outrages.

The most prominent of Paul's eccentricities was that mania which, from his childhood, he displayed for the military dress and exercise. This passion in a prince no more indicates the general or the hero than a girl's fondness for dressing and undressing her doll foretokens that she will be a good mother. Frederick the Great, the most accomplished soldier of his time, is well known to have had from his boyhood the most insuperable repugnance to all those minutiae of a corporal to which his father would have subjected him; this was even the first source of that disagreement which ever subsisted between the father and the son. Frederick, however, became a hero; his father was never anything more than a corporal. Peter III pushed his soldato-mania to a ridiculous point, fancying he made Frederick his model. He loved soldiers and arms, as a man loves horses and dogs. He knew nothing but how to exercise a regiment, and never went abroad but in a captain's uniform.

Paul, in his mode of life when grand duke, and his conduct after his accession, so strongly resembled his father that, changing names and dates, the history of the one might be taken for that of the other. Both were educated in a perfect ignorance of business, and resided at a distance from court, where they were treated as prisoners of state rather than heirs to the crown; and whenever they presented themselves appeared as aliens and strangers, having no concern with the royal family. The aunt of the father (Elizabeth) acted precisely as did the mother of the son. The endeavours of each were directed to prolong the infancy of their heirs, and to perpetuate the feebleness of their minds. The young princes were both distinguished by personal vivacity and mental insensibility, by an activity which, untrained and neglected, degenerated into turbulence; the father was sunk in debauchery, the son lost in the most insignificant trifles. An unconquerable aversion to study and reflection gave to both that infatuated taste for military parade, which would probably have displayed itself less forcibly in Paul had he been a witness of the ridicule they attached to Peter. The education of Paul, however, was much more attended to than that of his father. He was surrounded in infancy by persons of merit, and his youth promised a capacity of no ordinary kind. It must also be allowed that he was exempt from many of the vices which disgraced Peter; temperance and regularity of manners were prominent features of his character—features the more commendable, as

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before his mother and himself they were rarely to be found in a Russian autocrat. To the same cause, education, and his knowledge of the language and character of the nation, it was owing that he differed from his father in other valuable qualities.

The similarity which, in some instances, marked their conduct towards their wives, is still more striking; and in their amours, a singular coincidence of taste is observable. Catherine and Marie were the most beautiful women of the court, yet both failed to gain the affections of their husbands. Catherine had an ambitious soul, a cultivated mind, and the most amiable and polished manners. In a man, however, whose attachments were confined to soldiers, to the pleasures of the bottle, and the fumes of tobacco, she excited no other sentiment than disgust and aversion. He was smitten with an object less respectable, and less difficult to please. The countess Vorontzov, fat, ugly in her person and vulgar in her manners, was more suitable to his depraved military taste, and she became his mistress. In like manner, the regular beauty of Marie, the unalterable sweetness of her disposition, her unwearied complaisance, her docility as a wife, and her tenderness as a mother were not sufficient to prevent Paul from attaching himself to Made-moiselle Nelidov, whose disposition and qualities better accorded with his own, and afterwards to a young lady of the name of Lopukhin, who, it is believed, rejected his suit. To the honour of Paul it is related that he submitted to that mortifying repulse with the most chivalric patience and generosity. Nelidov was ugly and diminutive, but seemed desirous, by her wit and address, to compensate for the disadvantages of her person; for a woman to be in love with Paul it was necessary she should resemble him.

On their accession to the throne, neither the father nor the son were favourites with the court or the nation, yet both acquired immediate popularity and favour. The first steps of Paul appeared to be directed, but improved, by those of Peter. The liberation of Kosciuszko and other prisoners brought to public recollection the recall of Biron, Munich, and Lestocq, with this difference—that Peter III did not disgrace these acts of clemency and justice by ridiculous violences, or by odious and groundless persecutions. Both issued ukases extremely favourable to the nobility, but from motives essentially different, and little to the honour of the son. The father granted to the Russian gentry those natural rights which every man ought to enjoy; while the son attempted the folly of creating a heraldic nobility in Russia, where that Gothic institution had never been known. In the conduct which he observed towards the clergy, Paul, however, showed himself a superior politician. Instead of insulting the priests, and obliging them to shave their beards, he bestowed the orders of the empire on the bishops, to put them on a footing with the nobility, and flattered the populace and the priesthood by founding churches, in obedience to pretended inspiration.

In his military operations, however, his policy appears to have abandoned him, because here he gave the reins to his ruling passion. The quick and total change of discipline he introduced in his armies created him nearly as many enemies as there were officers and soldiers. In the distrust and suspicions which incessantly haunted him, his inferiority to his father is also evident. One of the first acts of Peter III was to abolish the political inquisition established by Elizabeth; whereas Paul prosecuted no scheme with greater alacrity than that of establishing a system of spies, and devising means for the encouragement of informers. The blind confidence of the father was his ruin, but it flowed from a humanity of disposition always worthy of respect. The distrust of the son did not save him; it was the

offspring of a timorous mind, which by its suspicions was more apt to provoke than to elude treason.<sup>k</sup>

### *Paul's Foreign Policy*

In regard to foreign matters Paul's initial policy was one of peace. He put a stop to the levying of recruits after the manner adopted by his mother—that is, in the proportion of three men to every five hundred souls—recalled his army from Persia, and left Georgia to take care of itself. He showed compassion for the Poles, recalled the prisoners from Siberia, transferred King Stanislaus from Grodno to St. Petersburg, visited Kosciuszko at Schlüsselburg and released him in company with the other prisoners. He bade Kolitchew, envoy extraordinary at Berlin, inform the king that he, Paul, wished neither conquest nor aggrandisement. He dictated to Ostermann a circular directed to the foreign powers, in which he declared that of all the countries of the world Russia alone had been constantly engaged in war since 1756; that forty years of warfare had reduced the population; that the emperor's humanity would not allow him to withhold from his beloved subjects the peace for which they longed; that though on account of these considerations Russia could take no active part in the struggle against France, the emperor would “nevertheless remain closely united with his allies, and would use every means to oppose the rise of the mad French Republic which threatened all Europe with upheaval by the destruction of its laws, privileges, property, religion, and customs.” He refused all armed assistance to Austria, which was alarmed at Napoleon's victories in Italy, and recalled the fleet that Catherine had adjoined to the English fleet for the purpose of blockading the coasts of France and Holland. He even received overtures made by Caillard, the French envoy to Prussia, and caused him to be informed that the emperor “did not consider himself at war with the French, that he had never done anything to harm them, but was rather disposed to keep peace with them, and would induce his allies to hasten the conclusion of war, to which end he offered the mediation of Russia.”

It was not long, however, before relations again became strained between France and Russia. By the Treaty of Campo Formio the Ionian Isles had been given to the French, who thus acquired a threatening position in the East and increased power over the Divan. The Directory authorised Dombrowski to organise Polish legions in Italy. Panin, at Berlin, intercepted a letter from the Directory to the French envoy, which spoke of a restoration of Poland under a prince of Brandenburg. Paul, on his side, took into his pay the troops of the prince of Condé, and established ten thousand émigrés in Volhynia and Podolia. He offered an asylum to Louis XVIII after his flight from Brunswick, and installed him in the ducal palace at Mitau with a pension of 200,000 rubles. The news that a French expedition was being secretly organised at Toulon made him fear for the security of the coasts of the Black Sea, which were immediately put in a state of defence. The abduction of Zagurski, the Russian consul at Corfu, the capture of Malta by Napoleon, the arrival at St. Petersburg of the banished knights who offered Paul the protectorate of their order and the title of grand master, the invasion of Helvetic territory by the Directory, the expulsion of the pope and the proclamation of the Roman Republic—all were events that precipitated the rupture.

Paul concluded an alliance with Turkey which had been disturbed by an Egyptian invasion, also with England, Austria, and the kingdom of Naples. Thus, by the double aggression of Bonaparte against Malta and Egypt, Rus-



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sia and Turkey were led, contrary to all traditions, to make common cause. Paul pledged himself to unite his fleet with the Turkish and English squadron, and to furnish one body of troops for a descent on Holland, another for the conquest of the Ionian Isles, and a grand auxiliary army for the campaigns in Italy and Switzerland.

In the autumn of 1798 a Turkish-Russian fleet captured the French garrisons in the Ionian Isles. The king of Naples invaded the territory of the Roman Republic, but Championnet brought the Neapolitan troops back on to their own ground, and after making a triumphal entry into Naples proclaimed the Parthenopean Republic.

#### THE CAMPAIGNS OF KORSAKOV AND SUVAROV (1798-1799)

The Russian army in Switzerland was placed under the command of Rimski-Korsakov, that of Holland under the orders of Hermann; while Austria, at the suggestion of England, requested that the victor of Fokshani and of the Rimmik should receive the command of the Austro-Russian army. Flattered by this mark of deference, Paul I recalled Suvarov from exile in his village. "Suvarov has no need of laurels," wrote the czar, "but the country has need of Suvarov."<sup>c</sup>

A few days after the battle of Magnano, Suvarov arrived on the Mincio with the first division of his forces, twenty thousand strong, and took the command of all the allied troops in Italy. The jealousy of the Austrian generals was naturally excited and they called a council of war, in order to examine his plans. The members of the council, beginning at the youngest, proposed their several schemes. Suvarov quietly heard them all, and when they had done, took a slate, drew two lines, and said, "Here, gentleman, are the French, and here the Russians; the latter will march against the former and beat them." So saying, he rubbed out the French line, and added, "This is all my plan; the council is concluded."

- Suvarov kept his word, and in less than three months swept the French entirely out of Lombardy and Piedmont. Thrusting himself between the three French armies of Switzerland, northern Italy, and the Parthenopean Republic, it was his purpose, in concert with the archduke Charles of Austria, to penetrate into France on its most defenceless side, by the Vosges and the Jura, the same quarter on which the great invasion of 1814 was afterwards effected. The campaign opened on the 25th of April, on the steep banks of the Adda, behind which Moreau had posted his diminished force of twenty-eight thousand men in three divisions. The passage was forced with immense loss to the French, who were compelled to abandon Milan, which Suvarov entered in triumph on the 29th.

After a week's delay, during which all the principal places of Lombardy surrendered to the allies, Suvarov followed Moreau's retreat, and endeavoured to dislodge him from his advantageous position on the Po. Not succeeding in this attempt as rapidly as suited his impetuous habits, the Russian general suddenly changed his purpose, and advanced against Turin, whilst Moreau at the same moment had resolved to retire to Turin and the crests of the Apennines, in order to preserve his communications with France. On the 27th of May, Vukassovitch, who commanded the advance guard of the Russians, surprised Turin, and forced the French to take refuge in the citadel, leaving in the hands of the victors nearly three hundred pieces of artillery, sixty thousand muskets, and an enormous quantity of ammunition and military stores. Moreau's army, thus deprived of all its resources, was saved

from destruction only by the extraordinary ability of its commander, who led it safely towards Genoa by a mountain path, which was rendered practicable for artillery, in four days. With the exception of a few fortresses, nothing now remained to the French of all Napoleon's conquests in northern Italy; they had been lost in less time than it had taken to make them.

Exulting in the brilliant success of his arms, Paul bestowed another surname, *Italienski*, or the Italian, on his victorious general, and ordered by an express ukase that Suvarov should be universally regarded as the greatest commander that had ever appeared. Meanwhile the results of his skill and vigour were neutralised by the selfish policy of the Austrian court, which had become by the Treaty of Campo Formio, and the acquisition of Venice, in some degree an actual accomplice with the aggressors against whom it was in arms. Suvarov was compelled to submit to the dictation of the emperor Francis I, and deeply disgusted he declared that he was no longer of any use in Italy, and that he desired nothing so ardently as to be recalled.

The disasters of the French in upper Italy were fatal to their ascendancy in the south, and Macdonald received orders to abandon the Parthenopean Republic, and unite his forces with those of Moreau. His retreat was exposed to great dangers by the universal insurrection of the peasants; but he accomplished it with great rapidity and skill. The two French commanders then concerted measures to dislodge the allies from their conquests—a project which seemed not unlikely to be fulfilled, so obstinately had the Aulic council adhered to the old system of dispersing the troops all over the territory which they occupied. Though the allies had above a hundred thousand men in the field, they could hardly assemble thirty thousand at any one point; and Macdonald might easily have destroyed them in detail could he have fallen upon them at once; but the time he spent in reorganising his army in Tuscany, and in concerting measures with Moreau, was well employed by Suvarov in promptly concentrating his forces. Macdonald advanced against him with an army of thirty-seven thousand men, taking Modena on his way, and driving Hohenzollern out of it after a bloody engagement. The two armies met on the Trebbia, where a first and indecisive action took place on the 17th of June; it was renewed on each of the two following days, and victory finally remained with the Russians. In this terrible battle of three days, the most obstinately contested and bloody that had occurred since the beginning of the war, the loss on both sides was excessive; that of the French was above twelve thousand in killed and wounded, and that of the allies not much less. But nearly equal losses told with very unequal severity on the respective combatants; those of the allies would speedily be retrieved by large reinforcements, but the republicans had expended their last resources, were cut off from Moreau, and had no second army to fall back upon. Macdonald with infinite difficulty regained the positions he had occupied before the advance to the Trebbia, after losing an immense number of prisoners.

The fall of the citadel of Turin on the 20th of June was of great importance to the allies; for besides disengaging their besieging force it put into their hands one of the strongest fortresses in Piedmont, and an immense quantity of artillery and ammunition. This event, and Suvarov's victory on the Trebbia, checked the successful operations of Moreau, and compelled him to fall back to his former defensive position on the Apennines. Again, contrary to Suvarov's wishes, the allied forces were divided for the purpose of reducing Mantua and Alexandria, and occupying Tuscany. After the fall of those two fortresses, Suvarov laid siege to Tortona, when Joubert, who had meanwhile superseded Moreau, marched against him at the head of the combined forces

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of the French. On the 15th of August, another desperate battle was fought at Novi, in which Joubert was killed, but from which neither side derived any particular advantage. The French returned to their former positions, and the Italian campaign was ended.

Suvarov now received orders to join his forces with those under Korsakov, who was on the Upper Rhine with thirty thousand men. The archduke Charles might, even without this fresh reinforcement, have already annihilated Massena had he not remained for three months, from June to August, in complete inactivity; at the very moment of Suvarov's expected arrival, he allowed the important passes of the St. Gotthard to be again carried by a coup-de-main by the French, under General Lecourbe, who drove the Austrians from the Simplon, the Furka, the Grimsel, and the Devil's Bridge. The archduke, after an unsuccessful attempt to push across the Aar at Dettingen, suddenly quitted the scene of war and advanced down the Rhine for the purpose of supporting the English expedition under the duke of York against Holland. This unexpected turn in affairs proceeded from Vienna. The Viennese cabinet was jealous of Russia. Suvarov played the master in Italy, favoured Sardinia at the expense of the house of Habsburg, and deprived the Austrians of the laurels and the advantages they had won. The archduke, accordingly, received orders to remain inactive, to abandon the Russians, and finally to withdraw to the north; by this movement Suvarov's triumphant progress was checked, he was compelled to cross the Alps to the aid of Korsakov, and to involve himself in a mountain warfare ill-suited to the habits of his soldiery.

Korsakov, whom Bavaria had been bribed with Russian gold to furnish with a corps one thousand strong, was supported solely by Kray and Hotze with twenty thousand men. Massena, taking advantage of the departure of the archduke and the non-arrival of Suvarov, crossed the Limmat at Dietikon and shut Korsakov, who had imprudently stationed himself with his whole army in Zurich, so closely in that, after an engagement that lasted two days, from the 15th to the 17th of September, the Russian general was compelled to abandon his artillery and to force his way through the enemy. Ten thousand men were all that escaped. Hotze, who had advanced from the Grisons to Schwyz to Suvarov's rencontre, was, at the same time, defeated and killed at Schanis. Suvarov, although aware that the road across the St. Gotthard was blocked by the Lake of Lucerne, on which there were no boats, had the temerity to attempt the passage. In Airolo, he was obstinately opposed by the French under Lecourbe, and, although Shveikovski contrived to turn this strong position by scaling the pathless rocks, numbers of the men were, owing to Suvarov's impatience, sacrificed before it.

On the 24th of September, 1799, he at length climbed the St. Gotthard, and a bloody engagement, in which the French were worsted, took place on the Oberalpee. Lecourbe blew up the Devil's Bridge, but, leaving the Urnerloch open, the Russians pushed through that rocky gorge, and, dashing through the foaming Reuss, scaled the opposite rocks and drove the French from their position behind the Devil's Bridge. Altorf on the lake was reached in safety by the Russian general, who was compelled, owing to the want of boats, to seek his way through the valleys of Schächen and Muotta, across the almost impassable rocks, to Schwyz. The heavy rains rendered the undertaking still more arduous; the Russians, owing to the badness of the road, were speedily barefoot; the provisions were also exhausted. In this wretched state they reached Muotta on the 29th of September and learned the discouraging news of Korsakov's defeat. Massena had already set off in



the hope of cutting off Suvarov, but had missed his way. He reached Altorf, where he joined Lecourbe on the 29th, when Suvarov was already at Muotta, whence Massena found on his arrival that he had again retired across the Brägelburg, through the Klönthal. He was opposed on the lake of Klönthal by Molitor, who was, however, forced to retire by Auffenberg, who had joined Suvarov at Altorf and formed his advanced guard, Rosen, at the same time, beating off Massena with the rear-guard, taking five cannon and one thousand of his men prisoners. On the 1st of October, Suvarov entered Glarus, where he rested until the 4th, when he crossed the Panixer Mountains through snow two feet deep to the valley of the Rhine, which he reached on the 10th, after losing the whole of his beasts of burden and two hundred of his men down the precipices; and here ended his extraordinary march, which had cost him the whole of his artillery, almost all his horses, and a third of his men.

The archduke had, meanwhile, tarried on the Rhine, where he had taken Philippsburg and Mannheim, but had been unable to prevent the defeat of the English expedition under the duke of York by General Brune at Bergen, on the 19th of September. The archduke now, for the first time, made a retrograde movement, and approached Korsakov and Suvarov. The different leaders, however, did nothing but find fault with each other, and the czar, perceiving his project frustrated, suddenly recalled his troops, and the campaign came to a close.

Paul's anger fell without measure or reason on his armies and their chiefs. All the officers who were missing, that is to say who were prisoners in France, were broken as deserters, and Suvarov, instead of being well received with well merited honours, was deprived of his command and not suffered to see the emperor's face. This unjust severity broke the veteran's heart. He died soon after his return to St. Petersburg; and no Russian courtier, nor any member of the diplomatic body except the English ambassador, followed his remains to the grave.

#### PAUL RECONCILED WITH FRANCE (1800 A.D.)

Frustrated in the objects for which he had engaged in war, Paul was now in a mood easily to be moved to turn his arms against the allies who had deceived his hopes. He had fought for the re-establishment of monarchy in France, and of the old *status quo* in Europe; and the only result had been the aggrandisement of Austria, his own immediate neighbour, of whom he had much more reason to be jealous than of the remote power of France. The rapid steps, too, which Bonaparte was taking for the restoration of monarchical forms in that country were especially calculated to conciliate Paul's goodwill towards the first consul. The latter and his able ministers promptly availed themselves of this favourable disposition through the connections they had made in St. Petersburg. Fouché had such confidential correspondence even with ladies in the Russian capital, that he afterwards received the earliest and most correct intelligence of the emperor's murder. Two persons at the court of St. Petersburg were next gained over to France, or rather to Bonaparte's rising empire; these were the minister Rostoptchin, and the emperor's favourite, the Turk Kutaisov, who had risen with unusual rapidity from the situation of the emperor's barber to the rank of one of the first Russian nobles. He was also nearly connected by relationship with Rostoptchin.

Rostoptchin first found means to send away General Dumourier from St. Petersburg, whither he had come for the purpose of carrying on his intrigues in favour of the Bourbons. He next sought to bring Louis Cobenzl also into

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discredit with the emperor, and he succeeded in this, shortly before the opening of the campaign in Italy in 1800, when the cabinet of Vienna was called upon to give a plain and direct answer to the questions peremptorily put by the emperor of Russia. Paul required that the cabinet should answer, without if or but, without circumlocution or reserve, whether or not Austria would, according to the terms of the treaty, restore the pope and the king to their dominions and sovereignty. Cobenzl was obliged to reply that if Austria were to give back Piedmont to the king of Sardinia it must still retain Tortona and Alessandria; and that it never would restore the three legations and Ancona. The measure of the emperor's indignation was now full; he forbade Count Cobenzl the court, and at a later period not only ordered him to leave the country, but would not even allow an embassy or *chargé-d'affaires* to remain.

The emperor proceeded more deliberately with regard to the English. At first he acted as if he had no desire to break with them; and he even allowed the Russians, whom they had hired for the expedition against Holland, to remain in Guernsey under Viomesnil's command, in order to assist their employers in an expedition against Brittany. The English government, however, at length provoked him to extremities. They refused to redeem the Russians who had been made prisoners in their service, by giving in exchange for them an equal number of French, of whom their prisons were full; they refused to listen to any arrangements respecting the grand mastership of the knights of Malta, or even as to the protectorate of the order, and gave the clearest intimations that they meant to keep the island for themselves. Bonaparte seized upon this favourable moment for flattering the emperor, by acting as if he had really more respect for Paul than the two powers for whom he had made such magnanimous sacrifices. Whilst the English refused to redeem the Russians made prisoners in their service by exchange, Bonaparte set them free without either exchange or ransom.

The emperor of Germany had broken his word, and neither restored the pope nor the king of Sardinia, whilst Bonaparte voluntarily offered to restore the one and give compensation to the other. He assailed the emperor in a masterly manner on his weak side, causing the six or seven thousand Russians, whom the English refused to exchange, to be provided with new clothing and arms, and he wrote a letter to Panin, the Russian minister, in which he said that he was unwilling to suffer such brave soldiers as these Russians were to remain longer away from their native land on account of the English. In the same letter he paid another compliment to the emperor, and threw an apple of mortal strife between him and England. Knowing as he did that his garrison in Malta could not hold out much longer, he offered to place the island in the hands of the emperor Paul, as a third party. This was precisely what the emperor desired; and Sprengporten, who was sent to France to bring away the Russians, and to thank the first consul, was to occupy Malta with them. The Russians were either to be conveyed thither by Nelson, who up to this time had kept the island closely blockaded, and was daily expecting its surrender, or at least he was to be ordered to let them pass; but both he and the English haughtily rejected the Russian mediation.

Paul now came to a complete breach with England. First of all he recalled his Russian troops from Guernsey, but on this occasion he was again baffled. It was of great importance to the English cabinet that Bonaparte should not immediately hear of the decided breach which had taken place between them and the emperor, and they therefore prevailed upon Viomesnil, an émigré, who had the command of the Russians in Guernsey, to remain some weeks longer, in opposition to the emperor's will. Paul was vehemently indignant

at this conduct; Viomesnil, however, entered the English service, and was provided for by the English government in Portugal.

Lord Whitworth was next obliged to leave Russia, as Count Cobenzl had previously been. Paul recalled his ambassadors from the courts of Vienna and London, and forthwith sent Count Kalitchev to Paris to enter into friendly negotiations with Bonaparte. In the meantime, the English had recourse to some new subterfuges, and promised, that in case Malta capitulated, they would consent to allow the island to be administered, till the conclusion of a peace, by commissioners appointed by Russia, England, and Naples. Paul had already named Bailli de la Ferrette for this purpose; but the English refused to acknowledge his nominee, and even to receive the Neapolitans in Malta. Before this took place, however, the emperor had come to issue with England on a totally different question.

The idea of a union among the neutral powers, in opposition to the right alleged by England, when at war with any power whatsoever, to subject the ships of all neutral powers to search, had been relinquished by the empress Catherine in 1781, to please the English ambassador at her court; Paul now resumed the idea. Bonaparte intimated his concurrence, and Paul followed up the matter with great energy and zeal, as in this way he had an opportunity of exhibiting himself in the character of an imperial protector of the weak, a defender of justice and right, and as the head of a general alliance of the European powers. Prussia also now appeared to do homage to him, for the weak king was made to believe, that by a close alliance between Russia and France, he might be helped to an extension of territory and an increase of subjects, without danger or cost to himself, or without war, which he abhorred beyond everything else. The first foundation, therefore, for an alliance between Russia and France, was laid in Berlin, where Beurnonville, the French ambassador, was commissioned to enter into negotiations with the Russian minister Von Krüderer. Beurnonville promised, in Bonaparte's name, that the Russian mediation in favour of Naples and Sardinia would be accepted, and that, in the question of compensations for the German princes particular regard would be had to the cases of Baden and Würtemberg.

#### THE ARMED NEUTRALITY (1800 A.D.)

As to the armed neutrality by sea against England, Prussia could easily consent to join this alliance, because she had in fact no navy; but it was much more difficult for Sweden and Denmark, whose merchant ships were always accompanied by frigates. In case, therefore, the neutral powers came to an understanding that no merchant vessels which were accompanied by a ship of war should be compelled to submit to a search, this might at any time involve them in hostilities with England. In addition to Denmark, Sweden, and Prussia, which, under Paul's protectorate, were to conclude an alliance for the protection of trading vessels belonging to neutral powers against the arrogant claims of England, Bonaparte endeavoured to prevail upon the North Americans to join the alliance. They were the only parties who, by a specific treaty in 1794, had acknowledged as a positive right what the others only submitted to as an unfounded pretension on the part of England. On that occasion the Americans had broken with the French Republic on the subject of his treaty, and Barras and Talleyrand had been shameless enough to propose that the Americans should pay a gratuity, in order to effect a renewal of their old friendship with France, which proposal, however, the Americans treated with contempt.



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On the 30th of September, 1800, their ambassadors concluded an agreement at Bonaparte's country seat of Morfontaine, which referred especially to the resistance which all the neutral powers under the protectorate of the emperor of Russia were desirous of making to the pretensions and claims of England. The Americans first of all declared that neutral flags should make a neutral cargo, except in cases where the ship was actually laden with goods contraband of war. It was afterwards precisely defined what were to be considered goods contraband of war. By the fourth article it was determined that neutral ships must submit to be detained, but that the ships of war so detaining a merchantman with a view to search should remain at least at the distance of a cannon-shot, and only be allowed to send a boat with three men to examine the ship's papers and cargo; and that in all cases in which a merchantman should be under convoy of a ship of war, no right of search should exist, because the presence of the convoy should be regarded as a sufficient guarantee against contraband. Inasmuch as England and Denmark were at open issue concerning this last point, the Americans would have been inevitably involved in the dispute had they immediately ratified the treaty of Morfontaine: they were, however, far too cunning to fall into this difficulty; and they did not therefore ratify the treaty till the Russian confederation had been dissolved.

Sweden and Denmark had come to issue with England concerning the right of search in 1798 and 1799, when four frigates, two Swedish and two Danish, were captured and brought into English ports. True, they were afterwards given up, but without any satisfaction, for the English still insisted upon the right of search. The dispute became most vehement in the case of the Danish frigate *Freya*, which, together with the merchantmen under her convoy, were brought into an English port, after a sharp engagement on the 25th of July, 1800; and the English, aware of the hostile negotiations which were going on in the north, at once despatched an expedition against Denmark.

Sixteen English ships of war suddenly appeared before Copenhagen, and most unexpectedly threatened the harbour and city with a destructive bombardment, if Denmark did not at once acknowledge England's right of search at sea. Had this acknowledgment been made, Bonaparte's and the emperor's plan would have been frustrated in its very origin; but Denmark had the good fortune to possess, in its minister Bernstorff, the greatest diplomatist of the whole revolutionary era, who contrived for that time to save Copenhagen without the surrender of any rights. It was quite impossible to resist by force, but he refused to enter upon the question of right or wrong; and in the agreement which he signed with Lord Whitworth on the 25th of August, 1800, he consented that in the meantime all occasion for dispute should be avoided, and thus the difficulty be postponed or removed. Denmark bound herself no longer to send her merchantmen under convoy — whereupon the *Freya*, and the vessels by which she was accompanied, were set at liberty. On this occasion the emperor Paul offered himself as arbitrator; and when Lord Whitworth rejected his interference or arbitration, he immediately laid an embargo on all the English ships in Russian ports.

The news of the agreement entered into at Copenhagen, however, no sooner reached St. Petersburg, than this first embargo was removed, and the dispute carried on merely in a diplomatic manner. At last the emperor Paul put an end to this paper war, when Vaubois, who had defended Malta since July, 1798, against the English, Russians, Neapolitans, and sometimes also the Portuguese, at length capitulated, on the 5th of September, 1800. The island was taken military possession of by the English without any reference

whatever to the order, to Naples, to the promise which they had made to the emperor, or to Bailli de la Ferrette, whom Paul had named as the representative of the order. As soon as this news reached St. Petersburg, Paul's rage and indignation knew no bounds. On the 7th of November, he not only laid an embargo upon three hundred English ships then in his ports, but sent the whole of their crews into the interior of Russia, and allowed them only a few kopecks a day for their support.

Lord Crarysfort, the English ambassador in Berlin, was unable for six weeks to obtain any answer from the Prussian government with respect to its connection with the northern confederation, although he insisted strongly upon it; and yet Stedingk, the Swedish minister, and Rosenkranz, the Danish minister, had signed the agreement for an armed neutrality in the form of that of 1780 as early as the 17th of December, 1800, in St. Petersburg, and the Prussian minister, Von Luft, in the name of his king, had signified his acceptance of the alliance on the 18th. When Lord Crarysfort at length obtained an answer on the 12th of February to his demands, so long and repeatedly urged in vain, Haugwitz had drawn it up equivocally both in form and contents. The emperor of Russia was so indignant at the ambiguity that he not only expressed his feelings on the subject warmly, but also took some hostile measures against Prussia.

On the other hand, the emperor invited Gustavus IV to St. Petersburg where he was received with the greatest splendour. He arrived at St. Petersburg at Christmas, 1800, and immediately, as if to insult the English, a grand meeting of the order of Malta was held; the king himself was loaded with marks of honour of every possible description, and at the end of December he signed a new agreement, by which the objects of that of the 16th of the same month were greatly enlarged. In the former alliance defensive operations alone were contemplated; but now offensive measures were also agreed upon, with the reservation, indeed, if they should become necessary. Paul took measures to refit his fleet, and an army was equipped which was to be placed under the commands of Soltikov, Pahlen, and Kutusov; the Danish fleet was in good condition; the Russian minister in Paris appeared to regard the circumstances as very favourable for gaining Hanover to his master without danger or risk; and Pitt himself considered the state of affairs so unfavourable, that he seriously contemplated the propriety of retiring and making way for a new ministry, in order to render a peace possible. This close confederacy against England was, however, dissolved at the very moment in which the first consul appeared to be disposed to favour Naples and Sardinia, in order to gratify the wishes of the emperor of Russia.

#### ASSASSINATION OF PAUL (1801 A.D.)

The catastrophe in St. Petersburg is easily explained by the continually changing humours of the emperor, by his mental derangement, which had been constantly on the increase for several months previous to his murder, by the acts of violence and injustice which he suffered himself to commit, and by the dreadful apprehension which prevailed among all classes of society, from the empress and the grand duke down to the very lowest citizen. The emperor's sober and rational intervals became progressively rarer, so that no man was sure for an instant either of his place or his life; thousands of persons completely innocent were sent to Siberia, and yet goodness and mildness alternated with cruel severity. The emperor one while exhibited the most striking magnanimity, at another the meanest vindictiveness.

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The beautiful and virtuous empress had patiently submitted to her husband's preference for the plain Nelidov, who at least treated her with honour and respect; but she was obliged also to submit to his attachment to Lopukhin, who continually provoked strife. She endured these things patiently, lived on good terms with the emperor, slept immediately under his chambers, and yet neither she nor her sons, Alexander and Constantine, were able to escape the suspicions of his morbid mind. It was whispered, by persons in the confidence of the court, that the emperor had said he would send the empress to Kalamagan, in the government of Astrakhan, Alexander to Schlüsselburg, and Constantine to the citadel of St. Petersburg. It is not worth while to inquire what truth there may have been in these reports; everyone felt that the time had arrived to have recourse to the only means which can be employed in despotic kingdoms for effecting a complete change in the measures of government. This means is the murder of the despot, which in such circumstances was usually effected in the Roman Empire by the Pretorians, in Constantinople by the Janizaries, or by a clamorous and infuriated mob, in St. Petersburg by a number of confederated nobles; and in all these cases was regarded as a sort of necessary appendage to the existing constitution.

Rostoptchin, the minister, who had long possessed the emperor's confidence, was dismissed and in disgrace; and Count Pahlen, who was at the head of the emperor's dreadful police, was suddenly and excessively favoured. He, too, observed, when he had reached the highest pinnacle, that he began to be suspected. The count was an Esthonian by birth, a man of a cold, deep, and faithless disposition, and the instrument of all the cruelties and severities which had been exercised by the emperor. He was also commander-in-chief of all the troops in the capital, and since the 10th of March had become a member of the ministry for foreign affairs. Up to this period he had been successful in discovering and frustrating all the real or pretended attempts at dethroning the emperor, but he now formed a conspiracy against him, because he knew that Paul had called to his aid two formidable assistants, to use them against himself in case of necessity. The emperor had previously sent away from St. Petersburg and now recalled Lindner and Arakcheiev, two of his most dreadful instruments of violence, the latter of whom played a fearful part in Russia even during the reign of the mild and element emperor Alexander. Pahlen had previously taken his measures in such a manner that a number of those to whom the murder of an emperor was no novelty were at that time collected in St. Petersburg, and only waited for a hint, either with or without Pahlen, to fall upon the emperor, who had personally given them mortal offence.

Valerian, Nicholas, and Plato Zubov had first been publicly affronted by the emperor like the Orlovs, and afterwards dismissed; they remained under compulsory absence in Germany till they found a medium for securing the favour of the only person who had any influence over the emperor. This medium was the French actress, Chevalier, who ruled the Turk Kutaisov (formerly a *valet de chambre*, but now adorned with all possible titles, honours, and orders, with the broad ribbon and stars of Europe), and through him ruled the emperor. Chevalier obtained permission for the Zubovs to return to the court, and Plato held Kutaisov bound by his expressed intention of marrying the Turk's daughter. Plato had been previously commander-in-chief of the army, and could, in case of need, reckon upon it with the greater certainty, as it had been made discontented by the gross and ridiculous treatment of the generals of the whole army, and even of such a man as Suvarov.

Participants in a plan for setting aside the emperor were easily found



among the nobles, as soon as it became certain that there was nothing to fear. It was necessary, however, to obtain the consent of the two eldest grand dukes; but not a word was said of the murder, but merely of the removal of their father from the government. Alexander was not easily prevailed upon to acquiesce in the deposition of his father, as, however numerous Alexander's failings in other respects may have been, both he and his mother were persons of gentle hearts. Pahlen undertook the business of persuading the prince, for which he was by far the best fitted, inasmuch as he knew all the secrets of the court, and combined all power in himself; he therefore succeeded in convincing the imperial family of the dangers with which they themselves were threatened, and of the necessity of deposing the emperor. He appears to have prevailed with Alexander by showing that he could only guard against a greater evil by consenting to his father's dethronement. Certain it is at least, that Alexander signed the proclamation, announcing his own assumption of the reins of government, two hours before the execution of the deed by the conspirators.

The emperor with his family lived in the Mikhailov palace; the 23rd of March, 1801, was chosen for the accomplishment of the deed, for on that day the Semenovski battalion of guards was on duty at the palace. The most distinguished men among the conspirators were the Zubov, General Count Benningsen, a Hanoverian, who had distinguished himself in the Polish wars under Catherine, Tchitchakov, Tartarinov, Tolstoi, Iashvel, Jesselovitch, and Uvarov, together with Count Pahlen himself, who did not accompany the others into the emperor's bed-chamber, but had taken his measures so skilfully that, if the enterprise failed, he might appear as his deliverer. Very shortly before the execution of the deed, Pahlen communicated the design to General Talitzin, colonel of the regiment of Preobrajenski guards, to General Deporadevitch, colonel of the Semenovski guards, together with some fifty other officers whom he entertained on the night on which the murder was committed.

On the evening before his death Paul received, when sitting at supper with his mistress, a note from Prince Mechereki, warning him of his danger, and revealing the names of the conspirators. He handed it unopened to Kutaisov, saying he would read it on the morrow. Kutaisov put it in his pocket, and left it there when he changed his dress next day to dine with the emperor. He turned to get it, but Paul growing impatient sent for him in a hurry, and the trembling courtier came back without the letter on which so much depended. On the night of the 3rd Paul went early to bed; soon afterwards the conspirators repaired to his apartment, the outer door of which was opened to them in compliance with the demand of Argunakov, an aide-de-camp, who pretended that he was come to make his report to the emperor. A Cossack who guarded the door of the bedroom offered resistance and was cut down. The conspirators rushed in and found the bed empty. "He has escaped us," cried some of them. "That he has not," said Benningsen. "No weakness, or I will put you all to death." Putting his hand on the bed-clothes and feeling them warm, he observed that the emperor could not be far off, and presently he discovered him crouching behind a screen. The conspirators required him to sign his abdication. He refused, a conflict ensued; a sash was passed round his neck, and he was strangled after a desperate resistance.

Alexander was seized with the most passionate grief when he learned at what a price he had acquired the crown. He had supped with his father at nine o'clock, and at eleven he took possession of the empire, by a document which had been drawn up and signed two hours and a half previously. The most dreadful thing of all, however, was that he was obliged not only to suffer

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the two chief conspirators, Zubov and Pahlen, to remain about his person, but to allow them to share the administration of the empire between them. It was a piece of good fortune that those two thoroughly wicked men were of very different views, by which means he was first enabled to remove Pahlen, and afterwards Zubov also. Their associates, however, remained, and at a later period we shall find Count Benningsen at the head of the army which was to deliver Prussia after the battle of Jena.

Paul was twice married: by his first wife, Nathalie Alexeievna, princess of Hesse Darmstadt, who died in 1776, he had no family; by his second, Marie Feodorovna, princess of Württemberg, who died in 1828, he had ten children, the eldest of whom, Alexander by name, now succeeded to the imperial throne.

#### THE ACCESSION OF ALEXANDER I (1801 A.D.); HIS EARLY REFORMS

The accession of Alexander was hailed with sincere and universal delight, not only as an escape from the wretched and extravagant reign of Paul, but as the opening fulfilment of the expectations which had long been anxiously fixed on his heir. The new monarch was twenty-five years of age, of majestic figure and noble countenance, though his features were not perfectly regular. He possessed an acute mind, a generous heart, and a most winning grace of manner. "Still," says M. Thiers, "there might be discerned in him traces of hereditary infirmity. His mind, lively, changeable, and susceptible, was continually impressed with the most contrary ideas. But this remarkable prince was not always led away by such momentary impulses; he united with his extensive and versatile comprehension a profound secretiveness which baffled the closest observation. He was well-meaning, and a dissembler at the same time." Napoleon said of him at St. Helena, "The emperor of Russia possesses abilities, grace, and information; he is fascinating, but one cannot trust him; he is a true Greek of the Lower Empire; he is, or pretends to be, a metaphysician; his faults are those of his education, or of his preceptor. What discussions have I not had with him! He maintained that hereditary right was an abuse, and I had to expend all my eloquence and logic during a full hour to prove that hereditary right maintains the repose and happiness of nations. Perhaps he wished to mystify me; for he is cunning, false, and skilful."

In the beginning of Alexander's reign reform succeeded reform, and all Europe applauded. He quickly put a stop to the system of terror and to the absurd vexations which Paul had introduced. He disgraced the instruments who had worked out the will of that poor maniac; he repaired the crying injustice which had been committed; he once more abolished the terrible secret inquisition, but, as we already said, it was again established by his successor. He instituted a permanent council, and contemplated the complete reorganisation of the administration of the interior. He relaxed the rigour of the censorship of the press, and granted permission to introduce foreign works. He reduced the taxes and the expenditure of the court; and in the first year of his reign he abstained from exacting the recruits for his army, an exaction odious to those whom it affects, and therefore often accompanied with fearful violences.

He applied himself most diligently to affairs, and laboured almost as much as his grandmother, who had devoted three hours to the concerns of the state when her ministers came to confer with her. He required detailed reports from all the higher officers of state; and having examined them, caused them to be published, a thing never before heard of in Russia. He abolished punish-

ment by torture; forbade the confiscation of hereditary property; solemnly declared that he would not endure the habit of making grants of peasants, a practice till then common with the autocrats, and forbade the announcement in public journals of sales of human beings. He applied himself to the reform of the tribunals; established pecuniary fines for magistrates convicted of evading or violating their duties; constituted the senate a high court of justice, and divided it into seven departments in order to provide against the slowness of law proceedings; and re-established the commission which had been appointed by Catherine for the compilation of a code. He applied himself to the protection of commerce; made regulations for the benefit of navigation, and extended and improved the communication in the interior of his empire. He did much to promote general education, and established several new universities with large numbers of subsidiary schools. He permitted every subject of his empire to choose his own avocation in life, regardless of restraints formerly imposed with respect to rank, and removed the prohibition on foreign travel which had been enacted in the last reign. He permitted his nobles to sell to their serfs, along with their personal freedom, portions of land which should thus become the *bona fide* property of the serf purchaser — a measure by which he fondly hoped to lay the basis of a class of free cultivators. It was under his auspices that his mother, Marie Feodorovna, founded many hospitals and educational institutes, both for nobles and burghers, which will immortalise her name.

One of the first acts of Alexander's reign was to give orders that the British sailors who had been taken from the ships laid under sequestration, and marched into the interior, should be set at liberty and carefully conducted at the public expense to the ports from which they had been severally taken. At the same time all prohibitions against the export of corn were removed — a measure of no small importance to the famishing population of the British Isles, and hardly less material to the gorged proprietors of Russian produce. The young emperor shortly after wrote a letter with his own hand to the king of England, expressing in the warmest terms his desire to re-establish the amicable relations of the two empires; a declaration which was received with no less joy in London than in St. Petersburg. The British cabinet immediately sent Lord St. Helens to the Russian capital, and on the 17th of June a treaty was concluded, which limited and defined the right of search, and which Napoleon denounced as "an ignominious treaty, equivalent to an admission of the sovereignty of the seas in the British parliament, and the slavery of all other states." In the same year (October 4–8) Alexander also concluded treaties of peace with France and Spain; for between Russia and the former power there had previously existed only a cessation of hostilities, without any written convention.

#### THE INCORPORATION OF GEORGIA

The incorporation of Georgia with the empire, an event long prepared by the insidious means habitually employed by Russia, was consummated in this year. The people of Georgia have always had a high reputation for valour, but at the end of the seventeenth century they suffered immensely from the Tatars and the Lesghians. Russia supported Georgia, not sufficiently indeed to prevent the enemy from destroying Tiflis, but quite enough to prove to the country that, once under the Russian rule, it would be safe from the Mussulmans. Alexander's manifesto of the 12th of September, 1801, says that he accepts the weight of the Georgian throne, not for the sake of extending the empire, already so large, but only from humanity! Even in Russia very few



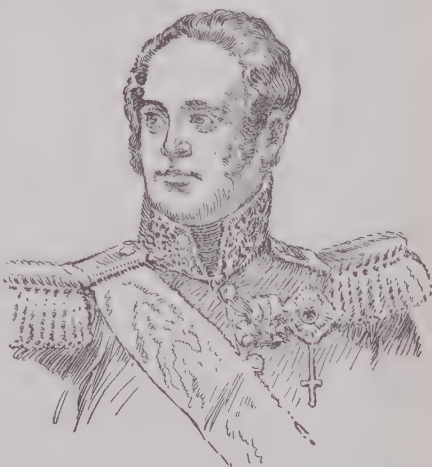
[1803 A.D.]

could believe that the Georgians surrendered themselves to the czar from a spontaneous acknowledgment of the superiority of the Russian rule, and of its ability to make the people happy; to disabuse themselves of any such notion, they had but to look at the queen of Georgia, Maria, who was detained at St. Petersburg, in the Tauric palace — a name that might well remind her of the treacherous acquisition of another kingdom. She rode through the streets in one of the court carriages, and her features expressed great affliction. The covering which she wore on her head, as usual in Georgia, prevented the people from seeing the scars of the sabre wounds she had received before she quitted the country. Her consort, George XIII, had bequeathed the kingdom to the Russians, but she protested against the act; and when the Russian colonel Lazarev came to carry her away to St. Petersburg, she refused to go with him. He was about to use violence, but the queen took out a poniard from her bosom and stabbed him. The interpreter drew his sabre and gave her several cuts on the head, so that she fell down insensible.

#### RUSSIA JOINS THE THIRD COALITION

Concurrently with his domestic reforms, Alexander occupied himself in an extensive series of negotiations, having for their object the general settlement of Europe upon such new bases as the results of the last war had rendered necessary. In particular, he was engaged as joint arbiter with Bonaparte in the matter of the indemnifications to be made to those princes who had lost a part or the whole of their possessions by the cession of the left bank of the Rhine. Alexander was secretly dissatisfied with the part he was made to play in these transactions, for the authority which he shared in appearance with Bonaparte, was in reality monopolised by the latter. He abstained, however, from remonstrating, contenting himself for the present with the outward show of respect paid to his empire, and with a precedent which, added to that of Teschen, established in future the right of Russia to mix itself up in the affairs of Germany. The Peace of Amiens between France and England was broken, and a war was declared on the 18th of May, 1803, between the two powers, which was ultimately to involve the whole of Europe. Meanwhile, many cases were arising to increase Alexander's displeasure against Bonaparte.

The relations between Russia and France were at this time of such a nature that the Russian chancellor, Vorontzov, said plainly, in a note of the 18th of July, that if the war were to be prolonged between France and England, Russia would be compelled finally to take part in it. Before this declaration on the part of Russia, Bonaparte had a scene with Markov, which alone might well have caused a rupture. He addressed the Russian ambassador, in a public audience, so rudely and violently that even Bignon, who is disposed to worship Bonaparte as a demi-god, is obliged to confess that his hero entirely lost his dignity, and forgot his position.



ALEXANDER I  
(1777-1825)

When Markov withdrew in November, he left his secretary of legation, D'Oubril, as acting ambassador in his place. Everyone, however, foresaw a breach at no very distant period; and Russia had already, in the autumn of 1803, when nothing was to be done with Prussia, entered into a closer connection with England. Negotiations were also commenced with Austria, and a union with Sweden and Denmark, for the purpose of liberating Hanover, was spoken of. This was the state of affairs at the beginning of 1804: the murder of the duke d'Enghien brought matters to a crisis. The mother of the Russian emperor had been all along hostile to everything proceeding from Bonaparte; and the mild and gentle spirit of the emperor, like that of all persons of good feeling in Europe, was deeply wounded by the fate of the duke. From the beginning of 1804, he had no further political reasons for keeping up a friendly relation with France; he therefore gave himself up entirely to his natural feelings on hearing of the catastrophe at Vincennes.

By the declarations interchanged between the courts of St. Petersburg and Berlin (May 3rd and 24th, 1805), it was agreed that they should not allow the French troops in Germany to go beyond the frontier of Hanover; and that should this happen, each of the two powers should employ 40,000 men to repel such an attempt. A convention was also signed between Russia and Austria before the end of the year, and they agreed to set on foot an army of 350,000 men. England, under the administration of William Pitt, added her strength to these combinations, and united the several powers in a third coalition for the purpose of wresting from France the countries subdued by it since 1792, reducing that kingdom within its ancient limits, and finally introducing into Europe a general system of public right. The plan was the same as that which ten years afterwards was executed by the Grand Alliance; it failed in 1805, because the participation of Prussia, on which the allies had reckoned, was, from the most ignoble motives withheld.

The negotiations of the several treaties connected with the coalition, occupied the greater part of the year 1805. By the Treaty of St. Petersburg (August 11th), between Great Britain and Russia, it was agreed that Alexander should make another attempt for arranging matters with Bonaparte, so as to prevent the war. The Russian minister Novosiltzov was sent to Paris by way of Berlin, where he received the passports procured for him from the French cabinet by that of Prussia; but at the same time, orders reached him from St. Petersburg, countermanding his journey. The annexation of the Ligurian Republic to France, at the moment when the allies were making conciliatory overtures to Napoleon, appeared to the emperor too serious an outrage to allow of his prosecuting further negotiations. War was consequently resolved on.

#### THE CAMPAIGN OF AUSTERLITZ (1805 A.D.)

Napoleon seemed to be wholly intent on his design of invading England. Part of his troops had already embarked (August 27th), when on a sudden the camp of Boulogne was broken up, and the army put in march towards the Rhine, which river it passed within a month after. Austria had set on foot three armies. The archduke Charles commanded that of Italy; his brother John was stationed with the second army on the Tyrol; and the third was commanded nominally by the archduke Frederick, the emperor's cousin, but in reality by General Mack. The first Russian army under Kutusov had arrived in Galicia, and was continuing its march in all haste. It was followed

[1805 A.D.]

by another under Michelson. The Russian troops in Dalmatia were to attempt a landing in Italy.

Mack having crossed the Inn (September 8th), and entered Swabia, Napoleon's plan was to cut him off from the army of Kutusov, which was marching through Austria. In this he succeeded by a violation of the Prussian territory. Marmont, who had marched by way of Mainz, and Bernadotte, who had conducted an army into Franconia, where they were joined by the Bavarians, traversed the country of Anspach, and thus came on the rear of the Austrian army (October 6th). From that date, scarcely a day passed without a battle favourable to the French. Several Austrian divisions were forced to lay down their arms. Mack, who had thrown himself into Ulm, lost all resolution, and capitulated with 25,000 men (October 19th). Mack's army was thus totally dissipated, except 6000 cavalry, with which the archduke Ferdinand had opened himself a passage through Franconia, and 20,000 men, with whom Kienmayer had retired to Braunau, where he was met by the vanguard of Kutusov. The two generals continued their retreat. The Russians repassed the Danube near Grein (November 9th), and directed their march towards Moravia. A few days after (November 13th), Vienna fell into the hands of the French. The Austrians had renounced the design of defending their capital, but decided that the passage of the river should be disputed.

Vienna is situated at some distance from the Danube, which flows to the right of the city between wooded islands. The Austrians had placed explosive materials under the floorings of the wooden bridge which crosses the several arms of the river, and were ready to blow it up the moment the French should show themselves. They kept themselves in readiness on the left bank, with their artillery pointed, and a corps of 7000 or 8000 men, commanded by Count Auersberg. The French, nevertheless, got possession of the bridge by stratagem. Murat, Lannes, Belliard, and their staff, leaving their troops behind them, crossed the bridge, told the Austrians that an armistice was agreed on, and asked to see their general. He was sent for. Meanwhile, the French officers kept the Austrian gunners in conversation, and gave time for a column of French grenadiers to come up unseen, under cover of the woods, seize the cannon, and disarm the artillerymen. The Austrian commander who had come to the spot just at the critical moment, fell completely into the trap. He himself led the French column over the bridge, and ordered the Austrian troops to be drawn up on parade to receive them as friends. The possession of the bridge afforded the French troops the means of reaching Znaim sooner than Kutusov, and thus preventing his junction with Buxhövdén.

Meanwhile, Alexander had gone to Berlin, to exert his personal influence over the timorous king, and prevail on him to abandon his wretched neutral policy, in which there was neither honour, honesty, nor safety. Alexander was warmly seconded by the beautiful queen of Prussia, and by the archduke Anthony, who arrived at the same time on a special mission from Vienna. French influence rapidly declined in Berlin; Duroc left it on the 2nd of November, without having been able to obtain an audience, for some days previously, either from the king or the emperor; and on the following day a secret convention was signed between the two monarchs for the regulation of the affairs of Europe, and the erection of a barrier against the ambition of the French emperor.

The Prussian minister Haugwitz, who had signed this convention only to gain time, and with a secret determination to elude its provisions, was to be entrusted with the notification of it to Napoleon, with authority, in case of its acceptance, to offer a renewal of the former friendship and alliance of the



Prussian nation; but in case of refusal, to declare war, with an intimation that hostilities would begin on the 15th of December — when they would be too late. Before that day came, Prussia relapsed into her old temporising habits; her armies made no forward movement towards the Danube, and Napoleon was permitted to continue without interruption his advance to Vienna, while 80,000 disciplined veterans remained inactive in Silesia; a force amply sufficient to have thrown him back with disgrace and disaster to the Rhine.

A characteristic scene took place at Potsdam during Alexander's visit. The king, the queen, and the emperor went one night by torchlight into the vault where lay the coffin of Frederick the Great. They knelt before it. Alexander's face was bathed in tears; he pressed his friend's hands, he clasped him in his arms, and together they swore eternal amity: never would they separate their cause or their fortunes. Tilsit soon showed what was the value of this oath, which probably was sincere for the moment when it was taken.

During the retreat of the Austrians and Russians under Kienmayer and Kutusov from Passau to Krems, the imprudence of Mortier, who had crossed to the left bank of the Danube at Linz, gave occasion to engagements at Stein and Dirnstein, in which the French lost more men than they ever acknowledged. Mortier's army of 30,000 men consisted of three divisions, under Generals Gazan, Dupont, and Dumonceau. This army had positive orders to keep always near to the main body, which was pursuing its march along the right bank, and never to advance beyond it. Kutusov had long retreated on the right bank; but on the 9th of November he crossed to the left at Grein, as before mentioned, and lay in the neighbourhood of Krems, when Mortier's troops advanced. The French divisions maintained the distance of a whole day's march one from another, because they thought they were following a fleeing army; but between Dirnstein and Stein they fell in with the whole Russian army, 20,000 strong, at a place where the French were obliged to pass through a frightful ravine. On the 11th of November, Mortier ventured to make an attack with Gazan's division alone; but near Dirnstein (twenty hours from Vienna), he got into a narrow way, enclosed on both sides by a line of lofty walls, and there suffered a dreadful loss. When the French, about noon, at length supposed themselves to have gained some advantage, the Russians received reinforcements, outflanked the French, cut them off, and would have annihilated the whole division, had not Dupont's come up at the decisive moment. The latter division had also suffered severely on the same day. Whilst Kutusov was sharply engaged with Mortier, whose numbers were being rapidly diminished, and his cannon taken, the Austrian general Schmidt attacked Dupont at Stein, where the contest was as murderous as at Dirnstein, till Schmidt fell, and the French forced their way out.

Kutusov, on his march to Znaim, was overtaken by the van of the French, under Belliard, near Hollabrunn; and everything depended on detaining the latter so long as might enable Kutusov to gain time for getting in advance. For this purpose, Bagration, with about six thousand men, took up a position in the rear of the main body. Nostitz served under Bagration, and had some thousand Austrians and a number of Russians under his immediate command. He occupied the village of Schöngraben, in the rear of the Russians, and in the very centre of their line of march. Belliard ought to have attacked him first; but as his corps was not superior in number to that of Bagration, he had again recourse to the expedient which he had already tried, with such signal success, at the bridge of Vienna. He entered into a parley; declared that peace with Austria was already concluded, or as good as concluded,

[1805 A.D.]

assured them that hostilities henceforth affected the Russians alone; and by such means induced Nostitz to be guilty of a piece of treachery unparalleled in war. Nostitz, with his Austrians, forsook the Russians, even those whom he had under his own command; and they being unable to maintain the village of Schöngraben, it was taken possession of without a shot; and Bagration and Kutusov seemed lost, for Murat's whole army was advancing upon them.

In the meantime the Russians at Hollabrunn extricated themselves from their difficulty; for they were not so stupidly credulous as the Austrians, but knew how to deceive the Gascons, by whom they were pursued, as Belliard had deceived the Austrians. For this purpose, they availed themselves of the presence in Kutusov's camp of Count von Winzingerode, the adjutant-general of the emperor of Russia, who had been employed in all the last diplomatic military negotiations in Berlin. Murat having sent his adjutant to call upon Kutusov, whose line of march had come into the power of the enemy, in consequence of Nostitz's treachery in capitulating, the Russian general assumed the appearance of being desirous to negotiate, and Winzingerode betook himself to the French camp. Belliard and Murat, without taking the trouble to inquire what powers the count and Kutusov had to conclude a treaty which should be generally binding, came to an agreement with Winzingerode, by virtue of which all the Russians, within a certain number of days, were to evacuate every part of the Austrian territory. This capitulation was to be sent to the emperor Napoleon, at Schönbrunn, for confirmation; and to this condition there was necessarily attached another, for the sake of which Kutusov had commenced the whole affair. There was to be a suspension of hostilities till the arrival of Napoleon's answer; and it was agreed that in the meantime both parties should remain in their then positions.

Bagration, with seven or eight thousand Russians, complied with this condition, and remained in his position at Hollabrunn, because he could be observed by the French; but Kutusov, with all the rest of the army, which lay at a greater distance, quietly continued his route to Znaim; and this, with a full knowledge of the danger of Bagration being afterwards overwhelmed by a superior force. On being made acquainted with the capitulation, Napoleon was enraged, for he immediately perceived how grievously his brother-in-law had suffered himself to be deceived; and he ordered an immediate attack. This was indeed made; but eighteen hours had been irreparably lost, and Kutusov gained two marches on Murat: the whole French army, above thirty thousand strong, therefore fell upon Bagration.

Bagration, who had still with him the Austrian regiment of hussars of the crown-prince of Homburg, commanded by Baron von Mohr, offered a vigorous resistance to the whole French army with his seven or eight thousand men. The Russian bombs set fire to the village in which was stationed the corps which was to fall upon Bagration's flank; the consequence was, that this corps was thrown into confusion, and the Russians opened up a way for themselves at the point of the bayonet. The Russian general, it is true, was obliged to leave his cannon in the hands of his enemy, and lost the half of his force; it must, however, always be regarded as one of the most glorious deeds of the whole campaign, that, after three days' continued fighting, he succeeded in joining the main body under Kutusov, at his headquarters at Wischau, between Brünn and Olmütz, and, to the astonishment of all, with one-half of his little army. Even the French admit that the Russians behaved nobly, that they themselves lost a great number of men, and that, among others, Oudinot was severely wounded.

On the same day on which Bagration arrived in Wischau, a junction had

been formed by Buxhövdén's army, with which the emperor Alexander was present, with the troops under Kutusov, who thenceforward assumed the chief command of the whole. Napoleon himself came to Brünn, and collected his whole army around him, well knowing that nothing but a decisive engagement could bring him safely out of the situation in which he then was, and which was the more dangerous the more splendid and victorious it outwardly appeared to be. It is beyond a doubt that the precipitation and haughtiness of the Russians, who were eager for a decisive engagement, combined with the miserable policy of the Prussian cabinet and the cowardice of the king, as well as the fears and irresolution of the poor emperor Francis, and the want of spirit among his advisers, contributed more to the success of Napoleon's plans respecting Prussia, Germany, and Italy, than his victories in the field.

A glance at the situation of affairs at the time of the battle of Austerlitz will show at once how easily he might have been stopped in his career. There was nothing Napoleon feared more than that the Russians should march either to Hungary or to Upper Silesia, and avoid a decisive engagement; he therefore took means to ascertain the characters and views of the personal attendants and advisers of the emperor Alexander; and when he had learned that young men of foolhardy dispositions had the preponderance in his councils, he formed his plans accordingly. He first advanced from Brünn to Wischau, and afterwards retired again into the neighbourhood of Brünn, as if afraid to venture upon an attack. The emperor of Germany, as well as Napoleon, appeared seriously desirous of a peace; but the former was obliged to propose conditions which the latter could not possibly accept; and Napoleon wished first completely to set the emperor Francis free from the Russians, his allies, and from Prussia, before he came to an agreement with him. As Count Stadion, who came to the headquarters of the French on the 27th of November, with Giulay, as ambassadors to treat for peace, was a sworn enemy of Napoleon, and remained so till 1813, and had, moreover, been very instrumental in founding the whole coalition, and in maturing their plans, his appearance on this occasion was of itself no good omen for the favourable issue of the mission.

The proposals made as the basis of a peace were the same as had been contemplated in the event of a victory on the part of the allies — the French were to evacuate Germany and Italy. When Napoleon sent Savary (afterwards duke of Rovigo), the head of his gendarmerie police, under pretence of complimenting the emperor Alexander, it was indisputably a great part of this envoy's object, as appears from the 30th bulletin, to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the prevailing opinions and the leading characters during the three days of his sojourn in the emperor's camp. Savary was very well received, and sent away with every courtly attention by Alexander; but it was intimated that it was intended to make common cause with Prussia, and that it was expected that Novosiltzov, whom the emperor Alexander wished to send to Napoleon, would meet Haugwitz in Brünn. The hint was sufficient to induce Savary to decline the company of Novosiltzov.

When Savary informed the emperor of the illusion of the Russian generals, and of their belief that fears were entertained of the Russians, and that on this account embassies were sent to seek for peace — Napoleon very cunningly took care to strengthen the fools in their folly. Savary was sent again to the enemy's camp to propose an interview between Napoleon and the emperor of Russia. The interview was declined; but Prince Dolgoruki was sent to propose conditions to Napoleon. The latter did not allow him to come into his camp, but received him at the outposts.



[1806 A.D.]

If it be asked why the Russians, with whom there were only some twenty thousand Austrians, did not wait for their third army, under Bennigsen, or reduce Bonaparte to the greatest perplexity, by taking up a strong position in Hungary or Upper Silesia, or remaining quietly upon the heights of Pratzen, the reply is, that the whole system of supplies was bad, and that want had reached so great a pitch, that it would have been impossible for them to remain. Certain it is that they suffered themselves to be drawn down from the heights, and away from Austerlitz, near Brünn, where the talents of their generals were unable to devise any plan of battle which Napoleon could not immediately oversee; it would have been otherwise in the mountains. The French allege, that Napoleon had long before fixed upon the very place in which the Russians offered him battle at Austerlitz, on the 2nd of December, as his battle-field, and laid all his plans accordingly. The possession of the heights of Pratzen was regarded by those skilled in strategy as the key of this battle-field. The Russians were in full possession of these heights, with all their force, on the 1st of December; on the 2nd they descended from them, when Bonaparte drew back one of the wings of his army. He had long calculated on gaining the victory by the possession of these heights, and thus rendering the retreat of the Russians impossible. He did not, therefore, fail, in the very opening of the battle, to seize upon them.

A column of the third Russian army, under Bennigsen, commanded by Michelson, just arrived at the decisive moment when Napoleon had also called to his aid Bernadotte's corps, and when the Bavarians were on their march from Budweis to Moravia; but none of their leaders could lay any claim to the reputation of a commander of genius. Napoleon's proclamation to his army shows his full confidence in his own superiority, as well as in that of his generals and soldiers; and this confidence was fully realised on the bloody field of Austerlitz on the 2nd of December.

#### THE CAMPAIGN OF EYLAU AND FRIEDLAND (1806-1807 A.D.)

After the defeat at Austerlitz the emperor made an attempt, whether sincere or not is uncertain, for a reconciliation with Napoleon. He sent D'Oubril to Paris, who, after a negotiation of ten days, concluded a treaty with the French plenipotentiary, General Clarke (July 20th, 1806). But Alexander refused to ratify the treaty, upon the very questionable allegation that his ambassador had exceeded his powers.

Prussia now suffered the just consequences of her policy. Disappointed in her hopes of acquiring Hanover, the reward for which she crouched to Napoleon, she imprudently provoked him to war without waiting for the arrival of the aid due to her by Russia. The campaign was decided in one day by the two terrific defeats of Jena and Auerstadt (October 14th, 1806). Prussia was hopelessly ruined before the Russian armies, ninety thousand strong, under Bennigsen and Buxhövdén, could arrive to save her. The Russians entered Prussia in November, and on the 26th of December the battle of Pultusk was fought with great obstinacy and loss of blood on both sides. The French spent the whole of a December night without covering; rain and snow fell incessantly; they waded up to their knees in marshes, spent twelve hours in making an advance of eight miles, and were obliged to pay dearly for their passage over the Narev. During the battle, Marshal Lannes and other generals were several times obliged to put themselves at the head of single regiments and battalions, and yet no decisive advantage was gained. The French, indeed, boasted of the victory; because the Rus-

sians, after having maintained their ground on a part of the field, retreated the next day.

If the victory at Pultusk, of which Bennigsen boasted, and on account of which he was afterwards rewarded by his emperor, and appointed commander-in-chief, was very doubtful, on the other hand, Prince Galitzin completely defeated the French at Golymin, on the very day on which they were to attack Buxhövdén, at Ostrolenka. This victory, too, was the more glorious, inasmuch as the Russians were less numerous than their opponents. The French, however, had not been able to bring up their artillery; and the superiority of the Russians in this particular decided the event. The weather and the time of the year rendered active operations impossible for some weeks. Bennigsen retired to Ostrolenka, and afterwards still farther; whilst the French, under Ney and Bernadotte, were scattered in the country on the farther side of the Vistula, in which Ney at length pushed forward as far as Heilsberg.

In January, 1807, Bennigsen and Napoleon came, almost simultaneously, upon the idea of changing the seat of war from the extreme east to the west. In the east, the struggle was afterwards carried on by two particular corps — a Russian, under Essen, and a French, first under Lannes, and then under Savary. This bloody struggle, however, had no influence on the issue of the war. Bennigsen no sooner learned that Ney had scattered his troops widely over the country on the farther side of the Vistula, than he broke up his quarters, and resolved to attack him, before Bernadotte, who was near, could come to his relief; but he was too late. Ney had already retreated when Bennigsen arrived; whether it was as the French allege, because Napoleon, who had seen the danger with which he was threatened, sent him orders to retreat, which arrived on the very day on which he was to be attacked by the Russians, or that General Markov was at first too eager, and Bennigsen afterwards too irresolute. Ney luckily marched from Heilsberg, nearer to the Vistula, and Bennigsen followed him hesitatingly, so that Bernadotte was able to keep him employed for some days till Napoleon came up. On receiving news of Bennigsen's march, the French emperor had sent orders to all his corps to renew the campaign on the 27th, and he had so taken his measures, that before the Russians had any suspicion of an attack, the main army of the French would fall upon their left flank, whilst they were on their march. For this purpose, Bernadotte was to allure Bennigsen quite to the Vistula; and then to advance again as soon as Napoleon had outflanked the left of the Russians.

The despatch containing these orders for Bernadotte fell into the hands of the Russians, through the inexperience of the officer entrusted with it, who failed to destroy the document at the right time. Thus warned of the impending danger, and finding themselves pressed on all sides, they allowed their stores and heavy baggage, at various places, to fall into the hands of the enemy, and thereby escaped being surrounded. After considerable sacrifices, they succeeded, on the 6th of February, in reaching the Prussian town of Eylau, which is only nine hours' distance from Königsberg. Soult attacked their rear, on the low hills behind the town, on the 7th, and drove them in; on the following day a general engagement took place. The honour of the victory is probably due to the Russians, as even Savary admits, who shared in the battle. It is not less certain, however, that the whole advantage accrued to the French, who, indeed, admit that the battle was one of the most dreadful recorded in history. The French accuse Bernadotte of having, by his delay, prevented the victory from being complete; whilst the Russians are just enough to admit that Lestocq, with his Prussians, saved their wing from utter defeat. The

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number of deaths in the battle, and on the day preceding it, was immense. Great numbers fell, not by the sword, but by cold, want, and excessive exertion. Whole battalions and regiments of the French — as, for example, that of Colonel Sémélé — were literally annihilated. Few prisoners were made, because the whole battle was fought with the bayonet.

The royal family of Prussia was placed in a very melancholy position by the issue of the battle, for they were obliged, in the middle of winter, to flee to Menel, where they found themselves among Russians, of whom their own emperor alleged, that, notwithstanding his despotic power, he was not able to restrain their barbarity, or to put a stop to their rapacity. Here, in the farthest corner of Prussia, they received news every month of the fall of one fortress after another, or of forced contributions levied upon their people.

The French army also retired after the battle of Eylau as well as the Russians. Bennigsen marched towards Königsberg, and although Berthier, on the morning of the 7th, wrote to the empress that they would be in Königsberg with their army on the following day, the French, nevertheless, drew off nearer to the Vistula. Nothing important was undertaken by either party for some months, but vigorous preparations were made for a new struggle; whilst new means were tried to prevent Prussia from taking any energetic measures — that is, from forming a close union with England and Russia. The king hesitated between the bold advice of Hardenberg and his friends, and the unconditional submission to the will of Napoleon, which was recommended by von Zastrov. The Russians were thoroughly dissatisfied with the English, and complained of being very badly supported by them; they suffered want of all kinds, were worse treated in many places in Prussia than the French, and even borrowed 660,000 dollars in coin from the king of Prussia.

Hardenberg, who accompanied his master to Tilsit, succeeded in having a new treaty entered into at Bartenstein between Russia and Prussia. Its principle was the same as that of the agreement made on the 12th of October, of the preceding year, at Grodno, by virtue of which the emperor bound himself to support the cause of the king with all his forces. In this treaty, it was not only promised, just as if they were before Paris, that Prussia should receive back all that had been lost, but it was formally determined what was to be done with the conquests wrested from France, and how even the left bank of the Rhine was to be partitioned among the allies.

About this time Bennigsen was appointed commander-in-chief of the Russian armies; but he is generally accused of incapacity, and fearful descriptions are given of the disorders, fraud, and embezzlement which prevailed, and of the plunder and barbarity which they practised against unfortunate Prussia. The emperor Alexander, as soon as he arrived at the army, did everything in his power to restore order; he was able, however, only to remedy single abuses; even Nicholas, who manifested a degree of severity from which Alexander shrank back, was not able to reach the source of the evil. Towards the end of May, Bennigsen thought his troops already sufficiently reinforced to make an attack upon the French, and drive them across the Vistula; whilst the combined army of English, Swedes, and Prussians, were to make an attack from Pomerania. The French army, lying from Dantzic to the Narev, was brought, before the beginning of June, when the campaign commenced, to 150,000 men, whose pay and sustenance were drawn from the requisitions and contributions imposed on Prussia. In April, 1807, the French senate passed a decree levying 80,000 conscripts, 60,000 of whom were to be immediately sent to the army; and the Poles, too, deceived by the hope of the restoration



of their nationality, raised a body of between 25,000 and 30,000 men, among whom were whole regiments recruited by the Polish nobility, or formed exclusively of nobles who volunteered their service, although Napoleon limited all the expectations of the Poles to the country on this side of the Vistula.

As soon as Bennigsen, in the beginning of June, made a serious movement in advance towards the Vistula, a series of murderous engagements began, similar to those which preceded the battle of Eylau; on the 9th, the main body of both armies came in sight of each other at Heilsberg, and on the 10th the French made an attempt to drive the Russians from their position. The united corps of Soult and Lannes, supported by the cavalry under Murat, made repeated attempts to force the Russians to give way; they, however, kept their ground.

Bennigsen afterwards heard, at Wehlau, that the French had separated into two divisions, and he resolved on the 13th, instead of continuing his route on the farther side of the Alle, to wheel about before Wehlau, and attack the French. By this step, as all writers admit, he gave himself into the hands of his great opponent, who never suffered his enemy to commit a fault with impunity. The position taken up by Bennigsen was such as to leave him no alternative between victory and destruction, for he had the Alle in his rear, and a marsh on one flank. Napoleon took advantage of this mistake, as usual; and the orders which he issued before the battle prove that he was sure of the victory. About five o'clock in the evening of the 14th of June, a battery of twenty guns gave the signal for the fight; it was bravely maintained on both sides, and both armies suffered great loss. The French accounts exaggerate the number of the Russians who were led into the battle of Friedland, as well as the number of prisoners: certain it is, however, that seventeen thousand Russians were either killed or wounded.

After the battle of Friedland, there was no longer any account to be taken of the Prussians; and it was a piece of great good fortune that such a sovereign as Alexander reigned in Russia, otherwise Prussia would have been wholly lost. Lestocq, with his Prussians, was obliged hastily to cross the Haff to Memel; and their magazines, considerable stores of powder and ammunition, together with one hundred thousand muskets, which the English had sent by sea to Königsberg, fell, with the town, into the hands of the French. Bennigsen was not very closely pursued on the other side of the Alle; he passed the Niemen on the 19th, and burned down the bridge behind him; immediately afterwards, Bonaparte arrived in Tilsit. Of all the Prussian fortresses, Colberg alone might have been able to maintain itself for some weeks, and Graudenz was saved merely by the peace. The treaty with England, which the Prussian minister signed in London on the 17th of June, and by which £1,000,000 sterling was promised in subsidies, came too late.

Schlacken informs us that all those who were about the king of Prussia had so completely lost courage, that Von Hardenberg, Von Stein, Von Schlacken himself, and many others who recommended perseverance, found none upon whom they could reckon. With respect to the Russians, he informs us that there was a party who assumed a threatening aspect — that the army was dissatisfied with the war — that the grand duke Constantine behaved often very rudely towards the Prussians, and allowed himself to be used as an instrument for working on the fears of his brother Alexander. On the 7th of June, the emperor manifested a disposition altogether contrary to the agreements and partition-projects of the convention of Bartenstein. He was dissatisfied with England, and perceived that the Austrians had no other object than to fish in troubled water, and he was, therefore, desirous, as much as

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possible, to withdraw from the whole affair. He proposed a truce for himself, with a clause that the Prussians also should obtain a cessation of hostilities; but the Russians and Prussians were to negotiate each for themselves respecting the conditions. Napoleon having entertained the proposal, Russia agreed, that during the continuance of the truce, the French should retain possession of the whole of Poland, except the circle of Białostok. The agreement was signed on the 21st, and a four weeks' notice of the renewal of hostilities was reserved. By the terms of the truce granted to Prussia, the French remained in possession of the whole kingdom; and the few fortresses which were not yet reduced were not to be supplied either with new works, ammunition, or provisions. Blücher, who commanded the Prussian auxiliary forces in Pomerania, was to leave the king of Sweden to his fate. The peace was to be negotiated at Tilsit, and for that purpose one half of the town was to be declared neutral.<sup>k</sup>

*Meeting of Alexander and Napoleon at Tilsit (1807 A.D.)*

Napoleon desired, as far as means and powers would allow, to give all possible pomp and solemnity to the interview with his mighty adversary. With this object, in the middle of the Niemen, opposite Tilsit, a raft was constructed, on which were two pavilions, covered in white cloth. The one which was destined for the two monarchs was of vaster dimensions and was adorned with all possible luxury: the other and smaller one was for their suites. On the frontals of the pavilions were painted in green, on the Russian side, an enormous A, and on the side turned towards Tilsit an N of equal size. To the annoyance of the Prussians, the monogram of Frederick William III was absent from the decorations of the Niemen raft. The French guards were ranged in lines, fronting the river. "All this army," writes an eye-witness, "awaited the appearance of their invincible leader, their thunder-bearing semi-divinity, in order to greet him at the moment of his swift passage to the wharf." Thousands of the inhabitants of Tilsit and French soldiers covered the high left bank of the Niemen.

The emperors got into the boats simultaneously. When both boats put off, the grandeur of the spectacle, the expectation of an event of world-wide importance took the ascendancy over all other feelings. Universal attention was concentrated upon the boat that carried that wonderful man, that leader of armies, the like of whom had never been seen or heard of since the times of Alexander the Great and Julius Cæsar. Napoleon stood on the boat in front of his suite, solitary and silent, his arms folded on his breast as he is represented in pictures. He wore the uniform of the Old Guard and the ribbon of the Legion of Honour across his shoulder, and on his head that little historical hat, the form of which has become famous throughout the world. Reaching the raft somewhat sooner than Alexander, Napoleon rapidly got onto it, and hastened to meet the emperor. The rivals embraced and silently entered the pavilion, accompanied by the joyful acclamations of the troops and the inhabitants, who were witnesses of a world-wide event — the reconciliation of Russia and France. At that moment a large boat put off from the left bank of the Niemen, having on it about twenty armed soldiers — and remained between the raft and the Russian shore. Evidently Napoleon did not hesitate to take open measures of safeguarding against any possible unforeseen occurrences.

That day the king of Prussia did not assist at the interview: Napoleon did not wish to see him, and Frederick William remained on the right bank of

the Niemen. "In that fateful hour, whilst the destiny of his monarchy was being decided, his gaze was constantly fixed and his ear directed towards the raft, as though he desired to listen to the conversation between the two emperors. Once he went down to the edge of the river and only stopped when the water was up to his horse's middle." The first interview between Alexander and Napoleon lasted an hour and fifteen minutes. "I detest the English no less than you do," were the first words of the emperor Alexander, "and I am ready to support you in everything that you undertake against them." "If such is the case," answered Napoleon, "then everything can be arranged and peace secured."

Taking advantage of Alexander's inimical disposition towards Great Britain, Napoleon entered upon a terrible philippic against the perfidy of Albion, representing it as a greedy, extortionate nation ever ready to sacrifice everyone, even its most faithful allies, for its own profit. In further conversation Napoleon strove to instil into Alexander that he was victimised by his allies, that he was mistaken in protecting the Germans, those ungrateful and envious neighbours, and in supporting the interests of a set of greedy merchants who showed themselves to be the representatives of England; all this was occasioned, according to him, by a feeling of generosity carried to excess, and by doubts which arose from the incapacity or corruption of ministers. After this Napoleon began to praise the valour and bravery of the Russian troops, with which he had been much struck at Austerlitz, Eylau, and Friedland; he considered that the soldiers on both sides had fought like veritable Titans and was of the opinion that the united armies of Russia and France might dominate the world, and give to it prosperity and tranquillity. Up till now Russia had squandered her forces, without having any recompense in view; by an alliance with France she would acquire glory, and in any case reap substantial advantages. Of course Russia was bound by certain obligations to Prussia, and in that respect it was indispensable that the honour of the emperor Alexander should be carefully guarded. In conclusion Napoleon expressed his intention of restoring to Prussia sufficient territory honourably to rid the emperor of his ally; after that, he affirmed, the Russian cabinet would be in a position to pursue a fresh line of policy similar in everything to that of the great Catherine. Only such a policy, in Napoleon's opinion, could be possible and advantageous for Russia.

Having flattered Alexander as emperor, Napoleon in order to complete the charm proceeded to flatter him as a man. "We shall come to an agreement sooner," said he, "if we enter upon negotiations without intermediaries, setting aside ministers, who frequently deceive or do not understand us; we two together shall advance matters more in a single hour than our intermediaries in several days. Nobody must come between you and me; I will be your secretary and you shall be mine," added Napoleon. Upon this basis he proposed to the emperor Alexander for convenience's sake to transfer the negotiations to Tilsit, declaring the position of the town to be a central one. The emperor gladly accepted Napoleon's invitation, and it was settled that negotiations should at once be entered upon in order to come to a definitive agreement<sup>1</sup> on the matter.

#### RUSSIA DECLARES WAR AGAINST ENGLAND (1807 A.D.)

The English government, alleging that in the secret articles of the treaty of Tilsit, of which they had possessed themselves, they had proof of Napoleon's

[<sup>1</sup> For the terms of the treaty, see volume XII.]



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design to seize the Danish fleet, fitted out an expedition against Denmark with extraordinary celerity. Copenhagen was bombarded for three days, and a great part of the city destroyed. The Danes then capitulated (September 7), and surrendered their fleet to the English, with all their naval stores in their arsenals and dockyards.

The expedition against Copenhagen was soon followed by a declaration of war on the part of Russia against England. In the manifesto published on this occasion (September 16th), Alexander complained bitterly of the bad faith of England, as manifested especially in the little aid she had afforded to the allies who had taken up arms in a cause in which she was more directly interested than any other power, and in the robber-like act of aggression she had committed against Denmark. He annulled all former conventions between Russia and England, especially that of 1801; proclaimed anew the principle of the armed neutrality; and declared that there should be no communication between the two powers until Denmark had received just compensation, and peace was concluded between France and England. In consequence of this declaration, an embargo was laid on all the English vessels in Russian ports, and Prussia was compelled to follow this example.

#### THE CONQUEST OF FINLAND (1807 A.D.)

It was not till the 6th of October that a formal demand was made upon Sweden to close the ports of the Baltic against English ships and trade. The king persevered in his alliance with England; and finally, because the emperor of Russia had conferred upon Napoleon the order of St. Andrew, he sent back his insignia; whereupon Alexander not only returned his Swedish order, but quietly adopted measures to take possession of Finland, whilst the Danes were preparing, in concert with the French, to invade the western provinces of Sweden. Although in the months of November and December, Gustavus repeatedly declined the proposals of the Russians for a union against England, everything went on in Sweden as in times of the most profound peace; and even when the Russian forces were collected on the very frontiers of Finland, the unfortunate king adopted no measures of defence whatever. On the 21st of January he was, for the last time, called upon to declare war against England; he replied by concluding a new alliance with her on the 8th of February. On the 21st, the Russians invaded Finland, without any specific declaration of war, and on the 14th of March, 1808, Denmark declared war against Sweden. The whole of Finland as far as Vasa, the island of Åland, and even the islands of Gotland, Åbo, Sveaborg, and all the fortresses, were taken possession of by the Russians even before the Swedish army and fleet were prepared. It was not till the end of April and beginning of May that a Swedish army under Klingspor and Aldercreutz, supported by a Swedish fleet, appeared in the field, and fought with various success.

We have lately seen Alexander take military possession of the Danubian provinces as a "material guarantee," whilst affecting not to be at war with Turkey. This was in exact conformity with Russian precedents. Finland, as we have said, was occupied without a declaration of war; but manifestoes were issued by General Buxhövdén, one of which contained the following passage: "Good neighbours, it is with the greatest regret that my most gracious master, the emperor of all the Russias, sees himself forced to send into your country the troops under my orders. But his majesty the king of Sweden, whilst withdrawing more and more from the happy alliance of the two greatest empires in the world, draws closer his connections with the common enemy,

whose oppressive system and unparalleled conduct towards the most intimate allies of Russia and of Sweden herself cannot be coolly endured by his imperial majesty. These motives, as well as the regard which his imperial majesty owes to the safety of his own states, oblige him to place your country under his protection, and to take possession of it in order to procure by these means a sufficient guarantee in case his Swedish majesty should persevere in the resolution not to accept the equitable conditions of peace that have been proposed to him, etc."

When the Russians took possession of Finland, the king gave them a pre-ference for incorporating it with their empire, which, however, they would no doubt have done in any case. He caused Alopeus, the Russian ambassador, to be arrested. This took place on the 3rd of March, and on the 25th a declaration was published on the part of the emperor of Russia, announcing to all the powers that "from that moment he regards the part of Finland hitherto reputed Swedish, and which his troops had only been able to occupy after divers battles, as a province conquered by his arms, and that he unites it forever to his empire."

It was easy to anticipate that the superior force of the Russians must in the end prevail; although the Russian garrison in Gotland, and that in the island of Åland, were at first taken prisoners, the island occupied, and the Russians beaten by land at Vasa on the 26th of July, and by sea at Roggerwick on the 26th of August. The Swedes lost all the advantages they had thus gained by the bloody battle fought at Ormais on the 14th of September, and by the defeat at Lokalar on the 18th. The Russian generals, probably in order to give courage to the malcontents, who were very numerous in Sweden, issued orders not to receive any letters or any flags of truce which were sent in the king's name, and carried on negotiations with the Swedish generals alone, for a suspension of arms, which was concluded for an indefinite time, on the 20th of September, but only continued till the 27th of October, when the Russians resumed hostilities, and the Swedes were driven to the north, across the Kemistrom. On the 20th of November a new truce was agreed upon between the Swedish general Adlercreutz and the Russian general Kamenskoi, with the reserve of fourteen days' notice before renewal of operations. By the conditions of this agreement the Swedes were to evacuate the whole of Uleåborg, and to retire completely behind the Kemistrom, with all their artillery, arms, and stores.

On the 13th of March in the following year a revolution was effected in Sweden, by which Gustavus was deposed; his uncle, the duke of Södermanland, became regent, and was afterwards proclaimed king (June 5, 1809) under the title of Charles XIII. At Stockholm the people flattered themselves that the dethronement of Gustavus would speedily bring peace to Sweden; but it was not so. Alexander refused to treat with a government so insecure as a regency, and hostilities continued. General Knorring who had passed the Gulf of Bothnia on the ice with twenty-five thousand Russians, took possession of the Åland islands, and granted the Swedes a cessation of hostilities, to allow them time to make overtures of peace. Apprised of this arrangement, Barclay de Tolly, who had crossed the gulf with another body of Russians towards Vasa, and taken possession of Umeå, evacuated west Bothnia, and returned to Finland. A third Russian army, under Shuvalov, penetrated into west Bothnia by the Torneå route, and compelled the Swedish army of the north under Gripenberg to lay down their arms (March 25th). This sanguinary affair occurred entirely through ignorance; because in that country, lying under the 66th degree of north latitude, they were not aware of the armistice granted by

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Knorring. On the expiry of the truce, hostilities began again in May, and the Russians took possession of the part of west Bothnia lying north of Umeå.

The peace between Russia and Sweden was signed at Frederikshamm on the 17th of September. The latter power adhered to the continental system, reserving to herself the importation of salt and such colonial produce as she could not do without. She surrendered Finland, with the whole of east Bothnia, and a part of west Bothnia lying eastward of the river Torneå. The cession of these provinces, which formed the granary of Sweden and contained a population of 900,000 souls, was an irreparable loss to that kingdom which had only 2,344,000 inhabitants left. In the following year Bernadotte, prince of Ponte Corvo, was elected crown prince of Sweden, and eventual successor to the throne, under the name of Charles John.

The loss of Finland had been but slightly retarded by some advantages gained over the Russian fleet by the combined squadrons of England and Sweden. The Russian vessels remained blockaded on the coast of Esthonia, but in an unassailable position, from which they were at last delivered by the weather and the exigencies of navigation in those dangerous seas. Another Russian fleet under Admiral Siniavin, which sailed to Portugal to co-operate with the French against the English, was obliged to surrender to Admiral Cotton after the convention of Cintra. It was afterwards restored to Russia. The war declared by that power against England in 1807, was little more than nominal, and was marked by no events of importance.

#### WAR WITH PERSIA AND WITH TURKEY

The annexation of Georgia to Russia, effected as we have seen, in the beginning of Alexander's reign, drew him into a war with Persia, which did not terminate until 1813. The principal events of that war were the defeat of the Persians at Etchmiadzin by Prince Zitzianov (June 20, 1804): the conquest of the province of Shirvan by the same commander (January, 1806): the taking of Derbent by the Russians (July 3rd); and the defeat of the Persians by Paulucci, at Alkolwalaki (September 1st, 1810).

About 1805 the condition of the Ottoman Empire, badly organised and worse governed, was such that everything presaged its approaching dissolution. Everywhere the sultan's authority was disregarded. Paswan Oglu, pasha of Widdin, was in open revolt. Ali Pasha of Janina was obedient only when it suited his convenience. Djezzar, the pasha of Syria, without declaring himself an enemy to the Porte, enjoyed an absolute independence. The sect of the Wahhabees was in possession of Arabia. After the departure of the English from Egypt, first the beys, and afterwards Muhammed Ali reigned over that country, and only paid their yearly tribute to the sultan when they pleased. In Servia, Czerni George was making himself independent prince of the Slavonians of the Danube. Ipsilanti and Morusi, both Greeks, by the permission, or rather by the command of Russia, were appointed hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia, for seven years at least, and were therefore rather subjects of the Russians than of the Turks. Selim III, who had reigned since 1789, convinced that the Porte could never re-establish its authority except by better organising the army, had endeavoured to model it on the European system. This attempt afterwards cost him his throne.

The English and Russian ambassadors ruled either alternately or together in Constantinople. But for their interference the old friendship between France and the Porte would most likely have been restored in July, 1802. At the time of the foundation of the empire in France, the sultan hesitated long



whether he would lean upon the English and Russian, or upon the French influence, for he felt a great want of confidence in Napoleon, since he had been informed by the English of the language which fell from the emperor in conversation with Lord Whitworth. He was reported to have taken the partition of Turkey for granted — as a thing unavoidable; and that on such partition the province of Egypt ought necessarily to fall to the share of France. This conversation was printed, in 1803, among the documents connected with the renewal of the war between England and France, and was communicated to the sultan. The French, indeed, in their official journals, contradicted the allegation; but who ever put any faith in their official journals?

On this ground we must explain the fact that the Turks favoured the Russians in the war which they were carrying on with the Persians; suffered them to sail up the Rion (ancient Phasis), and even to build a fort at its mouth. They were even desirous of renewing the friendly alliance formed with Russia in 1798, which renewal, indeed, the emperor of Russia was afterwards unwilling to confirm, because the English had taken care to have the inviolability of the Turkish Empire incorporated in the treaty of 1798. Had, therefore, the emperor of Russia ratified the alliance, he would have guaranteed to the Turks the actual condition of their empire in Europe, which he did not wish to do. This excited the suspicion of the Turks, who inclined more and more towards the French, and did not suffer themselves to be frightened by the threats of the English and Russians. Immediately after the Peace of Presburg, the Turks, who had previously acknowledged Napoleon's empire, sent a new ambassador to Paris. In return, Napoleon sent engineers, officers, artillerymen, workmen, and materials, in order to enable the sultan to improve his army, artillery, and the bulwarks of his empire; whilst, on the other hand, the Russian ambassador, Italinski, and the English ambassador, Arbuthnot, threatened war if the alliance with the French was not relinquished; and Italinski's threats fell with a double weight because a corps of Russians were ready for action on the Bug.

About the time at which Napoleon adopted the resolution of attacking Prussia also, and therefore foresaw a war with Russia, a Turkish army was assembled to take the field against the Russians on the Turkish frontiers, and Napoleon clearly saw how advantageous to him a war between the Russians and the Turks would be. He therefore sent General Sébastiani as ambassador extraordinary to Constantinople. Sébastiani arrived there in August, 1806; and soon gained so great an influence that for some time the Divan was entirely under his direction. At his instance it refused to renew the treaty of alliance with England, which was on the point of expiring; and it dismissed Ipsilanti and Morusi, as creatures of Russia, from their offices. In consequence of the threatening language held by Arbuthnot, the English ambassador, they were reinstated; but when this took place hostilities had already begun. The emperor Alexander had ordered General Michelson to enter Moldavia and Wallachia. The Porte then declared war against Russia (December 30th); but deviating for the first time from a barbarous custom, it allowed Italinski, the Russian minister, to depart unmolested.

A few days afterwards, Arbuthnot quitted Constantinople, after having repeatedly demanded the renewal of the alliance and the expulsion of Sébastiani. On the 19th of February, 1807, an English fleet, commanded by Vice-Admiral Duckworth, forced the passage of the Dardanelles, and appeared before Constantinople. Duckworth demanded of the Divan that the forts of the Dardanelles and the Turkish fleet should be surrendered to him; that the Porte should cede Moldavia and Wallachia to Russia, and break off alliance

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with Napoleon. But instead of profiting by the sudden panic which his appearance had excited, he allowed the Turks time to put themselves in a posture of defence. Encouraged and instructed by Sébastiani, they made their preparations with such energy and success that in the course of eight days the English vice-admiral found that he could not do better than weigh anchor and repass the Dardanelles.

Shortly afterwards Admiral Siniavin appeared in the Archipelago, and incited the Greek islanders to throw off the Turkish yoke; whilst Duckworth sailed to Egypt upon a fruitless expedition in favour of the mameluke beys against Muhammed Ali. Siniavin defeated the Turkish fleet on the 4th of April, captured several ships, and took possession of some islands. The bad condition of his ships, however, compelled him to give up the blockade of the Dardanelles, and to retire, in order to refit, after having another time defeated the Turkish fleet. Meanwhile, Selim had been deposed. His successor, Mustapha IV, declared that he would continue to prosecute the war with England and Russia. But Siniavin, before he retired to refit, met the Turkish fleet off Lemnos, on the 1st of July: the Turks were beaten, lost several ships, and a great many men.

The campaign of the Russians on the Danube, in 1807, was not productive of any decisive result, as General Michelson received orders to detach the third army corps to oppose the French in Poland. Czerni George, the leader of the revolted Servians, took Belgrade, Shabatz, and Nish, penetrated into Bulgaria, where he was reinforced by some Russian troops, and gained divers signal advantages. The war was conducted with more success on the frontiers of the two empires in Asia. The seraskier of Erzerum was entirely defeated by General Gudovitch (June 18); and that victory was the more important, as it prevented the Persians from making a bold diversion in favour of the Turks.

The emperor Alexander had agreed by the public articles of the Treaty of Tilsit (July, 1807) to evacuate Moldavia and Wallachia; but this was only a collusion between the two contracting parties. The Russians not only aimed at the permanent possession of the two provinces, but regarded all the Slavonians of the Danube as allies or subjects of the czar. When the Turks, on the 14th of July, concluded a peace with Czerni George, whereby Servia became in some measure independent — and Czerni George afterwards called himself prince of Servia — a Russian general guaranteed the treaty by his signature, as one of the parties to the agreement. In the following year Radovitchkin, a Russian envoy, repaired to Belgrade to establish the new principality; called an assembly of the nobles; drew up a sketch of a constitution for Servia, and tried to organise the administration.

The French general, Guilleminot, was sent to the Turkish camp to negotiate a truce on the terms ostensibly laid down in the Treaty of Tilsit: namely, that the Russians should evacuate Moldavia and Wallachia, but that the Turks should not occupy the two provinces until after the conclusion of a definitive peace. But Guilleminot's instructions contained a direct command to use the whole weight of the French influence in favour of the Russians and against the Turks; even one of Napoleon's greatest admirers, although owning occasional republican scruples, admits that their tone was very equivocal. In fact, it very soon became obvious that the whole mission of the general was a mere piece of diplomatic imposture and treachery. A congress was held at Slobozia, in the neighbourhood of Giurgevo, on the 24th of August, 1807, and a truce was signed, which, it was said, was to continue till the 30th of April, 1808. The Russians were to withdraw; the fortresses of Ismail, Braila, and Giurgevo to be given up to the Turks, whose troops, however, were to evacuate Moldavia

and Wallachia in thirty-five days. Everything, however, which afterwards took place in consultation between the French and Russians, in reference to Turkey, bore upon a scheme of partition.

The Russians at length, on the 7th of August, had left Cattaro and the other strong places in Dalmatia to the French; their emperor, on the 9th, had ceded all his rights as protector of the republic of the seven united islands to Napoleon, and the latter was busy making preparations thence to extend his operations and his dominion further to the east. Marmont, who administered the province of Dalmatia, received orders to fortify Ragusa more strongly, and to make a report on the best plan to be adopted in case it should be desirable to send an army quickly from Corfu, through Albania, Macedonia, and Thrace. The Russians continued to be quiet observers of all this, and in the mean time made firm their footing in the provinces on the Danube. They made a pretence of the conduct of the Turks on the occupation of Galatz, and their ill-treatment of the inhabitants of Moldavia, for not fulfilling the agreement entered into at Slobozia. The Russian troops, who, according to the terms of the treaty, were already retiring, received contrary orders; and the Turks, again driven out of the two provinces, occupied Galatz anew.

The conduct of the negotiation respecting the division of the Turkish booty, was committed to the chief of Napoleon's secret police, who had been actively engaged in the murder of the duke d'Enghien. He now held a princely rank as the duke of Rovigo, and was sent to St. Petersburg with this and similar commissions. In the Russian capital the emperor Alexander and the duke acted as rivals in the art of dissimulation; the emperor loaded him with civilities of all kinds, as some compensation for the coolness and contempt with which he was at first treated, to a surprising extent, by the empress-mother and the Russian nobility. He was, indeed, soon consoled, for the slaves of the czar were as zealous in showing respect in the presence of their master, as they were gross in their insolence when not under his observation. The accounts which Savary gives us of the political principles of the pious emperor and his chancellor, and their complete agreement with Napoleon's morality and his own, would be quite incredible to us, did he not literally quote their words. Savary's secret report to the emperor Napoleon, partly written in the form of a dialogue, is to be found among the fragments of Napoleon's unprinted correspondence. A contempt for public agreements, and the plunder of Sweden, even before the declaration of war, astonish us less than Romanzov's audacious contempt of the opinion of all Europe; he thought it not worth a moment's consideration; and this was quite in accordance with the language held by his master in speaking on the subject of Turkey. Thibaudeau has given so correct an opinion of both the emperors — of the nature of their consultations — of Savary and Romanzov that we cannot do better than refer the reader to the words of that writer.

Turkey would at that time undoubtedly have been partitioned, had Austria been willing to follow the numerous gentle hints to join the alliance of the emperors, who imagined themselves able to make their will the right and law of all nations; or if Napoleon had not found it inconsistent with his plans to bring on at an unfavourable moment a new war with Austria, which he clearly foresaw in 1808. The Russians, in the mean time, remained, throughout the whole of the year 1808, in quiet possession of the provinces which had been previously evacuated by them, and ruled not only in them, but extended their dominion as far as Belgrade, for the new prince of Servia was likewise under Russian protection. The army under the command of the grand vizir, which lay at Adrianople during the winter of 1807-1808, dwindled, during the



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continuance of the truce of Slobozia, to a few thousand men, because, according to ancient custom, the janissaries returned to their homes in winter; it again increased, however, in the beginning of summer. Bairaktar's army, which was organised on the new European principle, was computed at from twenty to thirty thousand men; it remained on the Danube till its leader, at length, resolved to put an end to the anarchy prevailing in Constantinople. He deposed Mustapha IV, who supported the faction of the janissaries, and placed his brother, Mahmud, on the throne. Bairaktar perished, however, in an insurrection (November 14th), and Mahmud, too, would have been murdered, had he not been the last scion of the imperial family. But he was compelled entirely to change his ministry, and to resign the government into the hands of those who enjoyed the favour of the ulemas and the janissaries.

During the disturbances in the internal affairs of the Turkish Empire, the foreign relations continued the same as they were in the year 1807, immediately after the truce of Slobozia. When Napoleon's plan of removing the negotiations respecting a peace between the Russians and the Turks to Paris failed of success, he found it advisable, in consequence of an impending war with Austria, to give the Turks into the hands of the Russians. One of the chief causes of the war between France and Austria in 1809 was the close union between the latter power and England in reference to Turkish affairs, which appeared in the co-operation of Lord Paget and Baron von Stürmer, the English and Austrian ambassadors in Constantinople. It was the Austrians who mediated the peace between England and the Porte of the 5th of January, 1809, after the conclusion of which the Turks refused to cede Moldavia and Wallachia to the Russians, at the congress of Jassy, as they had formerly done at Bucharest. This led to a new war, of which we shall have to speak hereafter.

## CONGRESS OF ERFURT (1808 A.D.)

In consequence of the complete stoppage of trade which followed the declaration of war in 1807, Russia suffered much more severely than England, and the Russian magnates, supported by the aversion of the emperor's mother to Napoleon, were very far from showing that good-will to the French which their emperor manifested for Napoleon and his representatives. This was soon experienced by Savary, duke of Rovigo, who, though overloaded with marks of politeness by the emperor, in reality proved unable to make any way at the court of St. Petersburg. Caulaincourt, duke of Vicenza, was afterwards deceived for some years by appearances, and by Alexander's masterly art of dissimulation; but Napoleon soon came to experience in Spain that the personal proofs of friendship exhibited by the emperor were by no means always in accordance with the Russian policy. The emperor Alexander himself, for example, on the urgent request of Caulaincourt, acknowledged Joseph Bonaparte as king of Spain; whilst Strogonov, the Russian ambassador in Madrid, alleged that he had no instructions to that effect, and corresponded with the insurgents. In the same way, Admiral Sinavin, who, on the breaking out of war with England, had taken refuge in Lisbon with nine ships of the line and a frigate, not only refused to render any assistance to Marshal Junot, who was threatened in that city by the English, but even to make a demonstration as if he were prepared to assist him. The manner in which he afterwards capitulated, on the 3rd of September, 1808, to Admiral Cotton, who caused his ships to be taken to England, might indicate a very different disposition, especially as the ten ships were afterwards given back.

There was, indeed, no want of interchange of civilities between the two emperors. Whoever compares the attentions and marks of regard which have been recorded as shown by the one to the other with the secret intrigues which they were at the same moment weaving against each other in Turkey and Spain, and with the open enmity which was shown as early as 1811, will learn from such a comparison what is the real worth of diplomatic and princely friendships. The emperor of Russia made presents to his imperial brother of vessels and ornaments of malachite and other precious stones, which the latter exhibited in the Salon du Prix in the Tuileries, in order to be able to boast of the friendship of the emperor of Russia in presence of the circles of the faubourg St. Germain. Busts of Alexander were manufactured in the imperial porcelain manufactory at Sèvres, and were everywhere to be seen in the palace and rooms of the imperial family. All who had access to the court, or wished to make themselves agreeable to the emperor, found it necessary to purchase these ornaments, and place them conspicuously in their houses. The friendship was so intimate that one of the emperor of Russia's adjutants accompanied the emperor of the French when he went to Bayonne to set aside the whole reigning family of Spain. This adjutant, however, was the same Tchernitchew who was engaged in constantly travelling backwards and forwards between St. Petersburg and Paris, who surrounded Napoleon, in spite of all his police, with a net of Russian espionage, and bribed all the employés who were venal in order to obtain papers. He intrigued with ladies to elicit secrets from them; and finally, in 1812, he even purchased a copy of the plan of operations for the war, when it was too late to change it.

Napoleon knew that Austria was thinking of taking advantage of the general discontent and the secret associations in Germany to frustrate the plans of France and Russia with respect to Poland and Turkey; he was, therefore, very desirous of assuring himself once more of the Russian emperor before his journey to Spain. This design was a cause of great anxiety to the very numerous partisans of the English and Prussian policy at the Russian court, when the question was raised of a conference between the two emperors in Erfurt. Von Schlöden, the friend of the minister von Stein, therefore presented a memorial to the emperor of Russia, shortly before his departure to Erfurt on the 7th of September, 1808, in which Alexander was forewarned of all that would take place there. From this it may be seen that the emperor of Russia was continually receiving secret counsel and warning from the enemies of the French, and that he played his part in Erfurt more ably than Napoleon, from whom he separated, as even the French writers report, with all the outward signs of indescribable friendship and esteem, but inwardly full of distrust. Von Schlöden says very freely to the emperor, that he had given him the advice laid down in his memorial, "in order that he might see through the sophisms, falsehoods, and deceptions which were prepared for him by Napoleon, and awaited him in Erfurt."

On his way to the congress, the emperor visited the king and queen of Prussia in Königsberg, and arrived on the 26th of September in Weimar, where his brother Constantine had been staying since the 24th. On the 27th Napoleon entered Erfurt, and at one o'clock drove out a distance of several miles from the town to meet the emperor of Russia, who was coming from Weimar. Our modest object does not permit us to incorporate in our prose the poetry of the subsequent festivities, nor in glowing language to extol the skill displayed by the masters of the ceremonies. That splendour enough was exhibited in Erfurt may be sufficiently gathered from the fact that the four vassal-kings of the confederation of the Rhine, thirty-four princes, twenty-four ministers of

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state, and thirty generals, were by express command to summon up for the occasion everything which imagination could suggest in the way of courtly splendour and extravagance. Talma and the Parisian company of actors had been sent to Erfurt, to act, as Napoleon said, before a pit of kings. Two armchairs were placed for the two emperors, whilst the other rulers sat behind them on common chairs. We know not what truth there was in the story, which was at that time in every mouth, and related in all the French works written for effect, that the emperor Alexander, whilst Talma was being applauded on the stage, played his own part with Napoleon in the pit in quite as masterly a manner. The latter, amidst applause, pronounced the following line:

The friendship of a great man is a favour of the gods.

when the emperor seized Napoleon's hand, made a profound bow, and feelingly exclaimed: "That I have never more truly felt than at the present moment." The festivities continued from the 27th of September till the 14th of October, and furnished to the Germans the most melancholy spectacle of their princes and nobles conducting themselves publicly, not only as slaves of Napoleon, but even as servants and flatterers of all his generals and courtiers.

In order to flatter the emperor of Russia, Napoleon acted as if he had been influenced by Alexander's application in favour of Prussia; but, in reality, oppressed the king and his subjects afterwards just as before. He profited by Alexander's admiration and friendship to make a show of his pretended willingness to conclude a peace with England. Though he had written three times directly to the king of England, and had always been referred to the minister, he nevertheless prevailed upon Alexander to unite with him in signing another letter addressed to King George. The result was such as might have been foreseen; the object, however, was attained: the letters and answers were printed, and officially commented upon in the journals.

The negotiations were carried on personally in Erfurt between the two emperors themselves, and much was agreed upon which neither the one nor the other intended to observe. A written treaty of alliance was besides concluded by Romanzov and Champagny, which was calculated with a view to a new war with Austria. The substance of the agreement consists in a closer alliance of the two powers against England, and the cession of Moldavia and Wallachia to Russia. Hitherto Napoleon had only been willing to concede this last point on conditions which referred to Silesia. In the fifth article of the Treaty of Erfurt, which was kept strictly secret, the two emperors agreed to conclude a peace with England on condition only that that country should acknowledge Moldavia and Wallachia as a part of the Russian Empire. Then follow several articles on the cession of those Turkish provinces. In the eleventh article it is stated, that further negotiations were to be carried on respecting a further partition. It was agreed, too, that the treaty was to be kept secret for ten years. Buturlin boasts, with reason, that the emperor Alexander in Erfurt, by his Greco-Slavonian arts of deception, gained a victory over the Italo-Gallic talents of Napoleon; and, in fact, the very highest triumph is to outwit the deceiver.

Even as early as this Napoleon is said to have thrown out the idea of a marriage with Catherine Pavlovna, Alexander's sister, which inferred, of course, a previous separation from the empress Josephine. Alexander, on his part, is said to have raised difficulties on the question of religion, and to have referred the matter to his mother, who very speedily had the princess betrothed to Duke Peter of Oldenburg. Moreover, the reception of the duke of Olden-



burg into the confederation of the Rhine was one of the results of the meeting in Erfurt.

The war which broke out in April, 1809, between France and Austria, put the sincerity of the Russo-French alliance to a practical test. Russia complied with the letter of her engagements to the one belligerent power by declaring war against the other; but Prince Galitzin, who was to have made a powerful diversion in Galicia, came so late into the field and his movements were so dilatory that it was evident he had no desire to contribute to the success of his sovereign's ally. There was no longer any show of cordiality in the diplomatic intercourse between France and Russia; but both parties found it convenient for the present to dissemble their mutual alienation. By the Treaty of Schönbrunn, signed by vanquished Austria (October 14th, 1809), that power ceded, partly to France and partly to the confederation of the Rhine, several towns in Germany and Italy, with their dependencies; she was despoiled, in favour of the duchy of Warsaw, of all western Galicia and the city of Cracow; and surrendered to Russia a territory whose population was estimated at 400,000 souls. The emperor of Austria, moreover, recognised the rights which Napoleon arrogated over the monarchies of the south of Europe, adhered to his continental system, and renounced all the countries comprised under the name of the Illyrian Provinces. But the house of Habsburg, true to the adage, *Tu, felix Austria, nube*, retrieved its fortunes at the expense of its pride, by bestowing a daughter in marriage on the conqueror.

#### RENEWED WAR WITH TURKEY (1810 A.D.)

Immediately after Alexander's return from Erfurt orders were given to open negotiations with the Turks. The conference took place at Jassy; but it was immediately broken off after the Russian plenipotentiaries had demanded, as preliminary conditions, the cession of Moldavia and Wallachia, and the expulsion of the British minister from Constantinople. Hostilities were then resumed. The Russians were commanded by Prince Prozorovski, and after his death by Prince Bagration. With the exception of Giurgevo, all the fortresses attacked by them fell into their hands, until they encountered the army of the grand vizir, near Silistria, and being defeated with a loss of ten thousand men (September 26th), were compelled to evacuate Bulgaria. The grand vizir, without taking advantage of his victory, retired to winter quarters.

In May, 1810, the Russian main army, under Kamenskoi, again crossed the Danube at Hirsova, passed through the Dobrudja, and marched straight against the Turkish main army to Shumla and Varna. At the same time, the corps of Generals Langeron and Sacken proceeded to blockade Silistria and Rusthuk. The Turks could nowhere keep the field. At Kavarna they were routed; at the storming of Bazardjik they lost ten thousand men; at the storming of Rasgrad three thousand. Silistria was reduced in seven days by Langeron. So far everything was favourable for the Russians. If they had added to their advantages the conquest of Rusthuk, the passes of Tirnova and of Sophia towards Adrianople would have been open, the fortress of Shumla would have been avoided, and the main army of the enemy would have been manœuvred out of it. The taking of Rusthuk, and above all the sparing of the troops, was consequently the next problem for General Kamenskoi. Instead of doing this, the Russians attempted to storm almost simultaneously the fortifications of Varna, Shumla, and Rusthuk, were repulsed from these three places, the defence of which was conducted by English officers, and

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succeeded so successfully, that the Turks felt themselves strong enough to come out from behind their intrenchments, and attack the Russian camp before Shamla. They failed, however, in their attempt to storm it.

To rescue Rustchuk, the grand vizier sent Mahmet Pasha with picked troops, by way of Timore, to the Danube. But if the Turks with their united forces were too weak to form the Russians to abandon their intrenchments before Shamla, they could certainly not expect with a part of their army to rout the enemy near Rustchuk, where he stood with his united forces between their separate wings. Only because Mahmet Pasha, who had increased his forces to forty thousand men, entered Wallachia at Turcoa and marched against Giurgevo, could the offensive have a meaning, or any influence upon the siege of Rustchuk, because here it met with too weak a point of defence. But to enter upon the offensive with an army in Wallachia, whilst the Russians stood before the fortresses of the Danube in Bulgaria, never came into the heads of the Turks. Mahmet Pasha intrenched himself at the mouth of the Yantra to cover the passes of Timore and Sepina. On the 7th of September he was attacked in front, flank, and rear, held out with his best troops till the next morning, and then overwhelmed with five thousand men, and all his artillery. After the Sissow and Chelawa capitulated, and on the 27th of September Rustchuk and Giurgevo surrendered.

The road to Aengenje was now open for the Russians, but their enormous losses, caused by their own folly, would have prevented their assuming the offensive beyond the Balkan for this year, even if the season had not been so far advanced. Reinforcements for the next year could not be expected, as Napoleon was preparing to attack Russia, and therefore they began to negotiate. Another desertion of the janissaries interrupted these negotiations, but did not induce the grand vizier to profit by this opportunity, and fall with his whole force upon the Russians, who at this time were scattered over the country from Walla to Sepina and thence as far as Kerna. Not until Czerni George, in February, 1811, had placed the principality of Servia under the protection of Russia, did the grand vizier guide him from his death in Timore, and cross the Balkan, with only fifteen thousand men. He, however, proceeded so slowly that Kermenshad lost time enough to assemble sufficient forces.

They met at Lefkeli on the Orsina; the Turks were defeated, and lost three thousand men. Ahmed Pasha, however a violent and sturdy soldier, without any higher military education, led fifty thousand fresh troops to Shamla, and insisted upon their taking the offensive. The Russians had resolved no reinforcements, but Kutusow had taken the command. Without any considerable losses, he concentrated his small army at Salabria and Rustchuk, and abandoned Bulgaria as far as the latter place, after having used the fortresses. In the battle before Rustchuk, on the 4th of July, the Turks were driven back, but on the 7th, they forced the twenty thousand Russians who stood on the right bank of the Danube to give up Rustchuk also, though not until the worst had been done.

Instead of crossing the river from the Idorudja, and operating with a separate force upon the Russian lines of communication, the grand vizier allowed himself to be induced, by the retreat of Kutusow, to cross the Danube at Rustchuk, without a fortress in his rear. Arrived on the left bank with his main army, a Russian flotilla forced his retreat, while Russian corps recrossed the Danube above and below Rustchuk, and took possession of the town (no longer defended) and of the Turkish camp (September 7th). The grand vizier fled, but his main army, still consisting of 25,000 men and 56 pieces of artillery,

was forced to surrender in the vicinity of Giurgevo. A few days afterwards Count St. Priest took Shirtov, with the whole of the Turkish flotilla on the Danube. Nicopoli and Widdin next surrendered, so that by the end of the campaign the Russians were masters of the whole right bank of the Danube. The Servians, also, aided by a body of Russians, had wrested from the Turks the last fortresses they held in the principality.

The grand vizir asked for a suspension of arms, with a view to negotiating a peace; but the terms now demanded by the victorious Russians were such as the Porte would not accede to. The war was continued in 1811, but always to the disadvantage of the Turks. Resolved on a last desperate effort, they assembled a formidable army whilst the conference at Bucharest was still pending. At last, the rupture between France and Russia changed the aspect of affairs, and compelled the latter power to abandon the long-coveted prey when it was already in its grasp. The Russian minister, Italinski, contented himself with requiring that the Pruth should for the future form the boundary between the two empires. The sultan regarded even this concession as disgraceful; but the Russians carried their point by bribery, and the Treaty of Bucharest was concluded. Its chief provisions were these:

Article 4. The Pruth, from the point where it enters Moldavia to its confluence with the Danube, and thence the left bank of the latter to its embouchure on the Black Sea at Kilia, shall be the boundary between the two empires. Thus the Porte surrendered to Russia a third of Moldavia, with the fortresses of Khoczim and Bender, and all Bessarabia, with Ismail and Kilia. By the same article, the navigation of the Danube is common to the subjects of Russia and Turkey. The islands enclosed between the several arms of the river below Ismail are to remain waste. The rest of Moldavia and Wallachia are to be restored to the Turks in their actual condition. Article 6. The Asiatic frontier remains the same as it was before the war. Article 8 relates to the Servians, to whom the Porte grants an amnesty and some privileges, the interpretation of which offers a wide field for the exercise of diplomatic subtlety. Article 13. Russia accepts the mediation of the Porte for the conclusion of a peace with Persia, where hostilities had begun anew, at the instigation of the English ambassador.

#### WAR WITH NAPOLEON

Notwithstanding all the demonstrations to the contrary made since the Peace of Tilsit, England, Russia, Prussia, and also Austria partially, always continued to maintain a certain mutual understanding, which was, however, kept very secret, and somewhat resembled a conspiracy. The most distinguished statesmen both in Russia and Prussia felt how unnatural was an alliance between Napoleon, Alexander, and Frederick William III, and directed attention to the subject. This was also done on the part of England, and it is certain that the emperor Alexander, as early as the meeting in Erfurt in 1808, expressed his doubts respecting the duration of his alliance with France. The conduct of Russia in the campaign against Austria, in 1809, first shook Napoleon's confidence in his ally. Mutual complaints and recriminations ensued; but neither party thought it advisable to give any prominence to their disunion, and Napoleon, even when he had entered, through Thugut, upon the subject of an Austrian marriage, still continued to carry on negotiations for an alliance with a Russian princess.

The enlargement of the territory of the duchy of Warsaw, extorted by



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Napoleon at the Peace of Schönbrunn, at length led to an exchange of diplomatic notes, which tended strongly to a war. The Poles naturally expected from Napoleon and his advisers that he would in some way give new life and currency to the name of Poland; against this the emperor of Russia earnestly protested. The whole of the diplomatic correspondence between Russia and France in the years 1810 and 1811 turns upon the use of the words Poles and Polish, although Russia had again obtained by the Peace of Schönbrunn a portion of Austrian Poland, as it had previously obtained a part of Prussian Poland by the Peace of Tilsit. Seeing that the whole of western Galicia, Zamoisk, and Cracow had been united to the duchy of Warsaw by the Peace of Schönbrunn, Russia called upon the emperor of the French to bind himself expressly by treaty not to revive the names of Pole and kingdom of Poland.

Before the end of 1809 many notes were exchanged concerning this point, apparently so insignificant, but in reality so important for the peace and safety of the Russian Empire. Napoleon agreed to give the assurance so earnestly desired by Alexander, and Caulaincourt, the French ambassador in St. Petersburg, signed a regular concession of the Russian demand in January, 1810. By the first two articles of this agreement it was laid down that the word Poland, or Polish, was not to be used when any reference was made to the enlargement of the duchy of Warsaw. By the third article the two emperors bound themselves not to revive or renew any of the old Polish orders. In the fifth, the emperor of the French agreed not further to enlarge the duchy of Warsaw by the addition of provinces or cities belonging to the former state of Poland.

This agreement, signed by Caulaincourt, still required the confirmation of the emperor of the French: and Napoleon had given instructions to his ambassador only to agree to such an arrangement on condition that the agreement was drawn up in the usual diplomatic manner: that is to say, in employing words and phrases so chosen as to be capable of any subsequent interpretation which may best suit the parties. This was not done. The articles were very brief, the language so clear and definite as to be incapable of mistake or misrepresentation. Without directly refusing his sanction to the treaty, Napoleon required that it should be couched in different language, and caused a new draft of it to be presented in St. Petersburg. The Russians saw at once through his purpose, and Alexander expressed his displeasure in terms which plainly indicated to the French ambassador his belief that Napoleon was really meditating some hostile measures against him, and was only seeking to gain time by the treaty.

This occurred in February, 1810; in the following months both Romanzov and Caulaincourt took the greatest possible pains to bring the question to a favourable issue, and negotiations continued to be carried on respecting this subject till September. They could not agree; and after September there was no more talk of the treaty, much less of its alteration. The relation between the two emperors had undergone a complete change in the course of the year.

The cupidity of Russia, far from being glutted by the possession of Finland, great part of Prussian and Austrian Poland, Moldavia, and Bessarabia, still craved for more. Napoleon was, however, little inclined to concede Constantinople and the Mediterranean to his Russian ally (to whose empire he assigned the Danube as a boundary), or to put it in possession of the duchy of Warsaw. The Austrian marriage, which was effected in 1809, naturally led Russia to conclude that she would no longer be permitted to aggrandise herself at the expense of Austria, and Alexander, seeing that nothing more

was to be gained by complaisance to France, consequently assumed a threatening posture, and condescended to listen to the complaints of his agricultural and mercantile subjects. No Russian vessel durst venture out to sea, and a Russian fleet had been seized by the British in the harbours of Lisbon. At Riga lay immense stores of grain in want of a foreign market. On the 31st of December, 1810, Alexander published a fresh tariff permitting the importation of colonial products under a neutral flag (several hundred English ships arrived under the American flag), and prohibiting the importation of French manufactured goods. Not many weeks previously, on the 13th of December, Napoleon had annexed Oldenburg to France. The duke, Peter, was nearly related to the emperor of Russia, and Napoleon, notwithstanding his declared readiness to grant a compensation, refused to allow it to consist of the grand-duchy of Warsaw, and proposed a duchy of Erfurt, as yet uncreated, which Russia scornfully rejected.

The alliance between Russia, Sweden, and England was now speedily concluded. Sweden, which had vainly demanded from Napoleon the possession of Norway and a large supply of money, assumed a tone of indignation, threw open her harbours to the British merchantmen, and so openly carried on a contraband trade in Pomerania, that Napoleon, in order to maintain the continental system, was constrained to garrison Swedish Pomerania and Rügen and to disarm the Swedish inhabitants. Bernadotte, upon this, ranged himself entirely on the side of his opponents, without, however, coming to an open rupture, for which he awaited a declaration on the part of Russia. The expressions made use of by Napoleon on the birth of the king of Rome at length filled up the measure of provocation. Intoxicated with success, he boasted, in an address to the mercantile classes, that he would, in despite of Russia, maintain the continental system, for he was lord over the whole of continental Europe; and that if Alexander had not concluded a treaty with him at Tilsit, he would have compelled him to do so at St. Petersburg. The pride of the haughty Russian was deeply wounded, and a rupture was nigh at hand.

Russia had, meanwhile, anticipated Napoleon in making preparations for war. As early as 1811, a great Russian army stood ready for the invasion of Poland, and might, as there were at that time but few French troops in Germany, easily have advanced as far as the Elbe. It remained, however, in a state of inactivity. Napoleon instantly prepared for war and fortified Dantzic. His continual proposals of peace, ever unsatisfactory to the ambition of the czar, remaining at length unanswered, he declared war.<sup>k</sup>

But, to get within reach of Russia, it was necessary for Napoleon to pass beyond Austria, to cross Prussia, and to conciliate Sweden and Turkey; an offensive alliance with these four powers was therefore indispensable. Austria was subject to the ascendancy of Napoleon, and Prussia to his arms: to them, therefore, he had only to declare his intentions; Austria voluntarily and eagerly entered into his plans, and Prussia he easily prevailed on to join him.

Austria, however, did not act blindly. Situated between the two giant powers of the north and the west, she was not displeased to see them at war: she looked to their mutually weakening each other, and to the increase of her own strength by their exhaustion. On the 14th of March, 1812, she promised France thirty thousand men, but she prepared prudent secret instructions for them. She obtained a vague promise of an increase of territory as an indemnity for her share of the expenses of the war, and the possession of Galicia was guaranteed to her. She admitted, however, the future possibility of a cession of part of that province to the kingdom of Poland, but in exchange for

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that she would have received the Illyrian Provinces. The sixth article of the secret treaty establishes this fact.

The success of the war, therefore, in no degree depended on the cession of Galicia, or the difficulties arising from the Austrian jealousy respecting that possession. Napoleon consequently might, on his entrance into Vilna, have publicly proclaimed the liberation of the whole of Poland, instead of betraying the expectations of her people, confounding and rendering them indifferent by expressions of doubtful import. This was one of those decisive issues which occur in politics as well as in war, and which determine the future. No consideration ought to have made Napoleon swerve from his purpose. But whether it was that he reckoned too much on the ascendancy of his genius, or the strength of his army and the weakness of Alexander; or that, considering what he left behind him, he felt it too dangerous to carry on so distant a war slowly and methodically; or whether, as we shall presently be told by himself, he had doubts of the success of his undertaking, certain it is that he either neglected or could not yet venture to proclaim the liberation of that country whose freedom he had come to restore. Yet he had sent an ambassador to her diet; and when this inconsistency was remarked to him he replied that that nomination was an act of war, which only bound him during the war, while by his words he would be bound both in war and peace. Thus it was that he made no other answer to the enthusiasm of the Lithuanians than evasive expressions, at the very time he was following up his attack on Alexander to the very capital of his empire.

He even neglected to clear the southern Polish provinces of the feeble hostile armies which kept the patriotism of their inhabitants in check, and to secure, by strongly organising their insurrection, a solid basis of operation. Accustomed to short methods and to rapid attacks, he wished to do as he had done before, in spite of the difference of places and circumstances; for such is the weakness of man that he is always led by imitation, either of others or of himself, which in the latter case is habit, for habit is nothing more than the imitation of one's self. Accordingly, it is by their strongest side that great men are often undone!<sup>h</sup>

### *Napoleon Invades Russia (1812 A.D.)*

On the 24th of June, 1812, Napoleon crossed the Niemen, the Russian frontier, not far from Kovno. The season was already too far advanced. It may be that, deceived by the mildness of the winter of 1806 to 1807, he imagined it possible to protract the campaign without peril to himself until the winter months. No enemy appeared to oppose his progress. Barclay de Tolly, the Russian commander-in-chief, pursued the system followed by the Scythians against Dairus, and perpetually retiring before the enemy gradually drew him deep into the dreary and deserted steppes. This plan originated with Scharnhorst, by whom General Lieven was advised not to hazard an engagement until the winter, and to turn a deaf ear to every proposal of peace. General Lieven, on reaching Barclay's headquarters, took into his confidence Colonel Toll, a German, Barclay's right hand, and Lieutenant-Colonel Clausewitz, also a German, afterwards noted for his strategical works.

General Pfühl, another German, at that time high in the emperor's confidence, and almost all the Russian generals opposed Scharnhorst's plan, and continued to advance with a view of giving battle: but on Napoleon's appearance at the head of an army greatly their superior in number, before the Russians had been able to concentrate their forces, they were naturally com-



pelled to retire before him; and, on the prevention, for some weeks, of the junction of a newly levied Russian army under Prince Bagration with the forces under Barclay, owing to the rapidity of Napoleon's advance, Scharnhorst's plan was adopted as the only one feasible.

Whilst the French were advancing, a warm and tedious discussion was carried on so long in the imperial Russian council of war at Vilna, whether to defend that city, or adopt the plan of Barclay de Tolly, the minister of war and commander-in-chief, that they were at length obliged to march precipitately to the Dvina with the sacrifice of considerable stores, and to take possession of a fortified camp which had been established at Drissa. As late as the 27th the emperor Alexander and the whole of his splendid staff and court were assembled at a ball, at the castle of Zacrest, near Vilna, belonging to General Bennigsen, so that the French found everything on the 28th just as it had been prepared for the reception of the emperor of Russia. They plundered the castle, and carried off the furniture as booty; the Russians were even obliged to leave behind them considerable quantities of ammunition and provisions.

In this way the line of the Russian defences was broken through; and even a portion of their army under Platov and Bagration would have been cut off, had the king of Westphalia obeyed the commands of his brother with the necessary rapidity. The difficulties of carrying on war in such an inhospitable country as Lithuania and Russia became apparent even at Vilna; the carriages and wagons fell behind, the cannon were obliged to be left, discipline became relaxed, above ten thousand horses had already fallen, and their carcasses poisoned the air. General Balakov could scarcely be considered serious in the proposals which he then made for peace in the name of the emperor of Russia, because the Russians required as a preliminary to all negotiation that the French army should first retire behind the Niemen. The mission of a general, who had been minister of police, and had therefore had great experience in obtaining information, had no doubt a very different object in view from that of making peace at such a moment.

Napoleon, in the hope of overtaking the Russians, and of compelling them to give battle, pushed onwards by forced marches; the supplies were unable to follow, and numbers of the men and horses sank from exhaustion, owing to over-fatigue, heat, and hunger. On the arrival of Napoleon in Witepsk, of Schwarzenberg in Volhinia, of the Prussians before Riga, the army might have halted, reconquered Poland, have been organised, the men put into winter quarters, the army have again taken the field early in the spring, and the conquest of Russia have been slowly but surely completed. But Napoleon had resolved upon terminating the war in one rapid campaign, upon defeating the Russians, seizing their metropolis, and dictating terms of peace. He incessantly pursued his retreating opponent, whose footsteps were marked by the flames of the cities and villages and by the devastated country to their rear. The first serious opposition was made at Smolensk, whence the Russians, however, speedily retreated after setting the city on fire. On the same day, the Bavarians, who had diverged to one side during their advance, had a furious encounter at Polotsk with a body of Russian troops under Wittgenstein. The Bavarians remained stationary in this part of the country for the purpose of watching the movements of that general, whilst Napoleon, careless of the peril with which he was threatened by the approach of winter and by the multitude of enemies gathered to his rear, advanced with the main body of the grand army from Smolensk across the wasted country upon Moscow, the ancient metropolis of the Russian empire.

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Russia, at that time engaged in a war with Turkey, whose frontiers were watched by an immense army under Kutusov, used her utmost efforts, in which she was aided by England, to conciliate the Porte in order to turn the whole of her forces against Napoleon. By a master-stroke of political intrigue, the Porte was made to conclude a disadvantageous peace at Bucharest on the 28th of May, as we have already related. A Russian army under Tchitchakov was now enabled to drive the Austrians out of Volhynia, whilst a considerable force under Kutusov joined Barclay. Buturlin, the Russian historian of the war, states that the national troops opposed to the invaders numbered 217,000 in the first line, and 35,000 in the second. Chambray, whose details are very minute, after deducting the men in hospital, gives the number of those present under arms as 235,000 of the regular army, without reckoning the garrisons of Riga, etc. This computation exceeds that of Buturlin, under the same circumstances, by 17,000. M. de Fezensac allows 230,000 for the total of the two armies of Barclay de Tolly and Bagration, but adds the army of Tormassov on their extreme left, 68,000, and that defending Courland, on the extreme right, 34,000, to make up the Russian total of 330,000 men.

Had the Russians at this time hazarded an engagement, their defeat was certain. Moscow could not have been saved. Barclay consequently resolved not to come to an engagement, but to husband his forces and to attack the French during the winter. The intended surrender of Moscow without a blow was, nevertheless, deeply resented as a national disgrace; the army and the people raised a clamour. Kutuzov, though immeasurably inferior to Barclay, was nominated commander-in-chief, took up a position on the little river Moskva near Borodino, about two days' journey from Moscow. A bloody engagement took place there on the 7th of September, in which Napoleon, in order to spare his guards, neglected to follow up his advantage with his usual energy, and allowed the defeated Russians, whom he might have totally annihilated, to escape. Napoleon triumphed; but at what a price!—after a fearful struggle, in which he lost forty thousand men in killed and wounded, the latter of whom perished, almost to a man, owing to want and neglect.<sup>k</sup>

### *The Abandonment of Moscow*

On his birthday, which was the 30th of August (11th of September of the Russian calendar), the emperor Alexander received a report from Prince Kontonov of the battle that had taken place at Borodino on the 26th of August, and which as the commander-in-chief wrote, “had terminated by the enemy not gaining a single step of territory in spite of their superior forces.” To this Kutuzov added that after having spent the night on the field of battle, he had, in view of the enormous losses sustained by the army, retreated to Mozhaisk. The losses on either side amounted to forty thousand men. As Ermolov very justly expressed it, “the French army was dashed to pieces against the Russian.” Although the emperor Alexander was not led into any error as to the real signification of the battle of Borodino, yet wishing to maintain the hopes of the nation as to the successful termination of the struggle with Napoleon and their confidence in Kutuzov, he accepted the report of the conflict of the 26th of August as the announcement of a victory. Prince Kutuzov was created general field-marshal and granted a sum of 100,000 rubles. Barclay de Tolly was rewarded with the order of St. George of the second class, and the mortally wounded Prince Bagration with a sum of 50,000 rubles. Fourteen generals received the order of St. George of the third class,

and all the privates who had taken part in the battle were given five rubles each.

Prince Kutuzov's despatch of the 27th of August to the emperor Alexander was read by Prince Gortchakov at the Nevski monastery before a thanksgiving service which took place in the presence of their majesties, and was printed in the *Northern Post*. But the following lines were omitted from the report: "Your imperial majesty will deign to agree that after a most sanguinary battle, which lasted fifteen hours, our army and that of the enemy could not fail to be in disorder. Moreover, through the losses sustained this day the position has naturally become incompatible with the depleted number of our troops — therefore, all our aims being directed to the destruction of the French army, I have come to the decision to fall back six versts, that is, beyond Mozhaisk."

A moment of anxious expectation approached in St. Petersburg. Meanwhile Kutuzov, retreating step by step, led the army to Moscow, and on the 1st of September he assembled a council of war at the village of Filiakh. There was decided the fate of the first capital of the empire. After prolonged debates Kutuzov concluded the conference by saying: "I know that I shall have to pay the damage, but I sacrifice myself for the good of my country. I give the order to retreat."

It was already towards nightfall when Rostoptchin received the following letter from Kutuzov: "The fact that the enemy has divided his columns upon Zvenigorod and Borovsk, together with the disadvantageous position now occupied by our troops, oblige me to my sorrow to abandon Moscow. The army is marching on the route to Riazan." It was thus that Rostoptchin received the first definite information of Kutuzov's intention to leave Moscow a few hours before the French were in sight of the capital; under these circumstances the Moscow commander-in-chief did all that was possible on his side and took all measures for setting the town on fire at the approach of the army. Rostoptchin departed unhindered in a droshky by the back gates.

When on the 2nd of September Napoleon reached the Dragomilovski barriers, he expected to find there a deputation, begging that the city might be spared; but instead of that he received the news that Moscow had been abandoned by its inhabitants. "Moscow deserted! What an improbable event! We must make sure of it. Go and bring the boyars to me," said he to Count Darn, whom he sent into the town. Instead of the boyars a few foreigners were collected who confirmed the news that Moscow had been abandoned by nearly all its inhabitants. Having passed the night on the outskirts of the city, on the morning of the 3rd of September Napoleon transferred his headquarters to the Kremlin. But here a still more unexpected occurrence awaited him. The fires, which had already commenced the eve, had not ceased burning; and on the night between the 3rd and the 4th of September the flames, driven along by a strong wind, had enveloped the greater part of the town. At midday the flames reached the Kremlin, and Napoleon was forced to seek a refuge in the Petrovski palace, where he remained until the 6th of September, when the fire began to abate.<sup>1</sup> Nine tenths of the city became the prey of the flames, and pillage completed the calamities that overtook the inhabitants who had remained in it.

It was only on the 7th of September that the emperor Alexander received through Iaroslav a short despatch from Count Rostoptchin to the effect that Kutuzov had decided to abandon Moscow. The next day, the 8th of Septem-

<sup>1</sup> Gazing from the Kremlin on Moscow in flames, Napoleon said, "This forebodes the greatest calamity for us." *Journal du Maréchal Castellane*, Paris, 1895.



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ber, the fatal news of Napoleon's occupation of the capital of the empire was confirmed by a despatch from the field-marshal dated the 4th of September and brought in by Colonel Michaud. Kutuzov wrote from the village of Jilin (on the march to the Borovsk bridge) as follows:

"After the battle of the 26th of August, which in spite of so much bloodshed resulted in a victory for our side, I was obliged to abandon the position near Borodino for reasons of which I had the honour to inform your imperial majesty. The army was completely exhausted after the combat. In this condition we drew nearer to Moscow, having daily greatly to do with the advance guard of the enemy: besides this there was no near prospect of a position presenting itself from which I could successfully engage the enemy. The troops which we had hoped to join could not yet come; the enemy had set two fresh columns, one upon the Borovsk route and the other on the Zvenigorod route, striving to act upon my rear from Moscow: therefore I could not venture to risk a battle, the disadvantages of which might have as consequences not only the destruction of the army but the most sanguinary losses and the conversion of Moscow itself to ashes.

"In this most uncertain position, after taking counsel with our first generals, of whom some were of contrary opinion, I was forced to decide to allow the enemy to enter Moscow, whence all the treasures, the arsenal, and nearly all property belonging to the state or private individuals had been removed, and in which hardly a single inhabitant remained. I venture most humbly to submit to your most gracious majesty that the entry of the enemy into Moscow is not the subjection of Russia. On the contrary, I am now moving with the army on the route to Tula, which will place me in a position to avail myself of the help abundantly prepared in our governments. Although I do not deny that the occupation of the capital is a most painful wound, yet I could not waver in my decision.

"I am now entering upon operations with all the strength of the line, by means of which, beginning with the Tula and Kaluga routes, my detachments will cut off the whole line of the enemy, stretching from Smolensk to Moscow, and thus avert any assistance which the enemy's army might possibly receive from its rear; by turning the attention of the enemy upon us, I hope to force him to leave Moscow and change the whole line of his operations. I have enjoined General Winzengerode to hold himself on the Tver route, having meanwhile a regiment of Cossacks on the Jaroslav route in order to protect the inhabitants against attacks from the enemy's detachments. Having now assembled my forces at no great distance from Moscow I can await the enemy with a firm front, and as long as the army of your imperial majesty is whole and animated by its known bravery and our zeal, the yet retrievable loss of Moscow cannot be regarded as the loss of the fatherland. Besides this, your imperial majesty will graciously deign to agree that these consequences are indivisibly connected with the loss of Smolensk and with the condition of complete disorder in which I found the troops."

This despatch from Prince Kutuzov was printed in the *Northern Post* of the 18th of September, with the exception of the concluding words of the report: "and with the condition of complete disorder in which I found the troops." The sorrowful news brought by Colonel Michaud did not, however, shake the emperor Alexander in his decision to continue the war and not to enter into negotiations with the enemy. When he had finished listening to Michaud's report, he turned to him with the following memorable words: "Go back to the army, and tell our brave soldiers, tell all my faithful subjects, wherever you pass by, that even if I have not one soldier left, I will put myself

at the head of my dear nobles, of my good peasants, and will thus employ the last resources of my empire; it offers more to me than my enemies think for, but if ever it were written in the decrees of divine providence that my dynasty should cease to reign upon the throne of my ancestors, then, after having exhausted every means in my power, I would let my beard grow and go to eat potatoes with the last of my peasants, rather than sign the shame of my country and of my beloved people whose sacrifices I know how to prize. Napoleon or I — I or he; for he and I can no longer reign together. I have learned to know him; he will no longer deceive me.”

“The loss of Moscow,” wrote Alexander to the crown prince of Sweden on the 19th of September, “gives me at least the opportunity of presenting to the whole of Europe the greatest proof I can offer of my perseverance in continuing the struggle against her oppressor, for after such a wound all the rest are but scratches. Now more than ever I and the nation at the head of which I have the honour to be, are decided to persevere. We should rather be buried beneath the ruins of the empire than make terms with the modern Attila.”

The letter that Napoleon addressed to the emperor from Moscow, dated the 8th of September, in which he disclaimed the responsibility of the burning of the capital, was left unanswered. In informing the crown prince of it, the emperor Alexander added: “It contains, however, nothing but bragging.”

### *The Retreat of the Grand Army*

At length the sorrowful days which the emperor Alexander had lived through passed by, and the hope of better things in the future manifested itself. On the 15th of October Colonel Michaud arrived in St. Petersburg from the army, for the second time; but on this occasion he was the bearer of the joyful intelligence of the victory of Tarantin, which had taken place on the 6th of October. The envoy also informed the emperor of the army's desire that he should take the command of it in person. The emperor replied as follows:

“All men are ambitious, and I frankly acknowledge that I am no less ambitious than others; were I to listen to this feeling alone, I should get into a carriage with you and set off to the army. Taking into consideration the disadvantageous position into which we have induced the enemy, the excellent spirit by which the army is animated, the inexhaustible resources of the empire, the numerous troops in reserve, which I have lying in readiness, and the orders that I have despatched to the army of Moldavia — I feel undoubtfully sure that the victory must be inalienably ours, and that it only remains for us, as you say, to gather the laurels. I know that if I were with the army all the glory would be attributed to me, and that I should occupy a place in history; but when I think how little experience I have in the art of war in comparison with my adversary, and that in spite of my good will I might make a mistake, through which the precious blood of my children might be shed, then setting aside my ambition, I am ready willingly to sacrifice my glory for the good of the army. Let those gather the laurels who are worthier of them than I; go back to headquarters, congratulate Prince Michael Larionovitch with his victory, and tell him to drive the enemy out of Russia and then I will come to meet him and will lead him triumphantly into the capital.”

At that time the fate of the *grande armée* was already definitively decided. Having lost all hope of the peace he so desired, Napoleon began to prepare

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for retreat. The defeat of his vanguard at Tarontin on the 6th of October hastened the departure of the French from Moscow; it began in the evening of the same day. Napoleon's intention was first to move along the old Kaluga road, to join Murat's vanguard, and then go on to the new Kaluga road; the emperor thus hoped to go round the Russian army and open a free access for himself to Kaluga. But the partisan Seslavin, who had boldly made his way through on to the Borovsk route discovered Napoleon's movements. Standing behind a tree in the road, he saw the carriage in which was the emperor himself, surrounded by his marshals and his guards. Not satisfied with this exploit, Seslavin besides caught a non-commissioned officer of the Old Guard, who had got separated from the others in the thickness of the wood, bound him, and throwing him across his saddle, galloped off with him.

The intelligence obtained by Sesskvin had for consequences the immediate move of Dokhtorov's corps to Malo-Iaroslavetz; at the same time Kutuzov decided to follow from Tarontin with the whole army, and these arrangements led, on the 12th of October, to the battle near Malo-Iaroslavetz. The town passed from the hands of one side to the other eight times, and although after a conflict of eighteen hours it was finally given up to the French, yet Kutuzov succeeded in opportunely concentrating the whole army to the south of it, at a distance of two and one-half versts.

Here, as Ségur justly remarks, was stopped the conquest of the universe, here vanished the fruits of twenty years of victory and began the destruction of all that Napoleon had hoped to create. The author of this success, Sesslavin, writes: "The enemy was forestalled at Malo-Iaroslavetz; the French were exterminated, Russia was saved, Europe set free, and universal peace established: such are the consequences of this great discovery."

The field-marshal had now to decide the question whether a general battle should be attempted for the annihilation of the French army, or whether endeavours should be made to attain this object by more cautious means. The leader stopped at the latter decision. "It will all fall through without me," said Kutuzov, in reply to the impatient partisans of decisive action. He expressed his idea more definitely on this occasion to the English general Wilson, who was then at the Russian headquarters: "I prefer to build a 'golden bridge,' as you call it, for my adversary, than to put myself in such a position that I might receive a 'blow on the neck' from him. Besides this, I again repeat to you what I have already several times told you—I am not at all sure that the complete annihilation of the emperor Napoleon and his army would be such a great benefit to the universe. His inheritance would give the continent not to Russia or any other power, but to that power which now already rules the seas; and then her predominance would be unbearable." Wilson replied: "Do what you ought, come what may." The Russian army began to depart on the night between the 13th and 14th of October for Detchina.

### *Napoleon on the Road to Smolensk*

When, on the 14th of October, Kutuzov and his army approached Detchina, Napoleon turned again from Gorodni in the direction of Malo-Iaroslavetz. Half-way there, a report was brought to him which announced that the Russian out-posts had quitted this latter town. Napoleon stopped, and, seating himself near a fire which had been lighted in the open: "What design," he said, "had Kutuzov in abandoning Malo-Iaroslavetz?" He was silent for a



moment and then added: "He wants to stop our road to the south." And, determined as he was not to fight, Napoleon ordered the army to return along the Smolensk road, preferring to contend with want of provisions rather than find himself on the other track, under the necessity of using force in order to pursue the direction he had intended to take when he quitted Moscow. Thus the whole plan of campaign was thwarted and the fortune of Napoleon compromised. From Malo-Iaroslavetz to Waterloo Napoleon's career presents nothing but a series of defeats, rarely interrupted by a few victories. It was in profound silence and with dejection painted on every visage that the French army, as though under the presentiment of its fatal destiny, retraced the way to Smolensk. Napoleon marched pensive in the midst of his downcast regiments, reckoning with Marshal Berthier the enormous distances to be traversed and the time it must take him to reach Smolensk and Minsk, the only towns on the Vilna road where food and ammunition had been prepared.

Kutuzov, learning on the 14th of October that Napoleon had left Malo-Iaroslavetz, immediately advanced his army on the Miadin road in the direction of some linen factories, and detached Platov with fifteen Cossack regiments and some flying squadrons, that they might inform him of Napoleon's movements. The next day he received from these squadrons the assurance that the latter was indeed effecting his retreat by the Smolensk route. Thus the manœuvres of Kutuzov were crowned with complete success. Thus it happened that just two months after the 17th of August, the day on which he had assumed command of the armies, the conqueror's eagles were flying with all speed towards the place whence they had taken flight. The movement carried out on the enemy's left flank as far as Malo-Iaroslavetz, and thence to the linen factories, disconcerted all Napoleon's plans, closed to him the road to Kaluga and Iukhnov, and forced him to follow a route which two months before had been ruined from end to end, and which led across deserts that Napoleon seemed to have prepared for himself. The enemy's army, which still amounted to one hundred thousand men, continued to bear a threatening aspect, but the want of provisions and the attacks it had to repulse must diminish its forces and hasten its disorganisation. Hunger, like a gnawing worm, was exhausting the enemy, while Russian steel completed his destruction. The nearest French magazines were at Smolensk, eight hundred versts away. To cross this distance with the little food he possessed, to suffer an immense loss, and, in addition, to be continually exposed to attacks—such were the exploits now before Napoleon and such was the position in which Kutuzov had placed him.

The question was: How is Napoleon to be pursued? What direction shall the army take in order to derive all the advantage possible from the retreat of the French? To follow the enemy's steps in columns was impossible without exposing the army to the pangs of hunger. "I think," said Kutuzov, "that I shall do Napoleon most harm by marching parallel with him and acting on the way according to the movements he may execute." This happy idea seemed to be a basis for the manœuvres which Kutuzov subsequently effected. He gave orders to the army to march on Viazma by Kussov, Suleika, Dubrova, and Bikov; to Miloradovitch to direct his way, with two corps of infantry and two of cavalry, between the army and the route to Smolensk, and to approach this route in the neighbourhood of Gzhatsk, and then, proceeding in the direction of Viazma, along the same road, to take advantage of every favourable opportunity of attacking the enemy; to Platov, who had been reinforced by Paskevitch's division, to follow the French in the rear; and finally

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to the guerilla corps to fall on the enemy's columns in front and in flank. In ordering these dispositions Kutuzov addressed the following order of the day to the army: "Napoleon, who thought only of ardently pursuing a war which has become national, without foreseeing that it might in one moment annihilate his whole army, now finding in every inhabitant a soldier ready to repulse his perfidious seductions, and seeing the firm resolution of the whole population to present, if need be, their breasts to the sword directed against their beloved country — Napoleon, in fine, after having attained the object of his vain and foolhardy thoughts, namely that of shaking all Russia by rendering himself master of Moscow, has suddenly made up his mind to beat a retreat. We are at this moment in pursuit of him, whilst other Russian armies occupy Lithuania anew and are ready to act in concert with us to complete the ruin of the enemy who has ventured to menace Russia. In his flight he abandons his caissons, blows up his projectiles, and covers the ground with the treasures carried off from our churches. Already Napoleon hears murmurs raised by all ranks of his army; already hunger is making itself felt, while desertion and disorder of every kind are manifested amongst the soldiers. Already the voice of our august monarch rings out, crying to us, 'Extinguish the fire of Moscow in the blood of the enemy. Warriors, let us accomplish that task, and Russia will be content with us — a solid peace will be again established within the circle of her immense frontiers! Brave soldiers of Russia, God will aid us in so righteous an achievement!'"

Immediately, as Kutuzov had ordered, a general movement of the army began in the enemy's rear. The French left on the road sick, wounded — all this might delay the march of the retiring troops. The cavalry began no longer to show themselves in the rearguard. For lack of food and shoeing the horses became so enfeebled that the cavalry were outdistanced by the infantry, who continued to hasten their retreat. Speed was the enemy's only means of escaping from the deserts in which no nourishment could be procured, and of reaching the Dnieper, where the French counted on finding some corn magazines, and forming a junction with the corps of Victor and St. Cyr and the battalions on the march, the various columns which were there at the moment, the dépôts, and a great number of soldiers who had fallen off from the army and were following it. Convinced of the necessity of hurrying their steps, all, from the marshals down to the meanest soldiers, went forward at full speed.

But the temperature grew daily more rigorous. The cold wind of autumn rendered bivouacs insupportable to the enemy, and drove him thence in the morning long before daybreak. He struck camp in the darkness, and lighted his way along the road by means of lanterns. Each corps tried to pass the other. The passage of the rivers, on rafts or bridges, was made in the greatest disorder, and the baggage accumulated so as to arrest the movements of the army. The provisions which the soldiers had laid in at Moscow, and which they carried on their backs, were quickly consumed, and they began to eat horseflesh. The prices of food and of warm clothes and footgear became exorbitant. To stray from the road for the purpose of procuring food was an impossibility, for the Cossacks who were prowling right and left killed or made prisoners all who fell into their hands. The peasants from the villages bordering on the route, dressed in cloaks, shakos, plumed helmets, and steel cuirasses which they had taken from the French, often joined the Don Cossacks or Miloradovitch's advance guard. Some were armed with scythes, others with thick, iron-shod staves, or halberds, and a few carried firearms. They came out of the forests in which they had taken refuge with

their families, greeted the Russian army on its appearance, congratulated it on the flight of the enemy, and by way of farewells to the latter took a just vengeance upon it. With the enemy the fear of falling into the hands of the Cossacks and peasants triumphed over the sense of hunger and deterred them from plundering. The French began to throw away their arms. The first to set the example were the regiments of light cavalry, to whom infantry muskets had been distributed at Moscow. The regiments being mixed together, they shook off all discipline. The disarmed men were at first few in number, and as they trailed along in the wake of the army they agglomerated them like snowballs.

The sick and those overcome by fatigue were abandoned on the road without the least pity. In fear of losing their flags the leaders of regiments removed them from their staves and gave them in keeping to the strongest and most tried soldiers, who hid them in their haversacks or under their uniforms, or wrapped them round their bodies. When Napoleon had passed Gzhatsk, he no longer rode on horseback in the midst of his troops, but drove in a carriage, wrapped himself in a green velvet cloak lined with sable furs, and put on warm boots and a fur cap.

#### *The Battle of Viazma; Smolensk is Found Evacuated*

The retreat was performed so rapidly, that Miloradovitch could not begin the pursuit of the enemy till he had arrived at Viazma. On the 22nd of October, he attacked the French near this town and beat them. Three guns and two flags were taken from them and two thousand of them were made prisoners. When Viazma had been passed, Kutuzov ordered Miloradovitch to follow in the enemy's track and to press him as much as possible, and Platov to get ahead of his right, and attack it in front, as Orlov Denissov was to do on his left; the guerillas had orders to march quickly on Smolensk. He exhorted the whole army to harass the French day and night. Kutuzov with the main body proceeded on the left, on a level with Miloradovitch, to be able to reach Orscha by the shortest road, in case Napoleon should effect his retreat on that town; but, if he took the direction of Mohilev, to stop his way and cover the district whence the Russian army drew its provisions. Kutuzov was inflexible in the resolution he had taken to keep Napoleon on the Smolensk road, which was so completely wasted, and to force him to die of hunger there rather than allow him to penetrate into the southern governments, where he might have obtained provisions. Anxious to know if Napoleon would not bear to the left towards Ielna and Mstislavl, and thence to Mohilev, Kutuzov did not confine himself to insisting on personally directing his army on the road, whence he could prevent this movement, but he ordered the Kaluga militia, reinforced by Cossacks and some regular cavalry regiments, to advance rapidly from Kaluga and Roslavl on Ielna; that of Tula to march on Roslavl, that of Smolensk on Ielna, and that of Little Russia to do its utmost promptly to occupy Mohilev.

Such were, in outline, the directions which Kutuzov gave to the army after the battle of Viazma, when the enemy found itself under the stern necessity of struggling with a new calamity which it had not yet experienced — namely, severe cold. The winds raged and thick snow fell for five days; it blinded the soldiers and lay so thick as to arrest their march. The French horses, not being rough-shod, fell under the guns, under the carts, and under their riders; men were lying on the route, dead or dying, dragging themselves along like reptiles, in villages reduced to ashes and round overturned wagons



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and caissons which the powder had blown to pieces. Many among them were seized with madness. It was in this state that, on the 31st of October, Napoleon led his army back to Smolensk, which he hastened to reach as the promised land, never doubting that he would be able to halt there. The thought of wintering in Smolensk supported soldiers exhausted by fatigue and warmed those overcome by the cold; each one collected his remaining strength to reach the town where their misfortunes were to end. On catching sight of the distant summits of Smolensk, the enemy rejoiced and forgot hunger and thirst. Arrived at the town they rushed into it by thousands, stifling and killing each other in its narrow gates, ran for the provisions they believed themselves sure of finding, and seeking for warm habitations; but it was in vain; for soon like a thunderclap the news was echoed that there was in Smolensk neither food nor refuge; that it was impossible to stay there; that they must go on. Twenty degrees of cold came to crown their misfortunes, but this suddenly ceased—the next day it thawed; otherwise the sudden extinction of the enemy would have been inevitable.

Smolensk presented a horrible spectacle. From the Moscow gate to the line of the Dnieper, the ground was strewn with corpses and dead horses. Fire had turned the Moscow suburb into a desert; in it and on the snow which covered the ice on the Dnieper were to be seen wagons, caissons of ammunition, ambulances, cannon, pontoons, muskets, pistols, bayonets, drums, cuirasses, shakos, bearskins, musical instruments, ramrods, swords, and sabres. Amongst the corpses on the banks appeared a long file of wagons, not yet unharnessed but whose horses had fallen down and whose drivers lay half dead in their seats. In other places horses were lying with the entrails protruding from their bodies. Their bellies were split open, for the soldiers had tried to warm their frozen limbs there, or to appease their hunger. Where the river banks ended, along the road which skirted the walls of the town, were seen five versts away six or more ranks of caissons of ammunition and projectiles, calashes from Moscow, carriages, droschkies, travelling forges. The French, frozen with cold, ran hither and thither, wrapped in priests' cassocks, in surplices, in women's cloaks, with straw wound about their legs, and hoods, Jews' caps, or mats on their heads; nearly all cursed Napoleon, emitted volleys of blasphemies, and, calling upon Death in their despair, bared their breasts and fell under his inexorable scythe.

### *Kutuzov's Policy*

Kutuzov, who had reduced Napoleon to this horrible situation, and who, by means of his flying squadrons, was kept aware of his every step, had succeeded in hiding all his own movements. Napoleon believed, as we see by the orders he gave his marshals, that Kutuzov was not marching parallel with the French army, but behind it; and yet Kutuzov continued his side movement round Smolensk, daily receiving reports of defeats of the enemy.

Already, between Moscow and Smolensk, one hundred pieces of cannon had been taken from the French and 10,000 men made prisoners. In congratulating the army on its successes, Kutuzov said in an order of the day: "After the brilliant success which we obtain every day and everywhere over the enemy, it only remains for us to pursue him speedily, and perhaps the soil of that Russia which he sought to subjugate will enclose all his bones within her breast; let us then pursue him without pause. Winter declares itself, the frost increases, the snow is blinding. Is it for you, children of the North, to fear all these harsh inclemencies? Your iron breasts resist them as they

resist the rage of enemies. They are the ramparts, the hope of our country, against which everything is broken. If momentary privations should make themselves felt, you will know how to support them. True soldiers are distinguished by patience and courage. The old will set an example to the young. Let all remember Suvarov; he taught us to endure hunger and cold where victory and the honour of the Russian people were concerned. Forward, march! God is with us! The beaten enemy precedes us; may calm and tranquillity be restored behind us.”

Kutuzov did not allow himself to be tempted by the disastrous position of his adversary and remained faithful to the cautious policy he had adopted, sparing as far as possible the troops entrusted to him. He never once altered his ruling idea, and remained true to it until the very end of the campaign. To those who were in favour of more energetic measures he replied: “Our young folks are angry with me for restraining their outbursts. They should take into consideration that circumstances will do far more for us by themselves than our arms.” Kutuzov’s indecision at Viazma and Krasnoi, Tchitchagov’s mistakes, and Count Wittgenstein’s caution, however, gave Napoleon’s genius the possibility of triumphing with fresh brilliancy over the unprecedented misfortunes that pursued him: on the 14th of November began the passage of the French across the Beresina at Stondianka, and then the pitiful remains of the *grande armée*, amounting to nine thousand men, hurriedly moved, or it would be more correct to say fled to Vilna, closely pursued by the Russian forces. The frost, which had reached thirty degrees, completed the destruction of the enemy; the whole route was strewn with the bodies of those who had perished from cold and hunger. Seeing the destruction of his troops and the necessity of creating a fresh army in order to continue the struggle, Napoleon wrote from Molodechno on the 21st of November his twenty-ninth bulletin, by which he informed Europe of the lamentable issue of the war, begun six months previously, and after transferring the command of the army to the king of Naples, Murat, he left Smorgoni for Paris on the 23rd of November.

As the remains of Napoleon’s army approached the frontiers of Russia, the complicated question presented itself to the emperor Alexander as to whether the Russian forces should stop at the Vistula and complete the triumph of Russia by a glorious peace or continue the struggle with Napoleon in order to re-establish the political independence of Germany and the exaltation of Austria. The emperor inclined to the latter decision — that is, to the prolongation of the war; such an intention was in complete accordance with the conviction he had previously expressed: “Napoleon or I—I or he; but together we cannot reign.” At the end of the year 1812 the final object of the war was already marked out by the emperor Alexander. This is evident from his conversation with Mademoiselle Sturdza not long before his departure for Vilna, in which the sovereign shared with her his feelings of joy at the happy results of the war. Alexander referred in their colloquy to the extraordinary man who, blinded by fortune, had occasioned so many calamities to mankind. Speaking of the enigmatical character of Napoleon, he called to mind how he had studied him during the negotiations at Tilsit; in reference to this the emperor said: “The present time reminds me of all that I heard from that extraordinary man at Tilsit. Then we talked a long while together, for he liked to show me his superiority and lavishly displayed before me all the brilliancy of his imagination. ‘War,’ said he to me once, ‘is not at all such a difficult art as people think, and to speak frankly it is sometimes hard to explain exactly how one has succeeded in winning a battle. In

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reality it would seem that he is vanquished who is afraid of his adversary and that the whole secret lies in that. There is no leader who does not dread the issue of a battle; the whole thing is to hide this fear for the longest time possible. It is only thus that he can frighten his opponent, and then there is no doubt of ultimate success.' I listened," continued the emperor, "with the deepest attention to all that he was pleased to communicate to me on the subject, firmly resolving to profit by it when the occasion presented itself, and in fact I hope that I have since acquired some experience in order to solve the question as to what there remains for us to do." "Surely, Sire, we are forever secure against such an invasion?" replied Mademoiselle Sturdza. "Would the enemy dare again to cross our frontiers?" "It is possible," answered Alexander, "but if a lasting and solid peace is desired it must be signed in Paris; of that I am firmly convinced."

Kutuzov was of an entirely opposite opinion; he considered that Napoleon was no longer dangerous to Russia, and that he must be spared on account of the English, who would endeavour to seize upon his inheritance to the detriment of Russia and other continental powers. All the thoughts of the field-marshal were directed to the salvation of the fatherland, and not that of Europe, as those English and German patriots would have desired, who were already accustomed to look upon Russia as a convenient tool for the attainment and consolidation of their political aims. Kutuzov's opinions, as might have been expected, were strongly censured by those around Alexander and in general by persons who judged of military movements from the depths of their studies.

The frame of mind of such persons is best described in the correspondence of Baron Ampheldt, who devoted the following witty lines to this burning question: "Our affairs might even go still better if Kutuzov had not taken upon himself the form of a tortoise, and Tchitchagov that of a weather-cock, which does not follow any plan: the latter sins by a superfluity of intellect and a want of experience, the former by excessive caution. I suppose, however, that after his passage across the Niemen Bonaparte has not a very large company left; cold, hunger, and Cossack spears must have occasioned him some difficulties. Meanwhile, as long as the man lives, we shall never be in a condition to count on any rest; and therefore war to the death is necessary. Our good emperor shares these views, in spite of the opinion of those contemptible creatures who would have wished to stop at the Vistula. But this is not the desire of the people, who, however, alone bear the burden of the war and in whom are to be found more healthy good sense and feeling than in powdered heads ornamented with orders and embroideries."

On the 28th of November the Russian forces occupied Vilna, after having taken 140 guns, more than 14,000 prisoners, and vast quantities of stores. Prince Kutuzov arrived on the 30th of November; he came to a place with which he was already well acquainted, having formerly filled the position of Lithuanian military governor. The population, forgetting Napoleon and their vanished dreams of the re-establishment of the kingdom of Poland, welcomed the triumphant leader with odes and speeches, and on the stage of the theatre Kutuzov's image was represented with the inscription: "The saviour of the country."

After the evacuation of Vilna the enemy fled, without stopping to Kovno; but on the 2nd of December Platov's Cossacks made their appearance in the town, which was quickly cleared of the French. The piteous remainder of that once brilliant army crossed the Niemen; only 1,000 men with nine guns and about 20,000 unarmed men were left of it. "God punished the foolish,"



wrote the emperor Nicholas twenty-seven years later in his order of the day to the troops, on the occasion of the unveiling of the Borodino monument; "the bones of the audacious foreigners were scattered from Moscow to the Niemen — and we entered Paris." *g*

#### CAMPAIGNS OF THE GRAND ALLIANCE (1813-1814 A.D.)

Rallying with amazing promptitude from the tremendous blow he had suffered in Russia, Napoleon raised a fresh army of 300,000 men in the beginning of 1813, in order to crush the insurrection in which all northern Germany had joined, with the exception of Saxony, after Prussia had openly adhered to the Russian alliance. By the Treaty of Kalish, which established that alliance, Alexander engaged not to lay down his arms until Prussia had recovered the territory it possessed before the war of 1800. Great efforts were now made by the cabinets of St. Petersburg and Berlin to detach Austria from France; and so strongly were the national feelings declared in favour of that policy, that Metternich had the utmost difficulty in withstanding the torrent, and evading the hazard of committing his government prematurely. Temporising with consummate art, he offered the mediation of his government between the hostile parties, and at the same time prosecuted his military preparations on such a scale as would enable Austria to act no subordinate part on the one side or the other in the coming struggle. Meanwhile, hostilities began; the Russians and Prussians were defeated by Napoleon at Lützen and at Bautzen, where Alexander commanded the allied armies in person; and they were fortunate in concluding an armistice with him at Pleisswitz on the 4th of June, 1813. They availed themselves of this truce to reinforce their armies, and more than sixty thousand fresh troops reached the seat of war from the south and the middle of Russia.

On the 27th, Austria signed a treaty at Reichenbach, in Silesia, with Russia and Prussia, by which she bound herself to declare war with France, in case Napoleon had not, before the termination of the armistice, accepted the terms of peace about to be proposed to him. A pretended congress for the arrangement of the treaty was again agreed to by both sides; but Napoleon delayed to grant full powers to his envoy, and the allies, who had meanwhile heard of Wellington's victory at Vittoria and the expulsion of the French from Spain, gladly seized this pretext to break off the negotiations. Meanwhile, Metternich, whose voice was virtually to decide Napoleon's fate, met him at Dresden with an offer of peace, on condition of the surrender of the French conquests in Germany. Napoleon, with an infatuation only equalled by his attempts to negotiate at Moscow, spurned the proposal, and even went the length of charging Count Metternich with taking bribes from England. The conference, which was conducted on Napoleon's part in so insulting a manner, and at times in tones of passion so violent as to be overheard by the attendants, lasted till near midnight on the 10th of August, the day with which the armistice was to expire. The fatal hour passed by, and that night Count Metternich drew up the declaration of war, on the part of his government, against France. Austria coalesced with Russia and Prussia, and the Austrian general, Prince Schwarzenberg, was appointed generalissimo of the whole of the allied armies.

The plan of the allies was to advance with the main body under Schwarzenberg, 190,000 strong, through the Hartz mountains to Napoleon's rear. Blücher, with 95,000 men, was meanwhile to cover Silesia, or in case of an attack by Napoleon's main body to retire before it and draw it further east-

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ward. Bernadotte, crown prince of Sweden, was to cover Berlin with 90,000 men, and in case of a victory was to form a junction, rearward of Napoleon, with the main body of the allied army. A mixed division under Wallmoden, 30,000 strong, was destined to watch Davout in Hamburg, whilst the Bavarian and Italian frontiers were respectively guarded by 25,000 Austrians under Prince Reuss, and 40,000 Austrians under Hiller. Napoleon's main body, consisting of 250,000 men, was concentrated in and around Dresden.

The campaign opened with the march of a French force under Oudinot against Berlin. This attack having completely failed, Napoleon marched in person against Blücher, who cautiously retired before him. Dresden being thus left uncovered, the allies changed their plan of operations, and marched straight upon the Saxon capital. But they arrived too late, Napoleon having already returned thither, after despatching Vandamme's corps to Bohemia, to seize the passes and cut off Schwarzenberg's retreat. The allies attempted to storm Dresden, on the 26th of August, but were repulsed after suffering a frightful loss. On the following day Napoleon assumed the offensive, cut off the left wing of the allies, and made an immense number of prisoners, chiefly Austrians. The main body fled in all directions; part of the troops disbanded, and the whole must have been annihilated but for the misfortune of Vandamme, who was taken prisoner, with his whole corps, on the 29th. It was at the battle of Dresden that Moreau, who had come from his exile in America to aid the allies against his old rival Napoleon, was killed by a cannon ball whilst he was speaking to the emperor Alexander.

At the same time (August 26th) a splendid victory was gained by Blücher, on the Katzbach, over Macdonald, who reached Dresden almost alone, to say to Napoleon, "Your army of the Bober is no longer in existence." This disaster to the French arms was followed by the defeat of Ney at Dennewitz by the Prussians and Swedes on the 6th of September. Napoleon's generals were thrown back in every quarter, with immense loss, on Dresden, towards which the allies now advanced again, threatening to enclose it on every side. Napoleon manœuvred until the beginning of October, with the view of executing a *coup de main* against Schwarzenberg and Blücher, but their caution foiled him, and at length he found himself compelled to retreat, lest he should be cut off from the Rhine, for Blücher had crossed the Elbe, joined Bernadotte, and approached the head of the main army under Schwarzenberg. Moreover, the Bavarian army under Wrede declared against the French on the 8th of October, and was sent to the Main to cut off their retreat. Marching to Leipsic, the emperor there encountered the allies on the 16th of October, and fought an indecisive action, which, however, was in his case equivalent to a defeat. He strove to negotiate a separate peace with the emperor of Austria, as he had before done with regard to the emperor of Russia, but no answer was returned to his proposals. After some partial engagements on the 17th, the main battle was renewed on the 18th; it raged with prodigious violence all day, and ended in the defeat of Napoleon; Leipsic was stormed on the following day, and the French emperor narrowly escaped being taken prisoner. He had lost 60,000 men in the four days' battle; with the remainder of his troops he made a hasty and disorderly retreat, and after losing many more in his disastrous flight, he crossed the Rhine on the 20th of October with 70,000 men. The garrisons he had left behind gradually surrendered, and by November all Germany, as far as the Rhine, was freed from the presence of the French.

In the following month the allies simultaneously invaded France in three directions: Bülow from Holland, Blücher from Coblenz, and Schwarzenberg,

with the allied sovereigns, by Switzerland and the Jura; whilst Wellington also was advancing from the Pyrenees, at the head of the army which had liberated the peninsula. In twenty-five days after their passage of the Rhine the allied armies had succeeded, almost without firing a shot, in wresting a third of France from the grasp of Napoleon. Their united forces stretched diagonally across France in a line three hundred miles long, from the frontiers of Flanders to the banks of the Rhone. On the other hand, the French emperor, though his force was little more than a third of that which was at the command of the allies, had the advantage of an incomparably more concentrated position, his troops being all stationed within the limits of a narrow triangle, of which Paris, Laon, and Troyes formed the angles. Besides this, there was no perfect unanimity among his enemies. Austria, leaning on the matrimonial alliance, was reluctant to push matters to extremities, if it could possibly be avoided; Russia and Prussia were resolute to overthrow Napoleon's dynasty; whilst the councils of England, which in this diversity held the balance, were as yet divided as to the final issue. There was a prospect, therefore, that the want of concert between the allies would afford profitable opportunities to the military genius of the French emperor.

On the 29th of January, 1814, Napoleon made an unexpected attack on Blücher's corps at Brienne, in which the Prussian marshal narrowly escaped being made prisoner. But not being pursued with sufficient vigour, and having procured reinforcements, Blücher had his revenge at La Rothière, where he attacked Napoleon with superior forces and routed him. Still Schwarzenberg delayed his advance and divided his troops, whilst Blücher, pushing rapidly forward on Paris, was again unexpectedly attacked by the main body of the French army, and all his corps, as they severally advanced, were defeated with terrible loss, between the 10th and 14th of February. On the 17th, Napoleon routed the advanced guard of the main army at Nangis, and again on the 18th he inflicted a heavy defeat on them at Montereau. Augereau, meanwhile, with an army levied in the south of France, had driven the Austrians under Bubna into Switzerland, and had posted himself at Geneva, in the rear of the allies, who became so alarmed as to resolve on a general retreat, and proposed an armistice. Negotiations for peace had been in progress for several weeks at Châtillon, and the allies were now more than ever desirous that the terms they offered should be accepted. But so confident was Napoleon in the returning good fortune of his arms, that he would not even consent to a suspension of hostilities while the conferences for an armistice were going on. As for the conference at Châtillon, he used it only as a means to gain time, fully resolved not to purchase peace by the reduction of his empire within the ancient limits of the French monarchy.

Blücher became furious on being informed of the intention to retreat, and with the approval of the emperor Alexander, he resolved to separate from the main army, and push on for Paris. Being reinforced on the Marne by Winzingerode and Bülow, he encountered Napoleon at Craon on the 7th of March. The battle was one of the most obstinately contested of the whole revolutionary war; the loss on both sides was enormous, but neither could claim a victory. Two days afterwards the emperor was defeated at Laon; but Blücher's army was reduced to inactivity by fatigue and want of food.

Napoleon now turned upon the grand army, which he encountered at Arcis-sur-Aube; but after an indecisive action, he deliberately retreated, not towards Paris but in the direction of the Rhine. His plan was to occupy the fortresses in the rear of the allies, form a junction with Augereau, who was then defending Lyons, and, with the aid of a general rising of the peasantry



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in Alsace and Lorraine, surround and cut off the invaders, or, at least, compel them to retreat to the Rhine. But this plan being made known to the allies by an intercepted letter from Napoleon to the empress, they frustrated it by at once marching with flying banners upon Paris, leaving behind only ten thousand men, under Winzingerode, to amuse Napoleon and mask their movement. After repulsing Mortier and Marmont, and capturing the forces under Paethod and Amey, the allies defiled within sight of Paris on the 29th. On the 30th they met with a spirited resistance on the heights of Belleville and Montmartre; but the city, in order to escape bombardment, capitulated during the night; and on the 31st, the sovereigns of Russia and Prussia made a peaceful entry. The emperor of Austria had remained at Lyons.<sup>b</sup>

## ALEXANDER I AT THE CAPITULATION OF PARIS (1814 A.D.)

The success at Paris was dearly bought; on the day of the battle the allies lost 8,400 men, of whom 6,000 were Russians. The magnitude of the losses is explained by the absence of unity in the operations of the allies and the consequent want of simultaneousness in the attacks from all parts of the allied army. However, the success of the day dealt a direct and decisive blow at the very strongest part of the enemy's position. While negotiations were being carried on with the French marshals for the surrender of Paris, the emperor Alexander made the tour of the troops, which were disposed near Belleville and Chaumont, and congratulated them on the victory; he then raised Count Barclay de Tolly to the rank of field-marshal. After that he returned to Bondy.

Meanwhile negotiations for the capitulation of Paris were being carried on in a house occupied by Marshal Marmont. There a large company had assembled anxiously awaiting the decision of the fate of Paris. At the head of those present was Talleyrand. An agreement between the French and the representatives of the allied armies was at last arrived at, and at the third hour after midnight the capitulation of Paris, composed by M. F. Orlov, was signed; the victors, however, had to give up their original stipulation that the French troops which had defended Paris should retire by the Brittany route. In the concluding 8th article of the capitulation, specially referring to the approaching occupation of Paris by the allies, it was said that the town of Paris was recommended to the generosity of the allied powers.

Orlov told Marshal Marmont that the representatives of the town of Paris could unrestrainedly express their desires in person to the emperor Alexander. A deputation from the town was therefore assembled which should proceed without delay to the headquarters of the allies; it consisted of the prefect of police Pasquier, the prefect of the Seine Chabrolles, and a few members of the municipal council and representatives of the *garde nationale*. At dawn the deputies set off in carriages for Bondy accompanied by Colonel Orlov, who led them through the Russian bivouacs.

On their arrival at headquarters the French were taken into a large room in the castle. Orlov ordered that his arrival should be announced to Count Nesselrode, who went to meet the deputies, whilst Orlov went straight to the emperor, who received him lying in bed. "What news do you bring?" asked the emperor. "Your majesty, here is the capitulation of Paris," answered Orlov. Alexander took the capitulation, read it, folded the paper, and putting it under his pillow, said, "I congratulate you; your name is linked with a great event."

At the time when the above described events were taking place before

Paris, Napoleon had made the following arrangements. When Winzingerode's division reached Saint-Dizier Napoleon moved from Doulevant to Bar-sur-Aube. In order to ascertain the real intentions of the allies he ordered increased reconnoitering, which led to the combat at Saint-Dizier, and Winzingerode was thrown back on Bar-le-Duc. From the questions addressed to prisoners Napoleon was convinced that only the cavalry division was left against him and that the chief forces of the allies were directed towards Paris. "This is a fine chess move! I should never have thought that a general of the coalition would have been capable of it!" exclaimed Napoleon. Without delaying, on the 27th of March, Napoleon directed the forces he had at his disposal towards Paris by a circuitous route through Troyes and Fontainebleau. On the 30th of March, at daybreak, when the allies were already before Paris and were preparing to attack the capital, Napoleon and his vanguard had hardly reached Troyes (150 versts from Paris). In the hope that at least by his presence he might amend matters in Paris, the emperor left the troops behind and galloped off to Fontainebleau; arriving there at night, he continued his journey without stopping to Paris. But it was already late, and on the night of the 31st of March, at twenty versts from Paris, Napoleon met the fore ranks of the already departing French troops, from whom he learned of the capitulation concluded by Marmont. At six in the morning Napoleon returned to Fontainebleau.

It was about the same time, on the morning of the 31st of March, that the deputation from Paris was received by the emperor Alexander at Bondy. Count Nesselrode presented the members by name to the emperor; after which Alexander addressed to them a discourse which Pasquier has reproduced in his *Mémoires* in the following manner: "I have but one enemy in France, and that enemy is the man who has deceived me in the most shameless manner, who has abused my trust, who has broken every vow to me, and who has carried into my dominions the most iniquitous and odious of wars. All reconciliation between him and me is henceforth impossible, but I repeat I have no other enemy in France. All other Frenchmen are favourably regarded by me. I esteem France and the French, and I trust that they will enable me to help them. I honour the courage and glory of all the brave men against who I have been fighting for two years and whom I have learned to respect in every position in which they have found themselves. I shall always be ready to render to them the justice and the honour which are their due. Say then, gentlemen, to the Parisians, that I do not enter their walls as an enemy, and that it only depends on them to have me for a friend, but say also that I have one sole enemy in France, and that with him I am irreconcilable." Pasquier adds that this thought was repeated in twenty different tones and always with the expression of the utmost vehemence, the emperor meanwhile pacing up and down the room.

#### THE RUSSIAN OCCUPATION OF PARIS

Then entering into details as to the occupation of Paris, the emperor Alexander consented to leave the preservation of tranquillity in the capital to the national guard, and gave his word that he would require nothing from the inhabitants, beyond provisions for the army; it was decided that the troops should be bivouacked. Having dismissed the deputation, the emperor Alexander ordered Count Nesselrode to set off immediately for Paris to Talleyrand and concert with him as to the measures to be taken in the commencement; the count entered the town accompanied by a single Cossack.

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"The boulevards were covered with well-dressed crowds of people," writes Count Nesselrode in his *Mémoires*. "It seemed as if the people had assembled for a holiday rather than to assist at the entry of the enemy's troops. Talleyrand was at his toilet; his hair only half-done; he rushed to meet me, threw himself into my arms and bestrewed me with powder. When he was somewhat tranquillised he ordered certain persons with whom he was conspiring to be called. They were the duke of Dalberg, the abbe de Pradt, and Baron Louis. I transmitted the desires of the emperor Alexander to my companions, telling them that he remained firmly determined upon one point — not to leave Napoleon on the throne of France; that later on the question as to what order of things must from henceforth reign would be decided by his majesty, not otherwise than after consultation with the prominent personages with whom he would be brought into relations."<sup>1</sup>

The emperor Alexander had intended to stop at the *Élysée* palace (*Élysée Bourbon*), but, having received information that mines had been laid under the palace, he sent the communication on to Count Nesselrode; when Talleyrand heard of it he would not believe the truth of the information, but, from excess of caution, he proposed that the emperor should stay with him until the necessary investigations should be made. In all probability the alarm raised had been prepared by the dexterity of Prince Bénévent himself, who thus made sure of the presence of the head of the coalition in his house.

After Count Nesselrode's departure for Paris, Colencourt made his appearance at Bondy, being sent to the emperor Alexander by Napoleon with proposals for the conclusion of immediate peace on conditions similar to those exacted by the allied powers at Châtillon. The emperor told the duke of Vicenza that he considered himself bound to secure the tranquillity of Europe, and that therefore neither he nor his allies intended to carry on negotiations with Napoleon. It was in vain that Colencourt endeavoured to shake Alexander's decision, representing to him that the allied monarchs, by deposing from the throne a sovereign whom they had all acknowledged, would show themselves upholders of the destructive ideas of the revolution. "The allied monarchs do not desire the overthrow of thrones," replied Alexander, "they will support not any particular party of those dissatisfied with the present government but the general voice of the most estimable men of France. We have decided to continue the struggle to the end, in order that it may not have to be renewed under less favourable circumstances, and we shall combat until we attain a solid and durable peace, which it is impossible to look for from the man who has devastated Europe from Moscow to Cadiz." In conclusion Alexander promised to receive Colencourt at any time in Paris.

"The subjection of Paris has shown itself to be an indispensable inheritance for our chroniclers. Russians could not open the glorious book of their history without shame if after the page on which Napoleon is represented standing amidst Moscow in flames did not follow that where Alexander appears in the midst of Paris."

As he left Bondy, Napoleon's envoy saw the horse prepared for Alexander to ride on his approaching entry into Paris; it was a light-grey horse called *Eclipse* which had formerly been presented to the emperor when Colencourt was ambassador in St. Petersburg. About eight o'clock in the morning Alexander left Bondy. "All were prepared to meet a day unexampled in history," writes an eye-witness.

After he had ridden about a verst, the emperor met the king of Prussia

<sup>1</sup> From the Russian State Archives.



and the guards; letting the Russian guard and his own guard's light cavalry pass in front, as they were to head the troops entering Paris, Alexander followed after them with the king of Prussia and Prince Schwarzenberg, accompanied by a suite of more than a thousand generals and officers of various nationalities. After them came the Austrian grenadiers, the Russian grenadier corps, the foot-guards, and three divisions of cuirassiers with artillery. The most superb weather favoured the triumph of this memorable day.

What were the feelings which then filled the soul of Alexander? Of what was the sovereign thinking that had lived through the painful experiences of Austerlitz, the glitter of Tilsit, changing to the defeat of Friedland and the burning of Moscow? In entire humility he was prepared to repay the evil and mortification he had endured by a magnanimity unheard of in history. Actually there appeared in the midst of Paris a victor who sought for no other triumph but the happiness of the vanquished. Even at Vilna, in December, 1812, the emperor Alexander had said: "Napoleon might have given peace to Europe. He might have — but he did not! Now the enchantment has vanished. Let us see which is best: to make oneself feared or beloved." In Paris a noble field awaited the emperor for changing into action these generous thoughts and aspirations after the ideal.

The streets were crowded with people, and even the roofs of the houses were covered with curious spectators. White draperies hung from the windows and the women at the windows and on the balconies waved white handkerchiefs. Henri Houssaye has very justly defined the frame of mind of the Parisian population on the day of the 31st of March: "They did not reason, they breathed." Answering graciously to the greetings of the populace, the emperor said in a loud voice: "I do not come as an enemy. I come to bring you peace and commerce." The emperor's words called forth acclamations and exclamations of "*Vive la paix!*" A Frenchman who had managed to push his way right up to the emperor said: "We have been waiting for you a long time." "It is the fault of the bravery of your troops if I have not come sooner," answered Alexander. "How handsome the emperor Alexander is, how graciously he bows. He must stay in Paris or give us a sovereign like himself," said the French to each other.

The allied troops were met with joyful exclamations of "Long live Alexander! Long live the Russians! Long live the allies!" As the allies approached the Champs-Élysées, the enthusiasm grew and began to assume the character of a demonstration against the government of Napoleon; white cockades made their appearance on hats and the exclamations resounded: "Long live the Bourbons! Down with the tyrant!" All these manifestations did not, however, arouse the least sympathy among the people for the Bourbons, who were unknown to it; the movement was purely superficial and partly artificial. The French, seeing the white bands on the Russian uniforms, imagined that Europe had taken up arms for the Bourbons, and in their turn showed the colour for which in their hearts they had no sympathy.

#### ALEXANDER I AND THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA (1815 A.D.)

The restoration of the French Empire hastened the settlement of the disputed points at the congress of Vienna. On the 3rd of May, 1815, treaties were signed between Russia, Austria, and Prussia which determined the fate of the duchy of Warsaw; it was forever united to the Russian Empire, with the exception of Posen, Bromberg, and Thorn, which were given to Prussia; Cracow was declared a free town, and the salt mines of Wieliczka

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were returned to Austria, together with the province of Tarnopol, which had belonged to Russia since 1809. Alexander took the title King of Poland and reserved to himself the right of giving to this kingdom, which was destined to have a social government, that "interior extension" which he judged right. In general it was proposed to give to the Russian as well as the Austrian and Prussian subjects the right of national representation and national government institutions in conformity with the form of political states which each government would consider most advantageous and most fitted to the sphere of its possessions. On the same day a treaty was concluded between the plenipotentiaries of Prussia and Saxony, according to the conditions of which the king of Saxony ceded to Prussia almost all Lusatia and a part of Saxony. Finally, more than a month later, on the 8th of June, 1815, the act of the German alliance was signed, and on the following day, the 9th of June, the chief act of the congress of Vienna.

Upon the basis of the conditions of the treaty of 1815, Russia increased her territory to the extent of about 2,100 square miles with a population of more than three millions; Austria acquired 2,300 square miles with three million inhabitants, and Prussia 2,217 square miles with 5,362,000 inhabitants. Thus Russia, who had borne all the three years' war with Napoleon, and made the greatest sacrifices for the triumph of the interests of Europe, received the smallest reward.

A few days before the signing of the treaties that determined the fate of the duchy of Warsaw, which had so long remained in an indefinite position, the emperor Alexander informed the president of the Polish senate, Count Ostrowski, of the approaching union of the kingdom of Poland to the Russian empire. In this letter, amongst other things, it was said: "If in the great interest of general tranquillity it could not be permitted that all the Poles should become united under one sceptre, I have at least endeavoured as far as possible to soften the hardships of their separation and to obtain for them everywhere all possible enjoyment of their nationality." Following upon this came the manifesto to the inhabitants of the kingdom of Poland granting them a constitution, self-government, an army of their own, and freedom of the press.

On the 21st of May, 1815, the solemnity of the restoration of the kingdom of Poland was celebrated in Warsaw. In his letter to the emperor Alexander, Prince Adam Czartoriski expressed the conviction that the remembrance of that day would be for the generous heart of the sovereign a reward for his labours for the good of humanity. All the functionaries of the state assembled in the Catholic cathedral church, where, after divine service had been celebrated, were read the act of renunciation of the king of Saxony, the manifesto of the emperor of all the Russias, king of Poland, and the basis of the future constitution. The council of the empire, the senate, the officials, and the inhabitants then took the oath of allegiance to the sovereign and the constitution. Then the Polish standard with the white eagle was raised over the royal castle and on all government buildings, whilst in all the churches thanksgiving services were celebrated, accompanied by the pealing of bells and firing of cannon. After this all the state dignitaries set off to wait on the czarévitch, Constantine Pavlovitch. The troops were assembled in the plain near Wola, where an altar had been erected; there, in the presence of the august commander-in-chief of the Polish army, the soldiers took the oath in battalions. The cannonades and salvoes of artillery which concluded the solemnity were interrupted by the loud exclamations of the people: "Long live our king Alexander!"

Prince Adam Czartoriski, who had been sent by the emperor from Vienna, occupied a place in the council. On the 25th of May Alexander wrote to him as follows: "You have had occasion to become acquainted with my intentions as to the institutions that I wish to establish in Poland, and the improvements that I desire to carry on in that country. You will endeavour never to lose sight of them during the deliberations of the council and to direct the attention of your colleagues to them in order that the course of government and the reforms, which are confided to them to bring into execution, may be in accordance with my views." A committee was formed for the framing of a constitution, composed of Polish dignitaries under the presidency of Count Ostrowski.

But this benign condition of affairs in the newly created kingdom was not of long duration, and on the 29th of July, 1815, Prince Czartoriski had to complain to the emperor of the czarevitch, and expressed his conviction that no enemy could occasion greater injuries to Alexander. It was, he said, as though he wished to bring matters to a rupture. "No zeal, no submission can soften him," wrote Prince Adam to the emperor. "Neither the army, nor the nation, nor private individuals can find favour in his sight. The constitution in particular gives him occasion for ceaseless, bitter derision; everything of rule, form, or law is made the object of mockery and laughter, and unfortunately deeds have already followed upon words. The grand duke does not even observe the military laws which he himself has established. He absolutely wishes to bring in corporal punishments and gave orders yesterday that they should be brought into force, in spite of the unanimous representations of the committee. Desertion, which is already now considerable, will become general; in September most of the officers will ask for their discharge. In fact, it is as if a plan were laid to oppose the views of your majesty, in order to render the benefits you have conferred void, in order to frustrate from the very beginning the success of your enterprise. His imperial highness in such a case would be, without himself knowing it, the blind instrument of this destructive design, of which the first effect would be to exasperate equally both Russians and Poles and to take away all power from your majesty's most solemn declarations. What would I not give for it to be possible to here satisfy the grand duke and fulfil the desires of your majesty in this respect! But this is decidedly impossible, and if he remains here I on the contrary foresee the most lamentable consequences!"

Indeed, as we look more closely into the state of affairs in Warsaw in the year 1815, it remains an unsolved enigma how the emperor Alexander, knowing as he did the indomitable character of his brother, could resolve to confide the destiny of the kingdom he had newly created to the wilful, arbitrary hands of the czarevitch, whose personality as the probable heir to the throne of Russia had disturbed the Poles since the time of the termination of the war of 1812. Prince Czartoriski's letter did not alter Alexander's determination: the czarevitch remained in Warsaw, and continued his impolitic course of action, the lamentable results of which were revealed by subsequent events.

On the 21st of May in Vienna the emperor signed the manifesto calling upon all the powers who observed the laws of truth and piety to take up arms against the usurper of the French throne. In the same manifesto the annexation to Russia of the greater part of the former duchy of Warsaw was announced: "Security is thus given to our frontiers, a firm defence is raised, calumnies and inimical attempts are repulsed, and the ties of brother-



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hood renewed between races mutually united by a common origin. We have therefore considered it advantageous to assure the destiny of this country by basing its interior administration upon special regulations, peculiar to the speech and customs of the inhabitants and adapted to their local position. Following the teaching of the Christian law, whose dominion embraces so vast a number of people of various races, but at the same time preserves their distinctive qualities and customs unchanged, we have desired in creating the happiness of our new subjects, to plant in their hearts the feeling of devotion to our throne and thus for ever efface the traces of former misfortunes arising from pernicious discord and protracted struggles." Without waiting for the termination of the congress the emperor Alexander left Vienna on the 25th of May; he desired to be nearer the Rhine until the arrival of the Russian troops and in closer proximity to the seat of the approaching military action.<sup>g</sup> The Russians, however, who were to have formed the army of the middle Rhine, were unable, though making forced marches, to arrive in time to take part in the brief campaign which terminated Napoleon's reign of the hundred days.<sup>k</sup>

## ALEXANDER'S RELIGIOUS MYSTICISM; BARONESS KRÜDENER

When he had left Vienna, the emperor Alexander stopped for a short time at Munich and Stuttgart, and on the 4th of June he arrived at Heilbronn, which had been chosen for the Russian headquarters. Here took place his first meeting with Baroness Juliane Krüdener.

Baroness Krüdener (born Vietinghov), the author of the famous novel *Valérie*, had already long since been converted from a vain woman of the world, and had entered upon the path of mystical pietism. Her acquaintance with the Moravian brethren and in particular with Johann Jung had definitely confirmed her ideas in a pious philanthropic direction. With the exaltation that was natural to her she became more and more persuaded that a great work lay before her, that God himself had entrusted her with a lofty mission, to turn the unbelieving to the path of truth. As her biographer observes, she was ready to affirm in imitation of Louis XIV that "*Le ciel c'est moi*" (Heaven is I). In 1814 Baroness Krüdener became intimate with the maid of honour Mlle. R. S. Sturdza, and through her penetrated to the empress Elizabeth Alexievna.

But, according to her own words, an inward voice told her that the matter was not to end there; the final aim of her aspiration was a friendship with the emperor Alexander, whose spiritual condition at that time was fully known to her from her conversations with Mademoiselle Sturdza as well as after the emperor's interviews with Johann Jung which took place during his majesty's stay at Bronchsaal. During the congress of Vienna Juliane Krüdener kept up an active correspondence with Mademoiselle Sturdza; in it she referred to the emperor Alexander and the great and beautiful qualities of his soul. "I have already known for some time that the Lord will grant me the joy of seeing him," wrote Baroness Krüdener; "if I live till then, it will be one of the happiest moments of my life. I have a multitude of things to tell him, for I have investigated much on his behalf: the Lord alone can prepare his heart to receive them; I am not uneasy about it; my business is to be without fear and reproach; his, to bow down before Christ, the truth." With these spiritual effusions were artfully mixed mysterious prophecies, such as: "The storm draws nigh, the lilies have appeared only to vanish."

Mademoiselle Sturdza was struck by these mysterious prognostications

and showed the letter to the emperor Alexander; he commissioned her to write to Baroness Krüdener that he would esteem it a happiness to meet her. The correspondence was further prolonged in the same spirit and finally the "prince of darkness" appeared on the scene, preventing her conversing with Alexander, that instrument of mercy, of heavenly things. "But the Almighty will be stronger than he," wrote Baroness Krüdener; "God, who loves to make use of those who in the eyes of the world serve as objects of humiliation and mockery, has prepared my heart for that submission which does not seek the approval of men. I am only a nonentity. He is everything, and earthly kings tremble before Him." The emperor Alexander's first religious transport, in the mystical sense, had manifested itself in the year 1812, when heavy trials fell upon Russia and filled his soul with alarm. His religious aspirations could not be satisfied with the usual forms and ceremonies of the church; in the matter of religion he sought for something different. Having separated himself, under the influence of fatal events, from those humanitarian ideals which to a certain degree had animated him in his youth he had adopted religious conventions; but here, also, by the nature of his character, he was governed by aspirations after the ideal, without, however, departing from the sentimental romanticism that was peculiar to him. Under such conditions Alexander must necessarily have been impressionable to the influence of pietists and mystics.

When he came to Heilbronn he was overwhelmed with weariness and sadness after the pompous receptions at the courts of Munich and Würtemberg, and his soul thirsted for solitude. During the first interview Baroness Krüdener lifted the veil of the past before the eyes of Alexander and represented to him his life with all its errors of ambition and vain pride; she proved to her listener that the momentary awakening of conscience, the acknowledgment of weaknesses, and temporary repentance do not constitute a full expiation of sins, and do not yet lead to spiritual regeneration. "No, your majesty," said she to him, "you have not yet drawn near to the god man, as a criminal begging for mercy. You have not yet received forgiveness from him, who alone has the power to absolve sins upon earth. You are still in your sins. You have not yet humbled yourself before Jesus, you have not yet said, like the publican, from the depths of your heart: 'God, I am a great sinner; have mercy upon me!' And that is why you do not find spiritual peace. Listen to the words of a woman, who has also been a great sinner, but who has found pardon of all her sins at the foot of the cross of Christ." Baroness Krüdener talked to Alexander in this strain for nearly three hours. Alexander could only say a few broken words, and bowing his head on his hands, he shed abundant tears. All the words he heard, were, as the Scripture expresses it, like a two-edged sword, piercing to the very depths of the soul and spirit, and trying the feelings and thoughts of his heart. Finally, Baroness Krüdener, alarmed by the agitated state into which her words had thrown Alexander, said to him: "Sire, I beg you to pardon the tone in which I have spoken. Believe that in all sincerity of heart and before God I have said to you truths which have never before been said to you. I have only fulfilled a sacred duty to you." "Do not be afraid," answered Alexander, "all your words have found a place in my heart: you have helped me to discover in myself what I had never before observed; I thank God for it, but I must often have such conversations, and I ask you not to go away."

From that day such conversations became a spiritual necessity to the emperor Alexander and a moral support in the pathway upon which he from thenceforth stood. According to the opinion of Prince Galitzin, Alexander's

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conversations with Baroness Krüdener were of a spiritual tendency, and perhaps only in part touched upon contemporary events. "There is no doubt," says Prince Galitzin, "that Baroness Krüdener, who lived by faith, strengthened the development of faith in the emperor by her disinterested and experienced counsels; she certainly directed the will of Alexander to still greater self-sacrifice and prayer, and perhaps at the same time revealed to him the secret of that spiritual, prayerful communion which, although designed by God as an inheritance for all mortals, is unfortunately the portion of a very few chosen ones." From that time it only remained for Prince Galitzin to experience a lively feeling of satisfaction as he observed, "with what giant strides the emperor advanced in the pathway of religion."

If the moral sphere in which Alexander began to move awakened the entire sympathy of Prince Galitzin, others looked upon the matter from another point of view.

In accordance with the course he had adopted during the campaigns of 1813 and 1814, the emperor desired to remain at the centre of military operations. This intention was not to the taste of the Austrians, and from their headquarters at Heidelberg they sent a notification that it was difficult to find suitable premises in such a small place and that his majesty would be far more tranquil if he prolonged his stay at Heilbrom. The emperor ordered an answer to be sent to the effect that he requested that only one or two houses should be allotted for his occupation in Heidelberg, and that his headquarters should be established in the neighbouring villages. After this, on the 6th of June, Alexander removed to Heidelberg and finally took up his abode outside the town, upon the banks of the Neckar, in the house of an Englishman, named Pickford, and here remained until the 10th of June, awaiting the approach of his army to the Rhine. The Baroness Krüdener also did not delay removing to Heidelberg; she settled not far from the house occupied by the emperor. He spent most of his evenings with her and, listening to her instructions, in confidential intercourse he told her of the griefs and passions which had darkened his sorrowful life. In these conversations, the fellow traveller and collaborator of Baroness Krüdener, Empaitaz, also took part. Baroness Krüdener did not flatter Alexander, she possessed the gift of speaking the truth without giving offence. According to the opinion of her admirers she might have become a beneficent genius for Russia, but this was hindered by the hypocrisy of various unworthy persons, who took advantage of this new frame of mind of the emperor, using it as a means for the attainment of aims which were not at all in accordance with Alexander's lofty sentiments and intentions.

Becoming more and more convinced of the power of repentance and prayer, the emperor once said to Empaitaz: "I can assure you that when I find myself in awkward situations I always come out of them through prayer. I will tell you something which would greatly astonish everyone if it were known: when I am in counsel, with ministers, who are far from sharing my principles, and they show themselves of opposite opinions, instead of disputing, I lift up an inward prayer, and little by little they come round to principles of humanity and justice."

Alexander had adopted the habit of daily reading the Holy Scriptures and began to seek in them immediate answers to his doubts. "On the 7th of June," relates Empaitaz, "he read the 35th psalm; in the evening he told us that this psalm had dispersed all remaining anxiety in his soul as to the success of the war; thenceforth he was convinced that he was acting in accordance with the will of God."



## ALEXANDER'S HOLY ALLIANCE (1815 A.D.)

The conclusion of the Holy Alliance belongs to this period (1815). In conceiving the idea of it, the emperor Alexander intended, independently of ordinary political negotiations, to strengthen the common bond between monarchies by an act based on the immutable truths of the divine teaching, to create an alliance which should bind together monarchies and nations by ties of brotherhood, consecrated by religion, and should be for them, like the Gospel, obligatory by conscience, feeling and duty. The emperor Alexander said one day to Baroness Krüdener: "I am leaving France, but before my departure I want by a public act to give due praise to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the protection he has shown us, and to call upon the nations to stand in obedience to the Gospel. I have brought you the project of this act and ask you to look over it attentively, and if you do not approve any of the expressions used to indicate them to me. I desire that the emperor of Austria and the king of Prussia should unite with me in this act of adoration, in order that people may see that we, like the eastern magi, confess the supreme power of God the Saviour. You will unite with me in prayer to God that my allies may be disposed to sign it."

Alexander wrote out the draft of the Act of the Holy Alliance with his own hand, and Mademoiselle Sturdza and Count Vapadistria took part in the wording of it. The latter ventured to observe that no such act was to be met with in the annals of diplomacy and that his majesty might express the ruling idea of the act in a declaration or manifesto. Alexander replied that his decision was unchangeable, that he took it upon himself to obtain the signature to it of his allies, the emperor of Austria and the king of Prussia. As to France, England, and other courts — "that," said the emperor to him, "will already be your concern."

The treaty of the Christian brotherly alliance, imagined by Alexander and called the Holy Alliance, consisted of three articles according to which the allies bound themselves: (1) to remain united by the indissoluble ties of brotherly friendship, to show each other help and co-operation, to govern their subjects in the same spirit of fraternity in order to maintain truth and peace; (2) to esteem themselves members of one Christian people, placed by providence to rule over three branches of one and the same family; and (3) to invite all the powers to acknowledge these rules and to enter the Holy Alliance. The sovereigns who signed the treaty were bound, "both in ruling over their own subjects and in political relations with other governments, to be guided by the precepts of the holy Gospel, which, not being limited in their application to private life alone, should immediately govern the wills of monarchs and their actions."

King Frederick William willingly declared his consent to become a member of the Holy Alliance, conceived in the same spirit as the scene that had once taken place at night at the tomb of Frederick the Great in the garrison church at Potsdam, and appearing to be the realisation of the thought expressed by the sovereigns after the battle of Bautzen: "If the Lord blesses our undertakings," said they, "then will we give praise to him before the face of the whole world."

The emperor Francis, however, received with greater reserve the proposal to join the Holy Alliance; he was in general incapable of letting himself be carried away by fantastic ideas and romanticism or of being subject to enthusiastic impulses of any kind. He consented to sign the treaty only after Metternich had tranquillised him with the assurance that the project should only

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be regarded as inoffensive chatter. But although in his narrative of the formation of the Holy Alliance Metternich contemptuously calls it "this empty, sonorous monument," he passes over one point in silence: by joining this treaty Austria obtained a valuable instrument for placing Russia at the head of the reactionary movement in Europe, and Metternich did not hesitate to take advantage of this circumstance with inimitable art in order to attain the political aims he had traced out. Only two sovereigns did not receive invitations to join the Holy Alliance: the pope and the sultan. The prince regent limited himself to a letter in which he expressed his approval of the context of the treaty, but on account of parliamentary considerations the English government did not join the alliance.

The Act of the Holy Alliance concluded in Paris with the emperor of Austria and the king of Prussia remained secret for some time, as the emperor Alexander did not desire to make it generally known. Christmas Day (December 25th, 1815) (January 6th, 1816) was the occasion chosen for the publication of the treaty. In the manifesto issued, it is said: "Having learned from experiences and consequences calamitous to the whole world that the course of former political relations between the European powers was not based on those principles of truth through which the wisdom of God, made known in his revelation, assures the peace and prosperity of nations, we have, conjointly with their majesties, the Austrian emperor Francis I and the king of Prussia, Frederick William, entered upon the establishment of an alliance between ourselves (inviting other Christian powers to take part in the same), by which we are mutually bound, both between ourselves and in relation to our subjects, to take for the sole means of attaining our ends the rule drawn from the words and teaching of our Saviour Jesus Christ, enjoining men to live as brothers, not in enmity and malice, but in peace and love. We desire and pray to the most High that he may send down his grace upon us, that he may confirm this Holy Alliance between all the powers, to their common welfare, and may no one venture to hinder unanimity by falseness to our compact. Therefore, adding to this a transcript of the alliance, we command that it shall be made public and read in all churches."

The most holy synod, in its turn, ordered that the treaty of the Holy Alliance should be printed and placed on the walls of churches or affixed to boards, and also that ideas should be borrowed from it for preaching. And thus, from the year 1816 Russia entered upon a new political path — an apocalyptic one; from thenceforth in diplomatic documents relating to the epoch, instead of clearly defined and political aims, we meet with obscure commentaries concerning the spirit of evil, vanquished by Providence, the word of the Most High, the word of life.<sup>1</sup> The ideal of the government administrators of that period, who stood at the head of affairs, became a sort of vague theological, patriarchal monarchy. Over Europe was lowered the dark veil of continuous and close reaction.<sup>9</sup>

The real significance of European history during the next period is best understood by studying the development of the alliances formed against the power of Napoleon, like the one under consideration, and which endured being renewed from time to time as occasion demanded. At first these were directed towards a definite object, but they gradually assumed wider scope, and in a spirit quite foreign to the "Holy Alliance," endeavoured to arrest

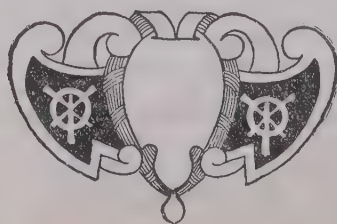
<sup>1</sup> The letter written by Emperor Alexander on the 18th of March, 1816, to Count Sieven, Ambassador in London, upon the occasion of the publication of the treaty of the Holy Alliance and preserved in the Russian State Archives, affords a clear instance of the direction of politics at that time.

and stem the aspirations of the period, whether legitimate or degenerate. The partly stationary, partly retrograde attitude of all, or most, of the European governments, which afterward became general, had its inception at this time. The spirit of absolutism, in short, found expression in the Holy Alliance. That this mystic Alliance was not suitable for any practical purpose was proved on the spot.<sup>1</sup>

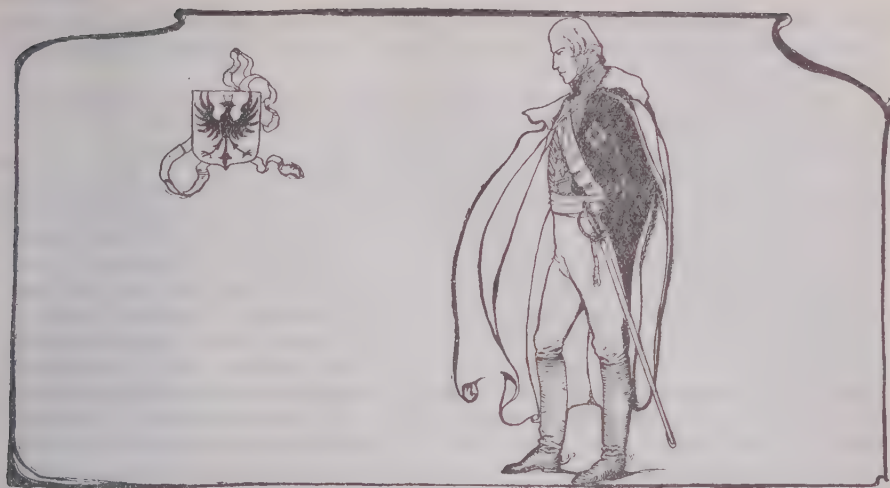
It was quite apparent and recognised by all that France could not be left to herself, for it had been determined to leave an allied army of 150,000 men under the Duke of Wellington in possession of the French fortresses. For what purpose and under what conditions this was to take place, naturally had to be decided by some explicit treaty. On the same day on which peace with France was signed — 20th November — the four powers which had signed the Treaty of Chaumont, England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia concluded among themselves a new Alliance of real and far-reaching significance. The new treaty confirmed the compacts made at Chaumont, and on the 25th of March, of the current year 1815, the allies expressed their conviction that the peace of Europe depended upon the consolidation of the restored order of things in France, on the maintenance of the royal authority and of the constitutional charter; they pledged themselves to reinforce the garrison troops in France, if necessary by 60,000 men from each of the four Powers, or if required by their combined army, in order to exclude Bonaparte and his family for ever from the French throne, but to support the sovereignty of the Bourbons and the Constitution. They further agreed, after the time fixed for the investment of France by the allied troops had elapsed, to adopt measures for the maintenance of the existing order of things in France and of the peace of Europe. In order to facilitate the execution of these duties and to consolidate the friendly relations of the four powers, it was arranged that from time to time, at certain fixed intervals, meetings of the sovereigns in person or of their ministers — congresses in fact — should take place, to consult concerning the great and common interests of the allies, and the measures that might be considered necessary at the time to promote the welfare and peace of the nations and of Europe.

It was this treaty which founded and introduced the Congress policy of the next decade, and it is well to note that France although a member of the Holy Alliance was excluded from this league, as was to be expected, and that England which had remained outside the Holy Alliance, here stood at the head of affairs. The true position and significance of things are thereby made clear.<sup>2</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Skrine<sup>1</sup> says, however: "For nearly half a century the Holy Alliance was the keystone of the edifice erected at Vienna, the hidden chain which linked Russia with the other military powers."]







## CHAPTER X

### ALEXANDER I, MYSTIC AND HUMANITARIAN

[1801-1825 A.D.]

Heaven grant that we may one day attain our aim of making Russia free and of preserving her from despotism and tyranny. This is my unique desire, and I willingly sacrifice all my labours and my life to the aim that is so dear to me.—ALEXANDER I.

#### THE COMPLEX CHARACTER OF ALEXANDER I

IN the preceding chapter, we followed the history of the external affairs of Russia during fourteen years of the reign of Alexander I. Now we shall witness the incidents of that monarch's later years, and, in particular, shall consider the internal condition of Russia during the reign of one of the most interesting of sovereigns. Clearly to appreciate the complex character of the reigns, we may follow Shilder, partly by way of recapitulation, in dividing it into three periods, each of which seems to represent a phase of the mental evolution of Alexander.<sup>a</sup>

The first period embraces the time between the years 1801 and 1810, and is usually designated as the epoch of reforms, but as we penetrate more deeply into the spirit of that period, we come to the conclusion that it might more justly be termed the epoch of vacillations. Actually, at this time, that is from 1801 to 1810, ceaseless vacillations took place in the governmental life of Russia, both in regard to the outward as well as the inward policy of the empire; throughout every branch of the administration of the state an entire instability of views and brusque changes from one political system to another were to be observed. All these manifestations were conditional exclusively on the personality of the emperor Alexander, who pos-

sessed the characteristic of not unfrequently vacillating at short intervals between two entirely opposed frames of mind, without reference to the direction he had elected to follow.

The second period is continued from 1810 to 1816 and in its inner signification is entirely concentrated in the struggle with France. This period in contrast to the preceding, is distinguished by the pursuit of one ruling idea, carried out with remarkable consecutiveness to the end, an instance which is almost unique in the whole reign of Alexander. Unexpectedly to all, to the astonishment of the whole world, in 1812, he showed himself immovable and decided to be or not to be. Meanwhile Napoleon, preparing himself for the invasion of Russia, had based his political and military calculations upon the imaginary weakness of Alexander's character, and in this respect the conqueror's hidden thoughts corresponded with the secret calculations of his allies, Metternich and Hardenburg. All these three enemies of Russia were however destined to experience complete disenchantment. The ruling idea of Alexander, which he then steadfastly followed, consisted in the overthrow of Napoleon. [These two periods we have covered in the preceding chapter, but we shall have occasion to revert to certain phases and incidents of their development.]

The third period, beginning from the year 1816, finishes with the death of the emperor Alexander in 1825. Historians usually call it the period of congresses and of the preservation of order in Europe established by them. It would be more exact and nearer to the truth to call this last decade the period of reaction.

After the overthrow of Napoleon the emperor Alexander appears as a weary martyr, wavering between the growing influence of Arakcheiev and his own personal convictions which he had adopted in the days of his youth. Amongst the reactionary measures which commenced in 1816 there can still be traced bright gleams of the enthusiasms and dreams of his youth. The speech pronounced in 1818 by the emperor at the opening of the Polish diet testifies to this. But from the year 1820 a complete vanishing of all the previous ideals to the realisation of which he had once aspired with sincere enthusiasm, is to be observed. To this moral condition was also united an incurable weariness of life, the signs of which had already been observed in the emperor Alexander by Metternich at the congress of Verona in 1822.

As we enter upon a closer analysis of the three periods into which we have divided this reign, we remark another curious feature in the development of Alexander. Metternich calls this phenomenon that of the periodic evolutions of the emperor's mind (*les évolutions périodiques de son esprit*). The phenomenon was repeated with striking regularity about every five years of his reign. Assimilating to himself any idea with which he was inspired, Alexander gave himself up to it, unhesitatingly and with full enthusiasm. The incubation required about two years, during which the idea acquired for him the importance of a system; the third year he remained faithful to the system chosen, he became more and more attached to it, he listened with real enthusiasm to its upholders and at such a time was inaccessible to any influence that might shake the justness of the views he had adopted. The fourth year he grew disturbed at the consequences which might possibly arise; the fifth year there became observable a medley of the old and vanishing system with some new idea which was beginning to take birth in his mind. This idea was usually diametrically opposed to the one that had left his horizon. After that, when he had assimilated the new convictions, he did not preserve any remembrance of the ideas he had abandoned,

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beyond the obligations which bound him to the various representatives of the former views.<sup>b</sup>

## MINISTERIAL INFLUENCES; SPERANSKI AND ARAKTCHEIEV

From 1806 to 1812 the preponderating influence over Alexander I was that of Speranski. Son of a village priest, educated in a seminary, and afterwards professor of mathematics and philosophy in the seminary of Alexander Nevski, Speranski became preceptor to the children of Alexis Kurakin, thanks to whom he quitted the ecclesiastical for a civil career, and became secretary to Troichtchinski, who was then chancellor of the imperial council. Later, after he had become director of the department of the interior under Prince Kotchubei, Speranski rose to the position of secretary of state and gained the complete confidence of the emperor. The favourites of the preceeding period had all been imbued with English ideas; Speranski, on the contrary, loved France and manifested a particular admiration for Napoleon. These French sympathies, shared at the time by Alexander I, formed a new bond between the prince and the minister which was not severed until the rupture with Napoleon. "We know," said Monsieur Bogdanovitch, "Alexander's fondness for representative forms and a constitutional government, but this taste resembles that of a dilettante who goes into ecstasies over a fine painting. Alexander early convinced himself that neither Russia's vast extent nor the constitution of civil society would permit the realisation of his dream. From day to day he deferred the execution of his utopian ideas, but delighted to discourse with his intimates upon the projected constitution and the disadvantages of absolutism. To please the emperor, Speranski ardently defended the principles of liberty, and by so doing exposed himself to accusations of anarchy and of having conceived projects dangerous to institutions that had received the consecration of time and custom." Painsstaking, learned, and profoundly patriotic and humane, he was the man best able to realise all that was practicable in the ideas of Alexander.

Speranski presented to the sovereign a systematic plan of reform. The imperial council received an extension of privileges. Composed as it was of the chief dignitaries of the state, it became in a measure the legislative power, and had the duty of examining new laws, extraordinary measures, and ministerial reports; it was in reality a sketch of a representative government. After the interview at Erfurt, during which Napoleon had showed him marked attention, Speranski entered into relations with the French legal writers, Loaré, Legras, Dupont de Nemours, and made them correspondents of the legislative commission of the imperial council. The Code Napoleon was not adapted to any but a homogeneous nation emancipated from personal and feudal servitude, with a population whose members all enjoyed a certain equality before the law. Thus to Speranski the emancipation of the serfs was the corner-stone of regeneration. He dreamed of instituting a third estate, of limiting the number of privileged classes, and of forming the great aristocratic families into a peerage similar to that of England. He encouraged Count Stroinovski to publish his pamphlet, *Rules to be Observed between Proprietors and Serfs*. As early as 1809 he had decided that the holders of university degrees should have the advantage over all others in attaining the degrees of the *tchin*. Thus a doctor would at once enter the eighth rank, a master or arts the ninth, a candidate the tenth, and a bachelor the twelfth.



Like Turgot, the minister of Louis XVIII, and the Prussian reformer, Stein, Speranski had aroused the hostility of everyone. The nobility of court and antechamber, and all the young officials who wished to rise by favour alone were exasperated by the ukase of 1809; proprietors were alarmed at Speranski's project for the emancipation of the serfs; the senators were irritated by his plans for reorganisation which would reduce the first governing body of the empire to the position of a supreme court of justice; and the high aristocracy was incensed at the boldness of a man of low condition, the son of a village priest. The people themselves complained at the increase in taxation, all those whose interests had been set aside united against the upstart; he was accused of despising the time-honoured institutions of Moscow and of having presented as a model to the Russians the Code Napoleon when the country was on the eve of war with France. The ministers Balachev, Armfelt, Guriev, Count Rostoptchin, Arakteheiev, and the grand duchess Catherine Pavlovna, sister of the emperor, influenced Alexander against him. Karanzin, the historian, addressed to the emperor an impassioned memoir on *New and Old Russia*, in which he stepped forth as the champion of serfdom, of the old laws, and of autocracy. Speranski's enemy even went to the length of denouncing him as a traitor and an accomplice of France. In March, 1812, he was suddenly sent from the capital to Nijni-Novgorod and afterwards deported to a distant post where he was subjected to close surveillance. He was recalled in 1819, when passions had somewhat cooled, and was appointed governor of Siberia. In 1821 he returned to St. Petersburg, but did not recover his former position.

A new epoch now set in. The adversaries of Speranski, Armfelt, Schichkov, and Rostoptchin attained high positions, but the acknowledged favourite was Arakteheiev, the rough "corporal of Gachina," born enemy to progress and reform and apostle of absolute dominion and passive obedience. He gained the confidence of Alexander, first by his devotion to the memory of Paul, next by his punctuality, his unquestioning obedience, his disinterestedness and habits of industry, and lastly by his ingenuous admiration for the "genius of the emperor." He was the most trustworthy of servitors, the most imperious of superiors, and the most perfect instrument for a reaction. His influence was not at once exclusive. After having conquered Napoleon, Alexander looked upon himself as the liberator of nations. He had set Germany free; he dealt leniently with France and obtained for it a charter; he granted a constitution to Poland, with the intention of extending its benefit to Russia. Though the censorship of the press had recently forbidden the *Viestnik slovesnosti* to criticise, "the servants of his majesty," Alexander had not entirely renounced his utopian ideas. English Protestant influence succeeded to the influence of France; French theatres were closed and Bible societies opened.

Nevertheless, this first period of favour for Arakteheiev soon became an epoch of sterility; though reaction had not yet set in there had at least come a decided pause. The reforms interrupted by the war of 1812 were not to be again resumed. The code of Speranski had come to an end and all efforts to compile one better suited to Russian traditions were of no avail.

#### EDUCATIONAL ADVANCES; THE LYCÉE AND THE LIBRARY

On the 23rd of January of the year 1811 was promulgated the statute of the lycée of Tsarskoi Selo, which had been definitely worked out by secretary of state Speranski. The aim of the establishment of the lycée was the educa-

[1801-1815 A.D.]

tion of young men, and chiefly of those who were destined to fill the most important posts of the government service. The following circumstance was the primary cause of the foundation of this higher educational establishment: although the emperor did not interfere in the matter of the education of his younger brothers, the grand dukes Nicholas and Michael Pavlovitch, which was entirely left to the empress, Marie Feodorovna, a case soon presented itself where the emperor recognised the necessity of departing from the rule he had established. The widowed empress desired to send her sons to the university of Leipsic for the completion of their studies; this was, however, firmly opposed by the emperor, and instead he had the idea of establishing a lycée at Tsarskoi Selo, where his younger brothers could assist at the public lectures. A wing of the palace, connected by a gallery with the chief building, was adapted to this purpose, and the solemn opening of the Tsarskoi Selo lycée took place on the 31st of October, 1811, in the presence of the emperor Alexander. It commenced with a thanksgiving service in the court chapel of Tsarskoi Selo, after which those present accompanied the clergy who made the tour of the edifice, sprinkling it with holy water. At the conclusion of the ecclesiastical ceremony, the imperial charter given to the lycée was read in the hall of the building, and the speeches began. Amongst them that of the adjunct professor Kunitzin earned the special approbation of the emperor for the art with which it avoided generalisations and dwelt on the beneficence of the founder. In conclusion, Alexander inspected the premises allotted to the students, and was present at their dinner table.

The year 1811 was also signalised by the completion of the building of the Kazan cathedral, the first stone of which had been laid by the emperor Alexander on the 8th of September, 1801. The constructor of the cathedral was the Russian architect Andrew Nikivorovitch Voroniknin. The building committee was under the direction of the president of the Academy of Arts, Count Alexander Stroganov. The building of the cathedral took ten years, and on the 27th of September, 1811, on the anniversary of the emperor's coronation, the solemn consecration of the new cathedral took place in the presence of the emperor. Count Stroganov was that day elevated to the dignity of actual privy councillor of the first rank. He was not destined to enjoy for long the completion of his work: ten days later he died.

In the very thick of the preparations for war, and amidst such agitating political circumstances as had been unknown till then, the emperor Alexander continued to labour for the enlightenment of his subjects. Notable among his acts at this time was the foundation of a public library. Catherine II's idea of founding in the capital a library for general use, and of rendering it accessible to all, was only brought to fulfilment by Alexander. A special edifice was built with this object; its construction had been already commenced during Catherine's reign. By 1812 all the preliminary work in the



TOWER OF IVAN VELIKA, MOSCOW

building of this library was completed, and on the 14th of January the emperor honoured the newly constructed library with a visit, and examined in detail all its curiosities. Following on this the "draft of detailed rules for the administration of the Imperial Public Library" was ratified by his majesty on the 7th of March.

The events of 1812, however, deferred the actual opening of the library: soon measures had to be thought of to save its treasures. The opening ceremony took place, therefore, two years later, in 1814, on the 14th of January, the anniversary of the day on which the emperor Alexander made his gracious visit to the library, on the memorable occasion of its founding.

A great many festivities took place at the Russian court upon the occasion of the marriage of the grand duke Nicholas Pavlovitch with the princess Charlotte of Prussia (July 13th, 1817). About the same time (July 31st, 1817), a modest festival was celebrated at Tsarskoi Selo — the first distribution of prizes to students of the lycée. On that day the emperor Alexander, accompanied by Prince A. N. Galitzin, was present in the conference hall of the institution he had founded; he himself distributed the prizes and certificates to the pupils, and after having announced the awards to be given to them and their teachers he left, bidding a fatherly farewell to all. The poet Pushkin was amongst the students who took part in the festival.

#### EXPULSION OF THE JESUITS FROM ST. PETERSBURG

The year 1815, which had been filled with a series of unexpected events, terminated with an important administrative measure which no one had foreseen. On the 18th of January, 1817, an imperial ukase was issued ordering the immediate expulsion of all the monks of the order of Jesuits from St. Petersburg, and at the same time forbidding their entry into either of the two capitals. In the middle of the night they were provided with fur cloaks, and warm boots, and despatched in carts to the residence of their brethren at Polotsk.<sup>1</sup> It was enjoined in this ukase that the Catholic church in St. Petersburg should be "placed on the same footing that had been established during the reign of the empress Catherine II and which had endured up to the year 1800." This expulsion put an end to the pedagogical activity of the Jesuits in St. Petersburg. The words of N. J. Turgeniev, spoken in the year 1812 and addressed to his successor Gruber, the Berezovski Jesuit, were, in fact, realised for the order in the most unpleasant way. He said: "This is the beginning of the end; you will now do so much that you will be sent away." The government was compelled to have recourse to decisive measures in view of cases of conversion to Catholicism amongst the orthodox pupils of the Jesuit school in St. Petersburg; besides which the influence of Jesuit propaganda was spreading in a remarkable way amongst the ladies of the high society of St. Petersburg.

This measure, however, did not put a limit to the misfortunes that descended upon the Jesuits during the reign of Alexander. A few years later (on the 25th of March, 1820) the order was given that the Jesuits should be expelled finally from Russia, adding that they were not under any aspect or

<sup>1</sup> In the year 1812 Alexander had granted a charter to the Jesuit College of Polotsk, raising it to the rank of an "academy" and giving it rights and privileges equal to those of the university; he was then probably governed by political considerations concerning Poland, and in the charter he refers to the college as "affording great advantages for the education of youth" and trusts that the "Jesuits will labour in Poland *dans le bon sens*" (along the right lines.)



[1816-1818 A.D.]

denomination to be allowed to return; and at the same time the Polotsk academy was suppressed, as well as all the schools depending on it.

## LIBERATION OF THE PEASANTS OF THE BALTIC PROVINCES (1816-1818 A.D.)

The nobility of Esthonia had in 1811 announced their desire of giving up their rights of servitude over their peasants. In the year 1816 this intention led to the confirmation of the establishment of the Esthonian peasants upon a new footing, according to which the individual right of servitude was abolished. The nobility kept the land as their property, and the relations between the peasants and the landowners were from thenceforth based upon mutual agreement by free will contracts conformable with rules determining essential conditions; a period of transition was appointed for bringing in the new order of things. After the first trial, the individual, landless liberation of the peasants spread throughout the Baltic provinces and in other governments — namely, in Courland in 1817 and in Livonia in 1819. The introduction of the new order of things was everywhere accomplished without any particular difficulty.

In expressing to the Livonian nobility his satisfaction upon the occasion of the reform effected, the emperor Alexander said: "I rejoice that the Livonian nobility has justified my expectations. Your example deserves imitation. You have acted in accordance with the spirit of the times and have understood that liberal principles alone can serve as a basis for the happiness of nations." From these words it is evident that the emperor entertained, according to Shishkov's expression, an unfortunate prejudice against the right of servitude in Russia, and it appeared to many that in other parts of the empire words would be followed by deeds.<sup>1</sup>

From the year 1816, the peasant question began to occupy society. The aide-de-camp of his majesty, Kisselev, even presented a memoir to the emperor which bore the title *Of the Gradual Abolition of Slavery in Russia*. The memoir began with the words: "Civic liberty is the foundation of national prosperity. This truth is so undoubted that I consider it superfluous here to explain how desirable it is that the lawful independence of which serfs and agriculturists are unjustly deprived, should be established for them throughout the empire. I consider this measure the more needful now that the progress of enlightenment and our closer contact with Europe, which hourly increases the fermentation of minds, indicate to the government the necessity of averting the consequences which may follow, and whose menace it would be already difficult or impossible to deny. The blood in which the French Revolution was steeped bears witness to this." In what manner the emperor Alexander regarded the memoir presented by his aide-de-camp, and what fate overtook this production of his pen have remained unknown.

P. D. Kisselev was not the only nobleman who recognised the urgent necessity of the government's occupying itself with the peasant question. The following circumstance serves as a proof of this: in this same year, 1816, many of the richest landowners of the government of St. Petersburg, knowing the emperor's moral aspirations to better the lot of the peasant serfs, decided to turn them into obligatory settlers upon the basis of the then existing regu-

<sup>1</sup> Much earlier, in 1807, the emperor had expressed himself to General Savari upon this question in the following words: "I want to bring the country out of the state of barbarism in which this traffic in men leaves it. I will say more — if civilisation were more advanced, I would abolish this slavery even if it were to cost me my head."

lations. The act was drawn up and signed by sixty-five landowners; it only remained to take it to be ratified by the emperor, and for this purpose the general aide-de-camp J. V. Vasilitchikov was chosen. Those who had taken part in the signature of the act supposed that the emperor knew nothing of the meetings that had taken place on the occasion and were convinced that he would receive graciously a proposition, which was in accordance with his manner of thinking. But the emperor Alexander was aware of the determination of the nobles and hardly had Vasilitchikov, after requesting permission to present himself to his majesty, begun to speak of the matter, when Alexander, interrupting him, inquired: "To whom, in your opinion, does the legislative power belong in Russia?" And when Vasilitchikov replied: "Without doubt to your imperial majesty as an autocratic emperor," Alexander, raising his voice, said, "Then leave it to me to promulgate such laws as I consider most beneficial to my subjects."

The emperor's reply gave little hope of a favourable solution of this important question. In the then existing state of affairs, the matter could not avoid passing through the hands of Araktcheiev. This indeed actually happened. In February, 1818, before the departure of the emperor Alexander from Moscow for Warsaw to open the first Polish diet, Count Araktcheiev announced that his majesty had deigned to issue an edict for the liberation of landowners' peasants from the condition of serfdom, with the stipulation that the edict should not in any of its measures be oppressive to the landowners, and especially that it should not present anything of a violent character in its accomplishment on the part of the government: but, on the contrary, that it should be accompanied by advantages for the landowners and awaken in them a desire to co-operate with the government in the abolition of the conditions of serfdom in Russia, an abolition corresponding to the spirit of the times and the progress of education, and indispensable for the future tranquillity of the possessors of serfs.

#### THE EMPEROR AND THE QUAKERS

In 1814, at the time of the emperor Alexander's stay in London, the famous philanthropist Quakers, De Grelle de Mobillier,<sup>1</sup> and Allen, had been inspired with the idea of taking advantage of a favourable occasion, and instilling into the minds of the allied sovereigns the conviction that the kingdom of Christ is a kingdom of justice and truth. With this object they first set off to visit the king of Prussia, who received them and praised the Quakers living in his dominions, but expressed his conviction that war is indispensable for the attainment of peace. The emperor Alexander showed them more sympathy; he visited a Quaker meeting and received a deputation. The emperor assured the Quakers that he was in agreement with the greater part of their opinions, and that although on account of his exceptional position his mode of action must be other than theirs, yet he was in union with them in the spiritual worship of Christ. In taking leave of the Quakers, Alexander invited them to come to see him in Russia and said: "I bid you farewell as a friend and brother."

Grelle and Allen arrived in St. Petersburg in November, 1818, during the

<sup>1</sup> Étienne de Grelle Mobillier was born in France in 1760 and was brought up in the Roman Catholic faith. At the beginning of the French Revolution he went to America and there entered the society of Friends or Quakers. He subsequently repeatedly visited Europe with various philanthropic aims, mainly in order to strengthen the principles of a morally religious life amongst mankind.

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emperor's absence. They went to Prince A. N. Galitzin, of whom Grelle wrote: "He is a man penetrated by a truly Christian spirit." Galitzin received the Quakers with an open heart and informed them that the emperor had sent him a letter telling him of their coming to Russia and requesting that they might be received as his friends. After various questions upon religious matters the Quakers, together with Prince Galitzin, gave themselves up to silent, inward meditation, and this method, writes Grelle, "did not appear at all unknown to the prince. Inspired by the love of Christ, we felt in ourselves, after silent, heartfelt prayer, the beneficent moving of grace. In taking leave of the prince, he offered us free access to all that could interest us — to the prisons, to reformatory institutions, and to refuges for the poor."

Their visit to the St. Petersburg prisons deeply agitated the pious Quakers; according to Grelle's observations, some of them were very dirty and overrun with vermin; the odour was unbearable and the air contaminated to such a degree that it affected the heads and lungs of the visitors. The Quakers also inspected a few refuges and schools.

On a subsequent evening the emperor Alexander received the Quakers alone. He called them his old friends, made them sit beside him on the sofa, and called to mind with inward emotion their interview in London in 1814, saying that it had given him the spirit of courage and firmness amidst all the difficult circumstances in which he was then placed. "The emperor then," writes Grelle, "suggested to us some questions upon religious matters, thus showing his sincere desire to progress in the saving knowledge of truth. He further questioned us as to what we had seen and done in Russia. We took advantage of the opportunity to relate to him the distressing condition of the prisons; and in particular we directed his attention to the wretched state of the prison in Åbo, and told him about an unfortunate man who had been kept in irons there for nineteen years. The emperor was touched by our narrative and said, 'This ought not to be; it shall not occur again.' The Quakers also informed the emperor how deeply grieved they had been to see, upon inspecting one of the schools, that the pupils were given books to read that were pernicious to their morals; after which they showed him a specimen of extracts they had made from the Holy Scriptures for the use of schools. The emperor remained wrapped in thought for a moment, and then turning to his companions, he observed: "You have done precisely what I much desired. I have often thought that schools might serve as a powerful instrument for the furtherance of the kingdom of Christ, by leading the people to the knowledge of the Saviour and the principles of true piety. Send me as soon as possible all that you have succeeded in preparing."

The conversation then touched on Daniel Villers, also a Quaker, whom the emperor had called to St. Petersburg to drain the marshes; Alexander said that he regarded his presence in Russia as a blessing to the people. "It was not the draining of the marshes," added the emperor, "nor any other material necessity that was the cause of my inviting some of your 'friends' to come here; no, I was guided by the wish that their true piety, their probity, and other virtues might serve as an example for my people to imitate."

In conclusion the emperor said, "Before we separate, let us try to spend some time in common prayer." "We willingly consented," writes Grelle in regard to this matter, "feeling that the Lord with His beneficent power was near us. Some time passed in silent, inward contemplation; our souls were humbled, and a little later I felt within me the heavenly breathing of the spirit of prayer and compunction; enfolded by the spirit, I bent my knees before the greatness of God; the emperor knelt beside me. Amidst the



inward outpourings of the soul we felt that the Lord had consented to hear our prayers. After that we spent a little while longer in silence and then withdrew. In bidding us farewell the emperor expressed the desire to see us again before we left. We spent two hours with him."

After this remarkable audience, which so graphically expresses the religious-idealistic frame of mind of the emperor Alexander, the Quakers visited under the patronage of the widowed empress the female educational establishments, the young pupils of which aroused much sympathy in them.



RUSSIAN PRIEST

Grelle found that some of them had hearts open for receiving evangelical inspiration. These visits were followed by the reception of the Quakers by the empress Marie Feodorovna. They told the empress that they were much pleased at the condition of the institutions under her patronage, but at the same time they could not be otherwise than grieved to see how little attention was paid in St. Petersburg, and in general throughout Russia, to the education of children of the lower classes; they also spoke to the empress of the unsatisfactoriness of the then existing prison accommodations for women, and indicated how advantageous it would be if the prisons were visited by women capable of instructing and consoling the unfortunate prisoners. The empress entirely agreed with these ideas.

Soon the emperor again invited the Quakers to come and see him. "He again received us in his private apartments," writes Grelle, "to which we were taken by a secret way, avoiding the guard and the court servants. Nobody seemed surprised to see us keeping our heads covered. The em-

peror, as before, received us with sincere affability. He began by informing us that the chains in which we had seen the prisoners at Åbo had been taken off, that the unfortunate man of whom we had told him had been set at liberty, and that orders had been given that the other prisoners were to be better treated. He then asked us to relate to him openly all that we had noticed in the prisons during our stay in Russia. The governor-general (Count Miloradovitch) had informed him of the changes and improvements which he considered it advantageous to carry out in the gaols, and the emperor entirely approved of the changes that had already been made. He further told us that the widowed empress had spoken to him with pleasure of our visit to her; that she had taken to heart what we had said of the extreme neglect of the education of children of the poorer classes, and that she was occupying herself in searching for the most effectual measures of remedying this defect as soon as possible. The emperor added that he had named a certain sum of money to be used for

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the establishment of six schools for poor children in the capital, and that the children were to receive there a religious and moral education. He further told us that he had attentively perused the books we had prepared and was delighted with them; that if we had only come to Russia to do this, we had already accomplished a very important work, and that he intended to bring our books into use throughout all the schools of his empire."

Before their departure for Moscow the emperor received his old friends a third time, and on this occasion he related to them various details of how he had himself been educated under the supervision of his grandmother, the empress Catherine. "The persons attached to me," said he, "had some good qualities, but they were not believing Christians and therefore my primary education was not united with any profound moral impressions; in accordance with the customs of our church, I was taught formally to repeat morning and evening certain prayers I had learned; but this habit, which did not in any wise satisfy the inward requirements of my religious feelings, soon wearied me. Meanwhile it happened more than once that, when I lay down to rest, I had a lively feeling in my soul of my sins, and of the various moral deficiencies of my mode of life; thus penetrated by heartfelt repentance I was moved by a desire to rise from my bed and in the silence of the night to throw myself upon my knees and with tears ask God for forgiveness and for strength to preserve greater watchfulness over myself in future. This contrition of heart continued for some time; but little by little, in the absence of moral support on the part of the persons who surrounded me, I began to feel more seldom and more feebly these salutary movings of grace. Sin, together with worldly distractions, began to reign more and more within my soul. Finally, in 1812, the Lord in His love and mercy, again called to me, and the former movings of grace were renewed with fresh strength in my heart. At that period a certain pious person<sup>1</sup> advised me to take to reading the Holy Scriptures and gave me a Bible, a book which until then I had never had in my hands. I devoured the Bible finding that its words shed a new and never previously experienced peace in my heart, and satisfied the thirst of my soul. The Lord in His goodness granted me his Spirit to understand what I read; and to this inward instruction and enlightenment I owe all the spiritual good that I acquired by the reading of the divine Word; this is why I look upon inward enlightenment or instruction from the Holy Ghost as the firmest support in the soul — saving knowledge of God."

The emperor then related to his companions how deeply his soul was penetrated with the desire to abolish forever wars and bloodshed upon earth. "He said," writes Grelle, "that he had passed many nights without sleep in strained and intense deliberation as to how this sacred desire could be realised, and in deep grief at the thought of the innumerable calamities and misfortunes that are occasioned by war. At that time when his soul was thus bowed down in ardent prayer to the Saviour the idea arose in him of inviting the crowned heads to unite in one holy alliance, before the tribunal of which all future disagreements that should arise should be settled, instead of having recourse to the sword and to bloodshed. This idea took such possession of him that he got up from his bed, expounded his feelings and aspirations in writing with such liveliness and ardour that his intentions were subjected on the part of many to unmerited suspicion and misinterpretation — 'Although,' added he with a sigh, 'ardent love for God and mankind was

[<sup>1</sup> Prince A. N. Galitzin.]

the sole motive that governed me.' Thoughts of the formation of the Holy Alliance again arose in him during his stay in Paris. After we had spent some time in conversing on this important subject, the emperor said to us: 'And thus we part, in this world, but I firmly trust that we, being separated by space, will however remain by the goodness of the spirit of God forever united through inward spiritual fellowship, for in the kingdom of God there are no limitations of space. Now, before we part, I have one request to make to you: let us join in silent prayer and see if the Lord will not consent to manifest His gracious presence to us, as He did the last time.'

"We gladly consented to fulfil his desire. A solemn silence followed during which we felt that the Lord was amongst us; our souls were reverently opened before Him and He himself was working within us through His grace. Somewhat later, I felt, through the breathing of the love of Christ, the lively desire of saying a few words of approbation to our beloved emperor in order to encourage him to walk with firm steps in the Lord's way and to put his whole trust, unto the end of his earthly journeyings, in the efficaciousness of the divine grace; in general I felt the necessity of guarding him from evil and strengthening him in his good intention of ever following the path of truth and righteousness. The words that I said produced a profound impression upon the emperor and he shed burning tears. Then our dear Allen, kneeling, raised a fervent prayer to God for the emperor and his people. The emperor himself fell on his knees beside him and remained a long while with us in spiritual outpourings before the Lord. Finally we solemnly and touchingly took leave of each other."



A VALDAI WOMAN

#### SECRET SOCIETIES UNDER ALEXANDER I

After the year 1815, when the emperor Alexander already appeared as a weary martyr, immersed in mystic contemplation and wavering between the evergrowing influence of Count Araktcheiev and the convictions he had himself formed in the days of his youth, the events of 1812 were

reflected in a totally different manner upon the movement of social ideas in Russia. The war of the fatherland was accompanied in Russia by an unusual rising of the spirit of the nation and a remarkable awakening of the public conscience. The continuation of the struggle with Napoleon beyond the frontiers of Russia had led Alexander's troops to Paris. This enforced military exploit widened the horizon of the Russian people; they became acquainted with European manners and customs, were in closer



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contact with the current of European thought, and felt drawn towards political judgment. It was quite natural that the Russian people should begin to compare the order of things in their own country with political and public organisation abroad. An unrestrainable impulse to criticise and compare was awakened; thenceforth it was difficult to become reconciled to the former status of Russian life and the traditional order of things.

It will be asked what abuses presented themselves to the gaze of the Russian conquerors, who had liberated Europe, upon their return to their country. An entire absence of respect for the rights of the individual was patent; the forcible introduction of monstrous military settlements, the exploits of Magnitski and others of his kind in the department of public instruction were crying shames; and, finally, the cruelties of serfdom were in full activity. The subtle exactions which then prevailed in service at the front completed the development of general dissatisfaction amongst military circles. There is, therefore, nothing astonishing in the fact that the misfortunes which then weighed upon the Russian people should have found an answering call in the hearts of men who were at that time in the grip of a violent patriotic revival.

The natural consequence of this joyless condition of affairs in Russia was a hidden protest, which led to the formation of secret societies. Under the then existing conditions there was no possibility of carrying on reformatory deliberations with the cognisance of the government. Thus a remarkable phenomenon was accomplished; on the one hand Russian public thought was seeking for itself an issue and solution of the questions that oppressed it; while on the other the emperor Alexander, disenchanted with his former political ideals and standing at the head of the European reaction, had become the unexpected champion of aspirations which had nothing in common with the ideas of which he had been the representative during the best period of his life. This circumstance made a break in the interior life of Russia, which imperceptibly prepared the ground for events until then unprecedented in Russian history. "What has become of liberalism?" is a question that one of the contemporaries of that epoch sets himself. "It seems to have vanished, to have disappeared from the face of the earth; everything is silent. And yet it is just at this instant that its hidden forces have begun to grow dangerous." The time had come when secret societies were in full bloom. The masonic lodges, which had been allowed by the government, had long since accustomed the Russian nobility to the form of secret societies. Officers' circles, in which conversations were carried on about the wounds of Russia, the obduracy of the people, the distressing position of the soldier, the indifference of society to the affairs of the country, imperceptibly changed into organised secret societies.

It happened that yet another time the emperor Alexander expressed the conviction that the interior administration of Russia ought to be thought of, that it was necessary that means should be taken for remedying the evil; but the sovereign did not pass from words to deeds. In reference to this, the ideas expressed by Alexander to the governor of Penza, T. P. Lubianovski, on the occasion of his visit to that town in 1824 are worthy of attention. The emperor had inspected the second infantry corps there assembled; the manœuvres had deserved particular praise. Observing signs of weariness on the emperor's face, Lubianovski ventured to remark that the empire had reason to complain of his majesty.

"Why?" "You will not take care of yourself." "You mean to say that I am tired?" replied the emperor. "It is impossible to look at the

troops without satisfaction; the men are good, faithful and excellently trained; we have gained no little glory through them. Russia has enough glory; she does not require more; it would be a mistake to require more. But when I think how little has been as yet done in the interior of the empire, then the thought lies on my heart like a ten-pound weight. That is what makes me tired."

The profoundly true thought that fell from the lips of the sovereign in his conversation with Lubianovski was not, however, put into application. At that period it was impossible to count upon the amendment of the state edifice through the administrations of the government. The dim figure of Arakcheiev had definitively succeeded in screening Russia from the gaze of Alexander, and his evil influence was felt at every step. Therefore in the main everything led to the sorrowful result that the emperor, as Viguel expressed it, was like a gentleman who, having grown tired of administering his own estate, had given it over entirely into the hands of a stern steward, being thus sure that the peasants would not become spoiled under him.

A few words remain to be said of the fate that overtook the secret societies after the closing of the Alliance of the Public Good. Benkendorf's<sup>1</sup> supposition that a new and more secret society would be formed after this, which would act under the veil of greater security, was actually justified. The more zealous members of the alliance only joined together more closely, and from its ruins arose two fresh alliances — the Northern and the Southern.

The leaders of the Northern Alliance in the beginning were Muraviev and Turgeniev. Later on, in 1823, Kondratz Bilciev entered the society, of which he became the leader. The aspirations of the Northern Alliance were of a constitutional-monarchic character. In the Southern Alliance, chiefly composed of members of the second army, the principal leader was the commander of the Viatka infantry regiment, Colonel Paul Pestel, son of the former governor-general of Siberia. Thanks to Pestel's influence the Southern Alliance acquired a preponderating republican tendency; he occupied himself with the composition of a work which he called *Russian Truth*, in which he expounded his ideas on the reconstruction of Russia. Many members of this society inclined to the conviction that the death of the emperor Alexander and even the extermination of the entire imperial family were indispensable to the successful realisation of their proposed undertakings; at any rate there is no doubt that conversations to this effect were carried on amongst the members of the secret societies. Soon the active propaganda of the members of the Southern Society called another society into existence — the Slavonic Alliance or the United Slavonians. In it was chiefly concentrated the radical element from the midst of the future Dekabrists. The members of this society proposed insane and violent projects and insisted chiefly on the speedy commencement of decisive action, giving only a secondary importance to deliberations on the constitutional form of government. Sergei Nuraviev Apostol called them mad dogs chained.

There yet remained a better means for strengthening the designs of the secret societies — this was to enter into relations with the Polish secret societies. Negotiations with the representative of the Polish patriotic alliance, Prince Tablionovski, were personally carried on by Pestel; but the details of this agreement are even now little known. Such was the dangerous and fruitless path into which many of the best representatives of thinking Russia were drawn: each year the crisis became more and more inevitable; and

<sup>1</sup> General-adjutant, chief of the guards staff.

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meanwhile the government became more decisively confirmed than ever in the pathway of reaction, thus indirectly giving greater power to secret revolutionary propaganda.

### *Closing of the Masonic Lodges*

In August, 1822, a rescript was issued in the name of the minister of the interior, ordering the closing of all secret societies, under whatever name they might exist — masonic lodges or others — and forbidding their establishment in future. All members of these societies had to pledge themselves not to form any masonic lodges or other secret societies in the future; and a declaration was required from all ranks of the army and from the civil service that neither soldiers nor officials should thenceforth belong to such organisations: "If any person refuses to make such a pledge, he shall no longer remain in the service."

All the measures drawn up by the rescript of August were, however, put into effect only with regard to the closing of the masonic lodges. As to the secret societies, which had undoubtedly a political aim, they continued to develop in all tranquillity. "At that time," writes a contemporary, "there was a triple police in St. Petersburg — namely, the governor general, the minister of the interior, and Count Arakcheiev; but that it did not bring forth any advantages is proved by the events of 1825."

According to the remarks of the same contemporary, card-playing had then spread in St. Petersburg society to an incredible degree. "Certainly in ninety houses out of a hundred they play," writes Danilevski, "and although the circle of my acquaintances has become very vast this year and I go out a great deal yet I never see people doing anything else than playing at cards. If one is invited to an evening party, it means cards, and I have hardly made my bow to the hostess before I find the cards in my hand. When one is asked out to dinner one sits down to whist before the meal is served. Card-playing occupies not only elderly people but young ones also. I think this has arisen partly from a defect in education which is in general observable in Russia — for when education finishes at seventeen, what store of ideas and knowledge, what passion for science can one expect to find in adults? This condition is further exaggerated by the fact that all political matters are banished from conversation: the government is suspicious, and spies are not unfrequently to be met with in society. The greater part of them are, however, known; some belong to old noble families, are decorated with orders, and wear chamberlains' keys."

The closing of the masonic lodges called forth the following deliberations from Danilevski: "As far as I know, masonry had no other object in Russia beyond benevolence and providing an agreeable way of passing time. The closing of the lodges deprived us of the only places where we assembled for anything else besides card-playing, for we have no society where cards do not constitute the principal or rather the only occupation. We are as yet so unversed in political matters that it is absurd for the government to fear that such subjects would furnish conversation at the masonic lodges. With us, notable persons have rarely been masons; at least none such have visited our lodge, which is usually full of people of the middle class, officers, civil-service employees, artists, a very few merchants, and a large percentage of literary men."<sup>b</sup>

These of course are the words of a partisan and must be taken with a certain allowance. The same remark applies with full force to the testimony



of the historian Turgeniev, whose association with the secret unions has already been mentioned, and whose comments on the subject, despite a certain bias, are full of interest. Turgeniev is speaking of the period just following that in which the government had taken action against the societies.<sup>a</sup>

*Turgeniev's Comment on the Secret Societies.*

The government contributed much [he declares] by its suspicions and precautions, to strengthen the reports which were afloat concerning secret societies: to them all was suspect. A species of insurrection having broken out in a regiment of the guards, of which the emperor was head, the government thought they could trace it to the action of some society, whereas it was caused by the brutal and ridiculous conduct of a new colonel they had placed in command. That such was their conviction there was no doubt, because two of the officers of the insurrectionary companies were traduced before a council of war, and condemned, not only without any proof but with no specification of the crime or fault with which they were charged, whereas in reality neither the one nor the other officer had ever belonged to a secret society.

A rash Englishman took it into his head to go round the world and publish an account of his travels. He arrived at St. Petersburg, went over Russia, and thence to Siberia. There he was taken for a spy, and soon an order came from St. Petersburg to conduct him to the frontier. Even pious Protestant missionaries, propagating with their accustomed zeal Christian morals among savage peoples, were suspected by the government. They were hindered in the holy warfare they desired to carry on in the farthest and least civilised regions of the empire. The powers only saw in them emissaries of European liberalism.

The public for their part did not fail to take appearances for reality. That is the common propensity of the crowd in every country. How many times, before and after this epoch, might not men have been seen addressing themselves to those who were supposed to be at the head of such societies, and instantly asking to be admitted. In the army subalterns thus addressed their chiefs, and old generals sought their young subordinates to obtain the same favour. It might have been said with equal truth to both parties that no secret societies existed. Men's minds, however, were all on the strain for political events. It was thought that some great change was to come soon, and everyone wanted to get an inkling of it. Restless curiosity was not the worst of the inconveniences caused to such associations. Doubtless, the evil was less due to societies than to persons who judged them after their deceitful appearances. Perhaps it was the fault of the political order which made secret societies necessary or, at any rate, inevitable; but it was nevertheless a serious matter which only publicity could remedy. The strong energy of a free man would advantageously replace the trickery and restlessness of a slave.

However, at the epoch of which we now speak, individuals were able to agitate in various ways, but without the least result. But if such a thing as an organised secret society did exist, how is it I did not know of it—I who knew many of those called liberals? I will give convincing proof of what I here maintain; I quote the words of Pestel, a man sent to the scaffold by the government not because he had committed some political crime but because he was considered as the most influential of those who were supposed to belong to secret associations. Pestel was in St. Petersburg just as my depar-

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ture was decided on. He came to see me and spoke with regret of the dissolution of the Bien Public Society. "As for us" (the 2nd army), he said, "we have not observed the dissolution. It would be too disheartening. We are believed to be strong and numerous; I encourage the delusion. What would be said were it known that we are but five or six who form the association?" He ended by advising me to renounce my journey, or, at any rate to return as soon as possible and take up the abandoned work again. "I see quite well," he said, "there is absolutely nothing left here of the old society, but at your house and a few others one can always believe in the existence of the society. Your departure will weaken this belief."

I explained that my health forced me to leave my affairs, and that, furthermore, I had little faith in the efficacy of secret societies. He seemed impressed by my reasoning and even agreed that I might be right on this last point.

His attention was much occupied with certain social theories that he and some of his friends had formulated. They thought to find in me one proselyte more. But they were disappointed, and Pestel was much surprised and disconcerted. These theories, which so many ardent imaginations had adopted, were no doubt excellent in intention, but they hardly promised great results. The genius, or something akin to it, in a Fourier, the zeal of an Owen, the utopianism of many others, might make proselytes and excite admiration; but the dreams of such men remained but dreams although they sometimes touched on the sublime. Only, in default of possible realisation, these theories might help humanity by directing the attention and effort of serious men towards certain things of which they had sufficiently appreciated the importance and utility. But to ensure that result more imagination was required. One of the fundamental points in the theory of Pestel and his friends was a universal distribution of territory, its cultivation to be determined by a supreme authority. At least they wanted to divide vast crown lands among those who had no property. What Elizabeth had guaranteed to all Englishmen—the right of being supported by the poor rates in default of other means of subsistence—they wanted to guarantee by means of the possession or at least the enjoyment of a certain quantity of land free for cultivation.

I tried to the best of my power to refute their arguments. It was not easy. The refutation of certain theories is difficult, and there are some whose very absurdity makes them unassailable. At last I came to think that Pestel and his friends were far more discontented with my opposition to their social theories than with my opinions on secret societies.<sup>d</sup>



A TATAR WOMAN

## LITERARY ACTIVITY OF THE PERIOD

The awakening of the Russian spirit was not manifested in political conspiracies alone. In science, in letters, and in art the reign of Alexander was an epoch of magnificent achievement. The intellectual like the liberal movement no longer bore the exotic and superficial character that had been apparent during the reign of Catherine; it penetrated to the deepest layers of society, gained constantly in power and extent, carried away the middle classes, and was propagated in the remotest provinces. The movement started in 1801 had not yet ceased, although the government failed to support the efforts it had itself aroused, and Alexander, embittered and disillusioned, had come to mistrust all intellectual manifestations. The increased severity of the censorship had not availed to prevent the formation of learned societies; literary journals and reviews continued to multiply.

During this period the Besieda, a literary club representing the classical tendencies, was formed, and the romanticists, Jukovski, Dachkov, Oouvarov, Pushkin, Bludov, and Prince Viazemski founded the Arzamas. At St. Petersburg appeared the *Northern Post*, the *St. Petersburg Messenger*, the *Northern Messenger*, the *Northern Mercury*, the *Messenger of Zion*, the *Beehive*, and the *Democrat*, in which latter Kropotkov inveighed against French customs and ideas, and in the *Funeral Orison of my Dog Balabas* congratulated the worthy animal on never having studied in a university, or read Voltaire.

Literary activity was, as usual, greatest at Moscow, where Karamzine was editing the *European Messenger*, Makarov the *Moscow Mercury*, and Glinka the *Russian Messenger*. In his journal Glinka endeavoured to excite a national feeling by first putting the people on their guard against all foreign influence, but more particularly that of France, and then arming them against Napoleon, teaching them the doctrine of self-immolation, and letting loose the furies of the "patriotic war." When the *Russian Messenger* went out of existence after the completion of its task, the *Son of the Soil*, edited by de Gretch, took up the same work and carried the war against Napoleon beyond the frontiers. "Taste in advance," it cried to the conqueror, "the immortality that you deserve; learn now the curses that posterity will shower on your name! You sit on your throne in the midst of thunder and flame as Satan sits in hell surrounded by death, devastation, and fire!" The *Russian Invalide* was founded in 1813 for the benefit of wounded and infirm soldiers. Even after the war-fever had somewhat subsided, and considerations less hostile to France were occupying the public mind, the literary movement still continued.

Almost all the writers of the day took part in the crusade against Gallomania and the belief in Napoleon's omnipotence. Some had fought in the war against France and their writings were deeply tinged with patriotic feeling. Krilov, whose fables rank him not far below La Fontaine, wrote comedies also. In the *School for Young Ladies* and the *Milliner's Shop* he ridiculed the exaggerated taste for everything French. Besides his classical tragedies Ozerov wrote *Dmitri Donskoi*, in which he recalled the struggles of Russia against the Tatars, and in a measure foretold the approaching conflict with a new invader. In the tragedy named after Pojarski, the hero of 1812, Kriukovski made allusions of the same order. The poet Jukovski put in verse the exploits of the Russians against Napoleon in 1806 and 1812, and Rostopchin did not await the great crisis before opening out on the French the vials of his wrath.



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Viewed in general, the literature of Alexander's period marked the passage from the imitation of ancient writers and French classicists to the imitation of French and English masterpieces. The Besieda and the Arzamas were the headquarters of two rival armies which carried on in Russia a war similar to that waged in Paris by romantic and classical schools. Schiller, Goethe, Byron, and Shakespeare were as much the fashion in Russia as in France, and created there as close an approach to a literary scandal. While Ozerov, Batiuchkov, and Derjavine upheld the traditions of the old school, Jukovski gave to Russia a translation of Schiller's *Joan of Arc* and of Byron's *Prisoner of Chillon*; and Pushkin published *Ruslan and Liudmilla, the Prisoner of the Caucasus, Eugene Oniegin*, the poem *Pollava*, and the tragedy *Boris Godunov*.

As in France the romantic movement had been accompanied by a brilliant revival of historical studies, so in Russia a fresh impulse was given to letters, and dramatists and novelists were inspired with a taste for national subjects by Karanzin's *History of the Russian Empire*, a work remarkable for eloquence and charm [as our various extracts testify] though deficient in critical insight. Schlötzer had recently edited Nestor, the old annalist of Kiev and father of Russian history.<sup>f</sup>

### *Alexander I as a Patron of Literature*

Protection and encouragement were shown to literature by Alexander I. Storck<sup>i</sup> writes as follows: "Rarely has any ruler shown such encouragement to literature as Alexander I. The remarkable literary merits of persons in the government service are rewarded by rises in the official ranks, by orders and pensions, whilst writers who are not in the government service and whose literary productions come to the knowledge of the emperor not unfrequently receive presents of considerable value. Under the existing conditions of the book trade, Russian authors cannot always count on a fitting recompense for large scientific works, and in such cases the emperor, having regard to these circumstances, sometimes grants the authors large sums for the publication of their works. Many writers send their manuscripts to the emperor, and if only they have a useful tendency he orders them to be printed at the expense of the cabinet and then usually gives the whole edition to the author."

In view of the desire manifested by Karamzin to devote his labours to the composition of a full history of the Russian Empire, the emperor by a ukase of the 31st of October, 1803, bestowed upon him the title of historiographer and a yearly pension of 2,000 rubles.

During the reign of the emperor Paul, Alexander, in a letter to Laharpe dated September 27th, 1797, expressed his conviction of the necessity of translating useful books into the Russian language, in order "to lay a foundation by spreading knowledge and enlightenment in the minds of the people." When he came to the throne, Alexander did not delay in accomplishing the intention he had already formed when he was czarevitch, and actually during the epoch of reforms a multitude of translations of works appeared, which had the evident object of inspiring interest in social, economic, and political questions and of communicating to Russian society the latest word of western science upon such questions.

In the establishment of the ministries the question of censorship was not overlooked; it was transferred to the ministry of public instruction. In consequence of this arrangement a special statute was issued (July 9th, 1804), "not in order to place any restraint," as is stated in the minister's report,

"upon the freedom of thought and of writing, but solely so as to take requisite measures against the abuse of such freedom." The entire statute contained forty-seven paragraphs—a circumstance worthy of attention if we take into consideration the fact that the censorship statute presented in the year 1826 by A. S. Shishkov had grown to 230 paragraphs. According to the statute of Alexander I the censorship was designed chiefly to "furnish society with books and works contributing to the true enlightenment of minds and to the formation of moral qualities, and to remove books and works of contrary tendencies." The censorship was entrusted to the university, constituting in its general jurisdiction the then newly organised department of the ministry of public instruction, which had the chief direction of schools. The basis of the functions of the censorship thus constituted was found in the three provisions following:

(1) Watchfulness that in the books and periodicals published, and in the pieces represented on the stage "there shall be nothing against religion, the government, morality, or the personal honour of any citizen." (2) Care that in the prohibition of the publication or issue of books and works the committee shall be "guided by a wise indulgence, setting aside all biased interpretation of the works or of any part of them which might seem to merit prohibition; and wisdom to remember that when such parts seem subject to any doubt or have a double meaning, it is better to interpret them in the manner most favourable to the author than to prosecute him." (3) A discreet and wise investigation of truths concerning faith, mankind, the position of the citizen, the law, and all branches of the administration, are to be treated by the censorship not only in the most lenient manner, but should enjoy entire liberty of publication, as contributing to the progress of enlightenment."

Such was the aspect of the censorship and statute which remained unchanged for more than twenty years, that is during the whole reign of the emperor Alexander. It was only from the year 1817, from the establishment of the ministry of public worship and of public instruction, that the censorship acquired a particularly irksome tendency which was in opposition to the liberal spirit of the statute: the most complete intolerance, fanaticism, and captiousness, which had been absent at the commencement of Alexander's reign, then made their appearance.

In January, 1818 the emperor Alexander came for a short time to St. Petersburg, and Karamzin took advantage of his stay in order to present to him the eight volumes of the *History of the Russian Empire* which he had just published. "He received me in his private apartments, and I had the happiness of dining with him," wrote Karamzin to his friend I. I. Dmitriev. "On the 1st of February my *History of the Russian Empire* was on sale; the edition was of three thousand copies, and in spite of the high price at which the work was sold (55 rubles, paper money, per copy), a month later not a copy was left at the booksellers."<sup>b</sup>

#### FAILURE OF THE POLISH EXPERIMENT

The constitution granted to Poland in 1815, based the government on a tripartite division of power; the three estates of the realm being the king, a senate, and a house of representatives—the latter two being comprehended under the name of a diet. The executive was vested in the king, and in functionaries by him appointed. The crown was hereditary; it was the prerogative of the king to declare war, convoke, prorogue, or dissolve the diet. He was empowered to appoint a viceroy, who, unless a member of the royal

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family, was to be a Pole. The king or viceroy was assisted by a council of state and five responsible ministers, their several departments being instruction, justice, interior and police, war, finance. These five ministers were subordinate to the president of the council. Considering the exhaustion, humiliation, and misery to which Poland had been reduced, such a constitution was apparently a great boon, for it guaranteed civil, political, and religious freedom; but by the very nature of things it was foredoomed to destruction.

The first Polish diet assembled at Warsaw on the 27th of March, 1818. The grand duke Constantine, commander-in-chief of the Polish army, was elected a deputy by the faubourg of Praga, and during the session was obliged to renounce his privilege as a senator, because, by the terms of the constitution, no person could sit in both houses. He was elected by a major-



HOUSE OF THE ROMANOV CZARS

ity of 103 votes to 6, an evident proof that the new reign had excited the liveliest hopes. The emperor arrived at Warsaw on the 13th of March; he devoted himself laboriously to the examination of state affairs, and on the 27th he opened the diet in person with a speech in the French language. He said, "the organisation which existed in vigorous maturity in your country permitted the instant establishment of what I have given you, by putting into operation the principles of those liberal institutions which have never ceased to be the object of my solicitude, and whose salutary influence I hope by the aid of God to disseminate through all the countries which He has confided to my care. Thus you have afforded me the means of showing my country what I had long since prepared for her, and what she shall obtain when the elements of a work so important shall have attained their necessary development."

There is no reason to doubt that Alexander cherished these intentions in his own sanguine but impractical way. The enfranchisement of the serfs of Esthonia, undertaken in 1802 and completed in 1816, and that of the serfs of Courland in 1817, exhibit the same principles. And when in 1819 the deputies of the Livonian nobility submitted to the approbation of the emperor a plan to pursue the same course with the serfs of their province, the following



was his remarkable reply: "I am delighted to see that the nobility of Livonia have fulfilled my expectations. You have set an example that ought to be imitated. You have acted in the spirit of our age, and have felt that liberal principles alone can form the basis of the people's happiness."

"Such," says Schnitzler, "was constantly, during nearly twenty years, the language of Alexander. He deeply mourned the entire absence of all guarantees for the social well-being of the empire. His regret was marked in his reply to Madame de Staël, when she complimented him on the happiness of his people, who, without a constitution, were blessed with such a sovereign: 'I am but a lucky accident.'" After 1815 he was no longer even that.

A year had hardly elapsed from the time when Alexander had addressed the words we have quoted to the diet at Warsaw, ere the Poles began to complain that the constitution was not observed in its essential provisions; that their viceroy Zaionczek had but the semblance of authority, whilst all the real power was in the hands of the grand duke Constantine, and of Novosiltzov the Russian commissioner. The bitterness of their discontent was in proportion to the ardour of their short-lived joy. Russian despotism reverted to its essential conditions; the liberty of the press was suspended; and in 1819 the national army was dissolved. On the other hand, the spirit of opposition became so strong in the diet, that in 1820, a measure relating to criminal procedure, which was pressed forward with all the force of government influence, was rejected by a majority of 120 to 3. Thenceforth there was nothing but mutual distrust between Poland and Russia.

#### CONSTITUTIONAL PROJECTS

The institutions which Alexander had given to Poland worked no happy results, and those which he designed for Russia would have been little better. He failed to accomplish even the good which he might have effected without organic changes. But he felt himself arrested by innumerable difficulties. He often wanted instruments to carry out his will, oftener still the firmness to support them against court cabals. The immense distances to be traversed, which, according to Custine, the emperor Nicholas feels to be one of the plagues of his empire, presented the same obstacle to Alexander. Again, his desire to exercise European influence distracted his attention from his proper work at home, and the empire sank back into its old routine. Discouraged at last, and awakening as he grew older from some of the illusions of his youth, he gave way to indolence more and more. He saw himself alone, standing opposed to an immense festering corruption; in despair he ceased to struggle against it; and in the latter portion of his reign he grievously neglected the care of his government.

The helm thus deserted by the pilot passed into the hands of General Araktcheiev, a shrewd, active man, devoted to business, perhaps also well-intentioned, but a Russian of the old school, without the necessary enlightenment, without political probity — arbitrary, imperious, and enthralled by qualities and notions inimical to progress; governed, moreover, by unworthy connections of a particular kind. Under the rule of Araktcheiev the censorship became more severe than ever. Foreign books were admitted with difficulty, and were subject to tyrannical restrictions; many professors of the new university of St. Petersburg were subjected to a despotic and galling inquisition; others were required most rigidly to base their course of instructions upon a programme printed and issued by the supreme authority. Free-

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masonry was suppressed. Foreign travellers were surrounded with troublesome and vexatious formalities. Many rigorous regulations, which had been long disused and almost forgotten, were revived. In short, Araktcheiev exercised with intolerable severity a power which he derived from a master who carried gentleness to an extreme of weakness—who loved to discuss the rights of humanity, and whose heart bled for its sufferings.

## THE MILITARY COLONIES (1819 A.D.)

It was by the advice of Araktcheiev that military colonies were established in Russia in 1819. The system was not new, for Austria had already adopted it on some of her frontiers; but its introduction into Russia was a novelty from which great results were expected, and which neighbouring states regarded with much uneasiness. The plan was to quarter the soldiers upon the crown-peasants, build military villages according to a fixed plan, apportion a certain quantity of field to every house, and form a statute-book, according to which these new colonies should be governed. The plan at once received the approbation of the czar. It was the intention of Araktcheiev, by means of these colonies, to reduce the expense entailed by the subsistence of the army, and to compel the soldier to contribute to his own maintenance by cultivating the soil; to strengthen the ranks by a reserve picked from among the crown-peasants, equal in number to the colony of soldiers; to furnish the soldier with a home, in which his wife and children might continue to dwell when the exigencies of war called him away; and to increase the population, and with it the cultivation of the soil, in a land where hands only are wanted to change many a steppe into a garden, many a scattered village into a thriving town.

Russian colonies were thus established in the governments of Novgorod, Mohilev, Kharkov, Kiev, Podolia, and Kherson; that is to say, in the neighbourhood of Poland, Austria, and Turkey. Political and military considerations had combined to fix the choice of localities for these colonies. In consequence of the vast dimensions of the Russian Empire, troops raised in the north and west can only reach the southern provinces after long intervals; and if, on any emergency, Russia should wish to concentrate a large part of her forces in the neighbourhood of the southern and western frontiers, such a concentration, it was thought, would be greatly facilitated by the fact of military colonies, with a large population, being already on the spot. The villages destined for the reception of military colonies were all to be inhabited by crown-peasants; these people were now relieved from the duties they had been accustomed to pay to the government, in consideration of their quartering men in their houses. All peasants more than fifty years of age were selected to be so-called head colonists, or master-colonists. Every master-colonist received forty acres of land, for which he had to maintain a soldier and his family, and to find fodder for a horse, if a corps of cavalry happened to be quartered in the village. The soldier, on his part, was bound to assist the colonist in the cultivation of his field and the farm labours generally, whenever his military duties did not occupy the whole day. The soldier, who in this way became domiciliated in the family, received the name "military peasant." The officers had the power of choosing the soldiers who were to be quartered upon the master-colonists. If the colonist had several sons, the oldest became his adjunct; the second was enrolled among the reserve; the third might become a military peasant; the others were enrolled

as colonists or pupils. Thus, in the new arrangements, two entirely different elements were fused together, and one population was, so to speak, engrafted upon another.

The labour of these agricultural soldiers is of course dependent upon the will of the officers, for they can only attend to agricultural work when freed from military duty. The man himself continues half peasant, half soldier, until he has served for five-and-twenty years, if he be a Russian, or twenty years if he be a Pole. At the expiration of this time he is at liberty to quit the service, and his place is filled up from the reserve. Beside the house of each master-colonist stands another dwelling constructed in exactly the same manner, and occupied by the reserve-man, who may be regarded as a double of the soldier. He is selected by the colonel of the regiment from among the peasants, and is generally a son or relation of the master-colonist. The reserve-man is instructed in all the duties appertaining to the soldier's profession, and is educated in every particular, so that he may be an efficient substitute. If the agricultural soldier dies, or falls in battle, his reserve-man immediately takes his place. The colonist now takes the place of the reserve-man, who in his turn is succeeded by the pupil. The master-colonist, peasant-soldier, and reserve-man, may all choose their wives at pleasure, and they are encouraged to marry. The women, on the other hand, are allowed to marry within the limits of their colony, but not beyond it. The sons of the master-colonists, soldiers, or reserve-men, between the ages of thirteen and seventeen, are called "cantonists." They are drilled like soldiers, and occasionally attend schools. The children between the ages of eight and thirteen visit the school of the village in which their parents dwell, and are exercised in the use of arms on alternate days. Like the cantonists, they wear uniforms, and are looked upon as future soldiers. All male children are sent to school, where, by the method of reciprocal education, they are taught to read, write, and cipher, alternately with their military studies. They are taught to recite a kind of catechism, setting forth the duties of the soldier; they learn the use of the sabre; are practised in riding, and, when they have attained the age of seventeen years, are mustered in the head-quarters of the regiment, and divided into corps, those who distinguish themselves by attention and diligence being appointed officers. The several component parts of a colony are as follows:

1. The head colonist—the master of the house and possessor of the estate.
2. His assistant, who joins him in the cultivation of his farm.
3. The military peasant, who likewise takes part in agricultural labour.
4. The reserve-man, who supplies the place of the soldier in case of need.
5. The cantonist, between the ages of thirteen and seventeen.
6. The boys, from eight to thirteen years old.
7. Male children under the age of eight years.
8. The female population.
9. The invalids.

The colonies in the south of Russia comprise 380 villages in the provinces of Kherson, Kharkov, and Iekaterainoslav. The crown has here 30,000 peasants. Every village contains two or three squadrons, according to its size; thus they contain altogether 80,000 men. These military districts, as the regions are called in which the colonies occur, are so strictly divided from the remaining portions of the provinces, that no man can enter them without a special passport, granted by the military authorities. Their constitution is entirely military, even the postal service being executed by soldiers. At every station a subaltern receives the order for post-horses and inspects it; another soldier harnesses the horses; a third greases the wheels; and a fourth mounts the box as coachman. As soon as the military coat appears in sight, every



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peasant on the high-road stops, plants his hands stiffly against his sides, and stands in a military attitude of "attention."

The laws are administered in the first instance by a detachment from every squadron, one of the officers acting as president. From the decision of this tribunal an appeal can be made to the regimental council, which is composed of the colonel, two captains, and six deputies from among the colonists. The judgments of this court are laid before the commandant-in-chief of the colonies, against whose decision neither soldiers nor colonists may protest, officers alone having the privilege of appealing to the emperor. In the headquarters of every regiment a copy of the code of laws is kept, and in most military villages churches are to be found, where a priest, who belonged to the church before the village was transformed into a military colony, performs the service.

The success of the military colonies in Russia fell far short of the expectations of their founders. To the unfortunate crown serfs they brought an intolerable aggravation of their wretchedness, by making them feel their slavery even in their homes and their domestic affections. The consequence was seen in the madness of their revenge on several occasions when they broke out into rebellion, as for instance at Novgorod, in 1832. "Nothing," says Dr. Lee, "could be sold without the knowledge of the officers in these military colonies. It is said that when a hen lays an egg, it is necessary to make an entry of the fact in a register kept for this and other equally important purposes. I was told that when a priest was speaking to some of these peasants about the punishments of hell, they answered they dreaded them not, because a worse hell than that in which they were doomed to pass their whole lives here, could not possibly exist.

"The military colonies," Lee continues, "please one at first sight from the order and cleanliness everywhere prevailing in them; but their population is said to be wretched in the highest degree. When the emperor Alexander was here, some years ago, he went round visiting every house; and on every table he found a dinner prepared, one of the principal articles of which consisted of a young pig roasted. The prince Volkhonski suspected there was some trick, and cut off the tail of the pig and put in his pocket. On entering the next house the pig was presented, but without the tail, upon which Prince Volkhonski said to the emperor, 'I think this is an old friend.' The emperor demanded his meaning, when he took out the tail from his pocket and applied it to the part from which it had been removed. The emperor did not relish the jest, and it was supposed this piece of pleasantry led to his disgrace. A more effectual, though bold and dangerous method of exposing to the emperor the deceptions carried on throughout the military colonies under Count Arakcheiev could not have been adopted than that which Prince Volkhonski had recourse to on this occasion. From that time Count Arakcheiev became his bitter enemy."

#### ALEXANDER AND THE GREEK UPRISING

We have now touched upon all that is worthy of note in Alexander's home policy during the last ten years of his reign. That portion of his life was spent in perpetual motion and perpetual agitation to little or no good purpose, whilst his proper functions were delegated to Count Arakcheiev, whose name was a word of terror to everyone in Russia. Absorbed by affairs foreign to the interests of his empire, Alexander was consistent or persevering in nothing but his efforts to enforce the dark, stagnant policy

of Austria, which had become that of the Holy Alliance. He was present at the congresses of Aix-la-Chapelle, Troppau, Laibach, and Verona, and zealously participated in all the repressive measures concerted there. He was the soul of the deliberations held at the latter place in 1822, and whilst he refused aid to the Greeks in their rebellion against their "legitimate sovereign," the sultan, he was all but inclined to use constraint to his ally, France, to compel her, in spite of the opposition of England, to take upon herself the execution of the violent measures resolved on in behalf of the execrable Ferdinand of Spain. A speech made at this congress to Châteaubriand, the French plenipotentiary, has been praised by some of the emperor's biographers for its "noble sentiments." To us it seems well worthy of record for its unconscious sophistry and signal display of self-delusion.

"I am very happy," said the emperor to Châteaubriand, "that you came to Verona, because you may now bear witness to the truth. Would you have believed, as our enemies are so fond of asserting, that the alliance is only a word intended to cover ambition? That might have received a colour of truth under the old order of things, but now all private interests disappear when the civilisation of the world is imperilled. Henceforward there can be no English, French, Russian, Prussian, or Austrian policy; there can only be a general policy, involving the salvation of all, admitted in common by kings and peoples. It is for me, the first of all, to declare my appreciation of the principles on which I founded the Holy Alliance. An opportunity presents itself; it is the Greek insurrection. Certainly no event appeared more adapted to my personal interests, to those of my subjects, and to the feelings and prejudices of the Russians, than a religious war against Turkey; but in the troubles of the Peloponnesus I saw revolutionary symptoms, and from that moment I held aloof. What has not been done to dissolve the alliance? Attempts have been made by turns to excite my cupidity, or to wound my self-love; I have been openly outraged; the world understood me very badly if it supposes that my principles could be shaken by vanities, or could give way before resentment. No, no; I will never separate myself from the monarchs with whom I am united. It should be permitted to kings to form public alliances, to protect themselves against secret associations. What temptations can be offered to me? What need have I to extend my empire? Providence has not placed under my command eight hundred thousand soldiers to satisfy my ambition, and to conserve those principles of order on which society must repose."

This was not the language of "noble sentiment," but of an intellect narrowed by sinister influences, perverted to the views of a most sordid policy, and flattering itself on its own debasement with the maudlin cant of philanthropy.

We may well conceive that it was not without inward pain and self-reproach that the benevolent Alexander stifled in his heart the voice that rose in favour of the Greeks, and resisted the wishes of his people, who were animated by a lively sympathy for their co-religionists. That sympathy was manifested as strongly as it could be under this despotic government, where every outward demonstration is interdicted, unless when specially commanded or permitted by authority. They could not see without surprise the head of the so-styled orthodox church enduring the outrages of the infidels, and looking on unmoved whilst one of her chief pastors was hung at the porch of his church, and multitudes of her children were massacred. These Greeks had of late been regarded as under the protection of Russia; she was their old ally — nay, more, their accomplice, who had more than once instigated

[1824 A.D.]

them to break their chains. The supineness of the emperor under such circumstances mortified the nobility, shocked the clergy, and was a subject of sincere affliction to the people, for whom, in their debased condition, religious sentiments held the place of political emotions.

High and low obeyed, however; murmurs were suppressed; but the Russians failed not to attribute to the wrath of God the misfortunes which befel Alexander, amongst which was the malady with which he was afflicted in 1824. It began with erysipelas in the leg, which soon spread upwards, and was accompanied with fever and delirium. For a time his life was in danger, and the people, who sincerely loved him, believed that they saw in this a punishment from on high because he had abandoned an orthodox nation.

#### THE GREAT INUNDATION OF 1824

Another misfortune was a frightful calamity which befel St. Petersburg in 1824. The mouth of the Neva, opening westward into the gulf of Finland, is exposed to the violent storms that often accompany the autumnal equinox. They suddenly drive the waters of the gulf into the bed of the river, which then casts forth its accumulated floods upon the low quarters on both its banks. It may be conceived how terrible is the destruction which the unchained waters make in a city built upon a drained marsh, on the eve of a northern winter of seven months' duration. There were terrific inundations in 1728, 1729, 1735, 1740, 1742, and in 1777, a few days before the birth of Alexander; but the worst of all was that which occurred on the 19th of November, 1824, a year before his death. A storm blowing from the west and southwest with extreme violence, forced back the waters of the Neva, and drove those of the gulf into it.<sup>e</sup>

At eight o'clock in the morning the waters began to rise rapidly and had soon submerged all the lower parts of the town. On the Nevski Prospect the water had reached the Troitski Perelok, and by twelve three parts of the town were submerged, owing to a southwesterly wind which rose to a violent tempest. At a quarter to three the waters began suddenly to subside. The emperor was profoundly moved by the awful calamity which took place before his eyes, and in the gloomy frame of mind that had possession of him he regarded it as a punishment for his sins. As soon as the water had so far subsided as to make it possible to drive through the streets he set off for the Galernaia (in the lower part of the town). There a terrible picture of destruction was unfolded before him. Visibly affected he stopped and got out of the carriage; he stood for a few moments without speaking, the tears flowing down his cheeks: the people, sobbing and weeping, surrounded him: "God is punishing us for our sins," said someone in the crowd. "No, for mine," answered the emperor sorrowfully, and he himself began to give orders about arranging temporary refuge and affording assistance to the sufferers. On the next day, the 8th (20th) of November, Count Araktcheiev, Alexander's favourite, wrote the following letter to the emperor:

"I could not sleep all night, knowing what your state of mind must be, for I am convinced how much your majesty must be now suffering from the calamity of yesterday. But God certainly sometimes sends such misfortunes in order that His chosen ones may show in an unusual degree their compassionate care for the unfortunate. Your majesty will of course do so in the present case. For this money is necessary and money without delay, in order to give assistance, not to the well-to-do but to the poorest. Your subjects must help you, and therefore I venture to submit my idea to you.



"The wise dispositions that you made, *batushka*,<sup>1</sup> with regard to my insignificant labours have constituted a tolerably considerable capital. In my position I have not required to use any of this capital even as table money, and now I ask as a reward that a million may be separated from the capital and employed in assisting the poor people. God will certainly give his help in this matter to the benefit of the country and the glory of your majesty, and bring about a still better means for its accomplishment. Batushka, order that a committee may be formed of compassionate people, in order that they may without delay occupy themselves with the relief of the poorest. They will glorify your name, and I, hearing it, shall thus enjoy the greatest pleasure on earth."

The emperor answered Count Araktcheiev the same day in a few gracious lines, full of heartfelt gratitude: "We are in complete agreement in our ideas,

dear Alexis Andreivitch. Your letter has comforted me inexpressibly, for it is impossible that I should not be deeply grieved at the calamity of yesterday, and especially at the thought of those who have perished or who mourn for relatives. Come to me to-morrow so that we may arrange everything. Ever your sincerely affectionate Alexander."

The emperor sent a note of the following content to Adjutant-General Diebitsch: "In order to afford effectual relief to the sufferers from the inundation of the 7th of November, and on account of the destruction of the bridges and the difficulties of communication between the various parts of the



TVERSKI GATE, MOSCOW

town, the following military governors are temporarily appointed under the direction of the military governor-general, Count Miloradovitch: for Vasili Oetroo, Adjutant-General Benkendov; for the St. Petersburg side, Adjutant-General Komarovski; and for the Viboz side, Adjutant-General Depreradovitch."

On the 8th of November the emperor sent for the newly appointed military governors and declared his will to them—that the most speedy and effectual assistance should be given to the unfortunate sufferers from the awful catastrophe. Count Komarovski, in describing the reception given to him and the other military governors, says that tears were observed in the emperor's eyes. "I am sure that you share my feelings of compassion," continued Alexander; "here are your instructions, which have been hastily drawn up—your hearts will complete them. Go from here straight to the minister of finance who has orders to give each of you 100,000 rubles to begin with." According to Komarovski the emperor spoke with such feeling and eloquence that all the assembled governors were deeply touched.

At the time of the inundation in a space of five hours about 5,000 persons

[<sup>1</sup> Little father," a title sometimes given to the Russian sovereigns by their subjects.]

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perished and 3,609 domestic animals; 324 houses were destroyed or carried away, and 3,581 damaged; besides this pavements, foot ways, quays, bridges, etc. were either destroyed or damaged. Considerable destruction and damage was also occasioned in the environs of the capital, on the Petershov road, in old Petershov, Oranienbaum, and Kronstadt, along the northern shore. More than 100 persons perished in these places, while 114 buildings were destroyed and 187 damaged.

On the 22nd of November the emperor assisted at a requiem service in the Kazan cathedral for those who had perished during the inundation. The historian Karamzin writes that the people as they listened to the requiem wept and gazed at the czar.<sup>b</sup>

## THE CLOSE OF ALEXANDER'S REIGN

The czar, deeply affected by the sad spectacles he had witnessed, never recovered from the shock. This increased his disgust of life and the heavy melancholy that had of late been growing upon him. The whole aspect of Europe gave fearful tokens that the policy of the Holy Alliance was false and untenable; it was everywhere the subject of execration, and its destruction was the aim of an almost universal conspiracy, extending even into Alexander's own dominions. Poland inspired him with deep alarm, and his native country, notwithstanding her habits of immobility, seemed ripe for convulsions. Thus his public life was filled with disappointment and care, and his private life was deeply clouded with horrors.

The diet of Warsaw had become so refractory, that in 1820 Alexander had found it necessary to suspend it, in violation of the constitution given by himself; and though he opened a new diet in 1824, he did so under such restrictions, that the Poles rightly considered it a mere mockery of representative forms.

Russia herself was by no means tranquil. In the year 1824 insurrections of the peasants occurred in several governments, and especially in that of Novgorod, in dangerous vicinity to the first-founded of the military colonies. The latter themselves shared the general discontent, and threatened to become a fearful focus of rebellion, as was actually the case in 1832. There existed also in Russia other centres of disaffection, the existence of which might have been long before known to Alexander, but for his culpable habit of allowing petitions to collect in heaps in his cabinet without even breaking their seals. He, however, learned the fact on his last journey into Poland in June, 1825, or immediately after his return.<sup>1</sup> He then received the first intimation of the conspiracy which had for many years been plotting against himself and against the existing order of things in Russia — a conspiracy which, as many believe, involved the perpetration of regicide. It is a curious fact, but one by no means unparalleled, that in a country where the police is so active, such a plot should have remained for years undetected. In 1816, several young Russians who had served in the European campaigns of the three preceding years, and who had directed their attention to the secret associations which had so greatly contributed to the liberation of Germany, conceived the idea of establishing similar associations in Russia; and this was the origin of that abortive insurrection which broke out in St. Petersburg on the day when the troops were required to take the oath of allegiance to Alexander's successor.

These details would be sufficient of themselves to account for the melan-

<sup>1</sup> The informer was an inferior officer of lancers. His name was Sherwood, and he was of English origin.

choly that haunted Alexander in the later years of his reign, and which was painfully manifest in his countenance. But he had to undergo other sufferings.

He was not more than sixteen years of age when his grandmother, Catherine II, had married him to the amiable and beautiful princess Maria of Baden, then scarcely fifteen.<sup>1</sup> The match was better assorted than is usually the case in the highest conditions of life, but it was not a happy one. It might have been so if it had been delayed until the young couple were of more mature years, and had not the empress unwisely restricted their freedom after marriage, and spoiled her grandson as a husband by attempting to make him a good one in obedience to her orders. Moreover, the tie of offspring was wanting which might have drawn the parents' hearts together, for two daughters, born in the first two years of their union, died early. Alexander formed other attachments, one of which with the countess Narishkin, lasted eleven years, until it was dissolved by her inconstancy. She had borne him three children; only one was left, a girl as beautiful as her mother, who was now the sole joy of her father's sad heart. But the health of Sophia Narishkin was delicate, and he was compelled to part with her, that she might be removed to a milder climate. She returned too soon, and died on the eve of her marriage, in her eighteenth year. The news was communicated to Alexander one morning when he was reviewing his guard. "I receive the reward of my deeds," were the first words that escaped from his agonised heart.

Elizabeth, whose love had survived long years of neglect, had tears to shed for the daughter of her rival, and none sympathised more deeply than she with the suffering father. He began to see in her what his people had long seen, an angel of goodness and resignation; his affection for her revived, and he strove to wean her from the bitter recollections of the past by his constant and devoted attention. But long-continued sorrows had undermined Elizabeth's health, and her physicians ordered that she should be removed to her native air. She refused, however, to comply with this advice, declaring that the wife of the emperor of Russia should die nowhere else than in his dominions. It was then proposed to try the southern provinces of the empire, and Alexander selected for her residence the little town of Taganrog, on the sea of Azov, resolving himself to make all the arrangements for her reception in that remote and little frequented spot. A journey of 1800 versts, after the many other journeys he had already made since the opening of the year, was a fatigue too great for him to sustain without injury, suffering as he still was from erysipelas; but he was accustomed to listen to no advice on the subject of his movements, and two or three thousand versts were nothing in his estimation; besides, on this occasion, in the very fatigue of travelling he sought his repose: he would fulfil a duty which was to appease his conscience. He quitted St. Petersburg in the beginning of September, 1825, preceding the empress by several days. His principal travelling companions were Prince Volkhonski, one of the friends of his youth of whom we have already heard; his aide-de-camp general, Baron Diebitsch, a distinguished military man who had been made over to him by the king of Prussia; and his physician, Sir James Wylie, who had been about his person for thirty years, and was at the head of the army medical department.

The journey was prosperous, and was accomplished with Alexander's usual rapidity in twelve days, the travellers passing over 150 versts a day; but his mind was oppressed with gloomy forebodings, and these were strengthened by the sight of a comet; for though brought up by a philosophic grand-

<sup>1</sup> She took the name of Elizabeth Alexievna.



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mother, and by a free-thinking tutor, he was by no means exempt from superstition. "Ilia," he called out to his old and faithful coachmen, "have you seen the new star? Do you know that a comet always presages misfortune? But God's will be done!" A very favourable change having taken place in the empress's health in Taganrog, Alexander ventured to leave her early in October, for a short excursion through the Crimea. On the 26th of that month Dr. Robert Lee, family physician to Count Vorontzov was one of the emperor's guests at Alupka. He relates that at dinner Alexander repeatedly expressed how much he was pleased with Orianda, where he had been that day, and stated that it was his determination to have a palace built there as expeditiously as possible. "To my amazement," says Dr. Lee, "he said after a pause, 'When I give in my demission, I shall return and fix myself at Orianda, and wear the costume of the Taurida.' Not a word was uttered when this extraordinary resolution was announced, and I thought that I must have misunderstood the emperor; but this could not have been, for in a short time, when Count Vorontzov proposed that the large open flat space of ground to the westward of Orianda should be converted into pleasure-grounds for his majesty, he replied: 'I wish this to be purchased for General Diebitsch, as it is right that the chief of my état-major and I should be neighbours.'"

During the latter part of his tour in the Crimea, Alexander had some threatenings of illness, but peremptorily refused all medical treatment. He returned to Taganrog on the 17th of November, with evident symptoms of a severe attack of the bilious remittent fever of the Crimea. He persisted in rejecting medical aid until it was too late, and died on the 1st of December. For a long time the belief prevailed throughout Europe that he had been assassinated; but it is now established beyond question that his death was a natural one. The empress survived him but five months.

Alexander's last days were embittered by fresh disclosures brought to him by General Count de Witt, respecting the conspiracy by which, if the official report is to be believed, he was doomed to assassination. From that time he declared himself disgusted with life. Once when Sir James Wylie was pressing him to take some medicine, "My friend," said Alexander, "it is the state of my nerves to which you must attend; they are in frightful disorder." — "Alas!" rejoined the physician, "that happens more frequently to kings than to ordinary men." — "Yes," said the emperor, with animation, "but with me in particular there are many special reasons, and at the present hour more so than ever." Some days afterwards, when his brain was almost delirious, the czar gazed intently on the doctor, his whole countenance manifesting intense fear. "Oh, my friend," he exclaimed, "what an act, what a horrible act! The monsters! the ungrateful monsters! I designed nothing but their happiness."<sup>e</sup>

"It is difficult to represent the condition of St. Petersburg during the last years of the reign of the emperor Alexander," writes a contemporary. "It was as though enveloped in a moral fog; Alexander's gloomy views, more sad than stern, were reflected in its inhabitants. Many people said: What does he want more? He stands at the zenith of power. Each one explained after his own fashion the inconsolable grief of the emperor. For a man who must live to all eternity, who was famed as the friend of liberty, and who had out of necessity become her oppressor, it was grievous to think that he must renounce the love of his contemporaries and the praise of posterity. Many other circumstances and some family ones also weighed on his soul. The last years of Alexander's life," writes in conclusion the eye-witness of these sorrowful days, "may be termed a prolonged eclipse."

*The Death of Alexander I*

On the 1st of December, 1825, a truly great misfortune fell upon Russia: the best of European sovereigns had ceased to exist. When he vanished from the political arena, only the finer side of his life came into view; the remainder was given over to oblivion. A contemporary who was at the same time a poet writes: "You see arising before you that beautiful spirit that was welcomed with such joy in 1801; you see that glorious czar to whom Russia owes the years 1813 and 1814; you see the comforter of the people after last year's inundation; you see that gracious, benevolent man who was so amiable in personal intercourse," and who, in the words of Speranski, will ever remain a true charmer. There was much that was ideally beautiful in his soul, he sincerely loved and desired good, and attained to it. There was indeed cause for grief, particularly in view of the uncertainty of the future that awaited Russia, which, according to the picturesque expression of a Russian writer after the death of Alexander, had, as it were, to enter a cold, uninviting passage to a long dark tunnel. This was a feeling that was shared by many contemporaries.

Independently of the grief which fell upon all Russia, for the persons who had surrounded the deceased monarch at his death a truly tragic moment had approached. Far from the capital and from all the members of the imperial family, in an isolated town (Taganrog) of the Russian empire, at two thousand versts from the centre of government the terrible question arose: Who would now be emperor, to whom was the oath of allegiance to be taken, and by whom in future would orders issue? Moreover, it was amidst the ramifications of a vast conspiracy and a universal fermentation that these questions presented themselves.

"The sphinx, undivined even to the grave," as the poet justly called Alexander, had not revealed his royal will, and even in view of the inevitable end he had not considered it necessary to refer by a single word or hint to the question that was of such crucial interest to the welfare of Russia. On the contrary, during the last days of his life Alexander had as though consciously set aside all earthly matters and died like a private individual who has closed his accounts with the world. Therefore it is not surprising that he failed to indicate the successor he had chosen; being satisfied with the dispositions he had previously made in secret, he seemed to think: "After my death they will open my will and testament and will learn to whom Russia belongs."

During the life of Alexander no one knew of the existence of the act naming the grand duke Nicholas Pavlovitch heir to the throne except three state dignitaries: Count Araktcheiev, Prince A. N. Galitzin, and the archbishop of Moscow, Philaret. By a fatal concurrence of circumstances, not one of them was present at the decease of the emperor at Taganrog. Of the three persons of confidence who were with Alexander, Adjutant-general Prince Volkonski, Baron Diebitsch, and Tchernichev, not one was aware that the elder brother's right to the succession of the throne had been transferred to the second. Adjutant-general Diebitsch afterwards said to Danilevski: "The emperor, who had confided many secrets to me, never, however, told me a word of this. Once we were together at the settlement, and he, directing the conversation to the grand duke Nicholas Pavlovitch, said, 'You must support him.' I concluded from these words only that, judging from the age of the grand duke, he might be expected to outlive the emperor and the czarevitch, in which case he would naturally be their successor."

Such were the limits of the knowledge that Diebitsch had at his disposal

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in Taganrog as the question of the succession. Nor did Prince Volkonski know anything about the matter. Even the empress Elizabeth Alexievna was in the same ignorance regarding the rejection of the grand duke Constantine Pavlovitch.

"When the illness of Alexander at Taganrog no longer gave any hopes of recovery," relates Diebitsch, "Prince Volkonski advised me to ask the empress to whom, in case of the emperor's death, I as chief of his majesty's general staff must address myself, for my position was one of very great difficulty; I was left chief of the army at a time when instances of a conspiracy were being disclosed. I could not decide upon personally proposing such a question to the empress, fearing to distress her, besides which, although I enjoyed her favour, yet it was not to such a degree as Prince Volkonski, who was the friend of the imperial family; therefore I urgently requested him to take upon himself this explanation with the empress. He only consented under the condition that I should be present. We went together into the room where the emperor was lying unconscious, and Prince Volkonski, going up to Elizabeth Alexievna said to her that I, as chief of the staff, requested her to say to whom, in case of misfortune, I was to address myself? 'Is the emperor then so ill that there is no hope?' asked the empress. 'God alone can help and save the emperor: only the tranquillity and security of Russia demand that the traditional forms should be observed,' answered the prince Volkonski.

"Of course in case of an unhappy event the grand duke Constantine Pavlovitch must be referred to," said the empress. The words plainly proved the empress' ignorance as to who was named heir to the throne. Prince Volkonski and I supposed that the late emperor Alexander had made a will, for he had an envelope with a paper in it always with him, which never left him. When we opened it after his death we found that it contained some written-out prayers."

Such being the position of affairs it only remained for Adjutant-general Diebitsch to inform the czarevitch Constantine Pavlovitch in Warsaw of the melancholy event, as the person who, according to the law of succession, had become emperor of all the Russias. It was then that Diebitsch wrote a letter to the empress Marie Feodorovna in which he said in conclusion: "I humbly await the commands of our new lawful sovereign, the emperor Constantine Pavlovitch." The act of the decease of the emperor Alexander was drawn up in Taganrog, annexed to the report of Baron Diebitsch, dated December 1st, 1825, and sent to the emperor Constantine.<sup>b</sup>

#### ALISON'S ESTIMATE OF ALEXANDER I

Majestic in figure, a benevolent expression of countenance, gave Alexander I that sway over the multitude which ever belongs to physical advantages in youthful princes; while the qualities of his understanding and the feelings of his heart secured the admiration of all whose talents fitted them to judge of the affairs of nations. Misunderstood by those who formed their opinion only from the ease and occasional levity of his manner, he was early formed to great determinations, and evinced in the most trying circumstances, during the French invasion and the congress of Vienna, a solidity of judgment equalled only by the strength of his resolution. He had formed, early in life, an intimacy with the Polish prince, Czartorinski, and another attachment, of a more tender nature, to a lady of the same nation; and in consequence he considered the Poles so dear to him, that many of the best informed patriots

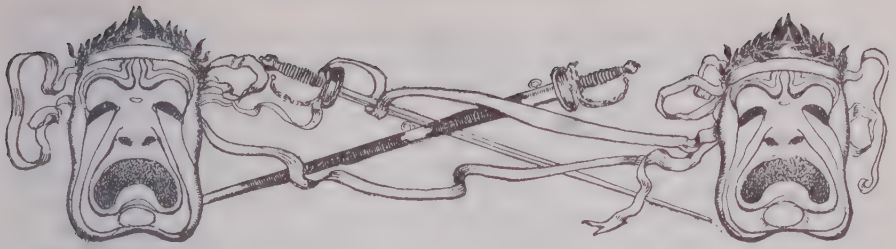


in that country hailed his accession to the throne as the first step towards the restoration of its nationality. A disposition naturally generous and philanthropic, moulded by precepts of Laharpe, had strongly imbued his mind with liberal principles, which shone forth in full and perhaps dangerous lustre when he was called on to act as the pacificator of the world after the fall of Paris. But subsequent experience convinced him of the extreme danger of prematurely transplanting the institutions of one country into another in a different stage of civilisation; and his later years were chiefly directed to objects of practical improvement, and the preparation of his subjects, by the extension of knowledge and the firmness of government, for those privileges which, if suddenly conferred, would have involved in equal ruin his empire and himself.<sup>g</sup>

#### SKRINE'S ESTIMATE OF ALEXANDER I

Of Alexander I it may be truly said that no monarch ever wielded unlimited power with a loftier resolve to promote the happiness of his people. And not theirs alone; for he sympathised with all the myriads doomed to suffering by false ideals and effete institutions. In him men saw the long-expected Messiah who was to give peace to a distracted world. But his nature had an alloy of feminine weakness, unfitting him to bear the reformer's cross. He was too sensitive of impressions derived from without; too easily led by counsellors who gained his confidence but were not always worthy of it. In youth he was swayed by noble infatuations and enamoured of the most diverse ideas in turn. But when he stood confronted with a crisis in his country's fortunes he rose superior to vacillation and kept a great design steadily in view. The will-power thus developed, and the resources at his command, made him for a brief period the leading figure in the civilised world. Despondency came with the inevitable reaction which followed the effort. He was drawn into the mazes of German illuminism, which lessened his capacity for persistent resolve. Its effect was heightened by his failure to pierce the dense phalanxes of ignorance around him, and by the unvarying ingratitude which requited his efforts for the public weal. Increasing physical weakness hastened the death of his generous illusions. An excessive devotion to duty exhausted his flagging powers and he became unequal to the task of governing all the Russias. As a dying tree is strangled by parasitical growths, so was Alexander in his decadence attacked by the enemies of human progress. When Metternich and Arakcheiev gained the mastery, all hope of domestic reform and consistent foreign policy disappeared. But despite the shadows which darkened his declining years, Alexander I of Russia will stand out in history as one of the few men born in the purple who rightly appraised the accident of birth and the externals of imperial rank; who held opinions far in advance of his age, and never wittingly abused his limitless powers; who displayed equal firmness in danger and magnanimity in the hour of triumph.<sup>h</sup>





## CHAPTER XI

### THE REIGN OF NICHOLAS I

[1825-1855 A.D.]

Nicholas Pavlovitch triumphed over two military revolts; then, as if the twelve days' interregnum had not existed, he dated his reign from the 1st of December, 1825, the day of Alexander's death. During the first ten or twelve years of his reign embarrassments of every kind, followed hard upon one another. These embarrassments were foreign war, first with Persia, and next with Turkey; the enmity of Austria whilst this latter struggle was going on; the abandonment of the Russian alliance by France, in consequence of the revolution of July, 1830; the insurrection of Poland; the epidemic of Asiatic cholera in 1831 and the popular riots to which this scourge gave rise, especially in St. Petersburg; a revolt in the heart of the military colonies; a famine which desolated the southern provinces during the years 1834 and 1835; the fires at Åbo, Tula, Kazan, and at last (December, 1837) at the emperor's own residence, the Winter Palace. But all these cruel trials did not daunt the courage of the new autocrat; they served only to bring out the firmness of his mind and the strong cast of his character.—SCHNITZLER.<sup>o</sup>

#### THE INTERREGNUM

AFTER the 24th of November, 1825, Adjutant-general Diebitsch had begun to send information to Warsaw of the illness of the emperor Alexander, by means of letters addressed to General Kuruta. The first courier, bearing this alarming news, arrived at Warsaw on the 1st of December in the evening of the very day of the emperor Alexander's death.

The czarevitch Constantine Pavlovitch did not conceal the painful presentiment that took possession of him, and wrote to Baron Diebitsch the same day in the following terms: "In spite of all the consolations expressed in your letter, I cannot rid myself of the painful impression it has produced on me. I tell you frankly that if I were to obey the dictates of my heart I should set off and come to you. But unfortunately my duties and my position do not permit me to give way to these natural sentiments."

The grand duke Michael Pavlovitch was at that time at Warsaw, and the czarevitch hid even from him and Princess Lovitch the alarming letters that he received from Taganrog. "I do not speak to you of the condition of mind in which I now find myself," wrote the czarevitch to Adjutant-general Diebitsch on the 5th of December, "for you know only too well of my devotion and sincere attachment to the best of brothers and monarchs to doubt them.

My position is rendered all the more painful from the fact that, the emperor's illness is only known to me and my old friend Kuruta and my doctor; the news has not yet reached here, so that in society I have to appear calm, although there is no such calmness in my soul. My wife and brother do not suspect anything, so that I had to invent an explanation for the arrival of your first messenger, which I shall have to do again to-day. If I were to obey only the suggestions of my heart of course I should have been with you long ago, but you will naturally understand what hinders me."

Meanwhile couriers continued to follow upon each others' heels and finally on December 7th, at seven in the evening, the czarevitch received the fatal intelligence of the death of his brother. The report of Adjutant-general Diebitsch did not shake the czarevitch's decision as to the question of the succession to the throne, and he then said to the grand duke Michael Pavlovitch, "Now the solemn moment has come to show that my previous mode of action was not a mask, and to terminate the matter with the same firmness with which it was commenced. My intentions and my determinations have not changed one iota, and my will to renounce the throne is more unchangeable than ever."

Summoning the persons of his entourage and informing them of the loss that had overtaken Russia, the czarevitch read them his correspondence with the emperor Alexander in 1822 and ordered that letters to the empress Marie Feodorovna, and to the grand duke Nicholas Pavlovitch, should be prepared, stating that he ceded his rights to the succession to the throne to his younger brother, by virtue of the rescript of the emperor Alexander of the 14th of February, 1822. The czarevitch here used the expression "cede the throne to the grand duke Nicholas Pavlovitch," because he knew nothing of the existence of the state act which as long ago as 1824 had invested this cession with the power of a law. Such were the misapprehensions with which was accompanied Alexander's secret and evasive manner of action in regard to the question of the succession.

Meanwhile what was taking place in St. Petersburg? The news of the death of the emperor Alexander was received in the capital only on December 9th, during prayers which were being said for the recovery of the emperor in the church of the Winter Palace. The circumstances are thus narrated by the empress Elizabeth Alexievna herself:

On the 9th inst. at the termination of the liturgy, when prayers for the health of the emperor had already commenced, his highness was called out from the sacristy by Count Miloradovitch and informed by him that all was over. His imperial highness became faint, but recovering himself he returned with Doctor Rule to the sacristy. The empress was on her knees and being already prepared by the grand duke's prolonged absence, and guessing her lot from his face she grew faint; meanwhile the priest presented the cross to her, and as she kissed it she lost consciousness.

His imperial highness, turning to his wife, said to her "Take care of our mother, and I will go and do my duty." With these words he entered the church, ordered that a reading desk should be brought in, and took the oath of allegiance to his beloved brother and emperor, Constantine, which he ratified by his signature; some others who happened to be there also subscribed to the same: they were the minister of war Tatistchev, General Kutusov, the general in waiting Potapov, and all the others who were present.

Then he presented himself before the Preobrajenski regiment that was on guard in the palace (the company of his majesty's grenadiers), and informed them of the emperor's death and proclaimed Constantine emperor. The



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grenadiers received the announcement with tears, and immediately took the oath of allegiance. After this his imperial highness commissioned the general in waiting, Potapov, to inform the chief and all the other guards of what had taken place and to bring them from their posts to take the oath, which was done without delay and with sorrow and zeal; meanwhile General Neitgart was sent to the Nevski monastery, where were all the general officers of the guards' corps, with the proposal to General Voinov to do the same throughout all the regiments of the guards. Finally similar announcements and instructions were sent to all the regiments and detachments in both the city and its environs.

Meanwhile the council of the state had assembled and opened its sitting by the proposal to break the seals of the envelope which contained the will of the late emperor. Some discussion arose, and finally it was decided to unseal the packet, in order to learn the last will of the czar.

In the act was drawn up the renunciation of the throne by the czarevitch and the nomination of the grand duke Nicholas as the emperor's heir. Some discussion again arose upon this question, but it was cut short by the suggestion that his highness should be invited into the presence of the council. Count Miloradovitch replied that his highness had already taken the oath and that in any case he considered it unfitting that his highness should be called, or should come to the council, but offered to bring all this to his knowledge and to ask that they might be allowed to come to him in order to report all that had taken place; this was done and the grand duke replied that he could not hinder their coming.

When the members of the council presented themselves before the grand duke he informed them that the contents of the act had long been known to him, namely since July 25th, 1819, but that in no case would he dare to occupy the place of his elder brother, from whose supreme will his lot depended, and that holding it as a sacred obligation most humbly to obey him in all things, he had therefore taken the oath and felt entirely certain that the council, having in view the welfare of the state, would follow his example.

The council followed his highness into the church and at his request took the oath before him; they were then introduced by him into the presence of the empress mother, who was pleased to inform them that the act and its content were known to her, and were made with her maternal consent, but that she also was enthusiastic over her son's conduct. Confirming all his actions she requested the council by their united endeavours to preserve the tranquillity of the empire.

In accordance with the measures taken, by three o'clock in the afternoon the troops as well as all grades of officials in the government service had taken the oath confirming the accession to the throne of the emperor Constantine. During the whole time tranquillity and order were preserved. It is easy to imagine the astonishment and vexation of the czarevitch when, instead of



NICHOLAS I  
(1796-1855)

receiving the expected commands of the new emperor, he was informed that all Russia had taken the oath of allegiance to him as lawful sovereign, and that the will of the late emperor had not been fulfilled.

Meanwhile early in the morning of December 15th the grand duke Michael Pavlovitch arrived in St. Petersburg with letters from the czarevitch. To the amazement of the court and the inhabitants, the grand duke did not follow the general example of swearing fidelity to the emperor Constantine. He did not conceal his regret at what had taken place in St. Petersburg, nor the apprehension with which the necessity of a new oath filled him. He dwelt on the difficulty of explaining to the public why the place of the elder brother to whom allegiance had already been sworn should suddenly be taken by the younger. The grand duke Nicholas in answer to his brother repeated what he had already said, that he could not have acted otherwise in such a position as that in which he was placed by his ignorance of the sacred acts of the late emperor, and that neither his conscience nor his reason reproached him. "Everything, however," added he, "might yet be amended and take a more favourable turn if the czarevitch himself were to come to St. Petersburg; his obstinacy in remaining at Warsaw may occasion disasters, the possibility of which I do not deny, but of which in all probability I shall myself be the first victim."

After long deliberation the grand duke Nicholas decided to write a fresh persuasive letter to the emperor Constantine, in which he asked him to decide finally what his fate was to be; and in conclusion he wrote, "In God's name, come." The empress Marie Feodorovna added her persuasions to those of her son, and not satisfied with these measures it was decided a few days later to despatch the grand duke Michael to Warsaw to convince the czarevitch of the necessity of his presence in St. Petersburg.

An answer from the czarevitch to the grand duke Nicholas' letter dated the 14th of December was brought to St. Petersburg by Lazarev, aid-de-camp to Nicholas: "Your aide-de-camp, dear Nicholas, on his arrival here, confided your letter to me with all exactitude. I read it with the deepest grief and sorrow. My decision is unalterable and consecrated by my late benefactor the emperor and sovereign. Your invitation to come quickly cannot be accepted by me, and I must tell you that I shall remove myself yet further away, if all is not arranged in accordance with the will of our late emperor. Your faithful and sincere friend and brother for life." But even this letter did not decide the matter; the return of Belussov from Warsaw with the answer to the grand duke Nicholas' letter of December 15th had yet to be awaited.

A new complication remained to be added to all these difficulties. On December 24th there came to St. Petersburg and presented himself to the grand duke Nicholas, Colonel Baron Fredericks of the Izmailovski Life Guards, who had fulfilled the functions of commandant in Taganrog. He brought to the grand duke a packet from Baron Diebitsch addressed to his imperial majesty, to be given into his own hands. To the question as to whether he knew of the contents of the packet, Fredericks replied in the negative, but added that as the place of residence of the emperor was unknown in Taganrog, exactly the same paper had been sent also to Warsaw.

Nothing therefore remained for Nicholas to do but to open the mysterious packet and "at the first rapid glance over its contents," writes Baron Kory, "an inexpressible horror took possession of him." It was on reading the report contained in this packet that the grand duke first learned of the existence of secret societies formed with the object of destroying to the very

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roots the tranquillity of the empire. The existence of these societies had been carefully hidden from him by the late emperor Alexander.

Almost immediately thereafter the courier Belussov returned from Warsaw with the czarevitch's decisive answer, which put an end to the interregnum. Nicholas Pavlovitch was emperor. At nine o'clock in the evening the emperor sent the following postscript to Adjutant-general Diebitsch:

The decisive courier has returned: by the morning of the day after to-morrow I shall be emperor or else dead. I sacrifice myself for my brother; happy if as a subject I fulfil his will. But how will it be with Russia? What about the army? General Tolle is here and I shall send him to Mohilev to bear the news to Count Saken. I am looking out for a trustworthy person for the same commission to Tuitelin and to Ermolov. In a word, I hope to be worthy of my calling, not in fear and mistrustfulness, but in the hope that even as I fulfil my duty so will others fulfil their duty to me. But if anywhere anything is brewing and you hear of it, I authorise you to go at once where your presence is necessary. I rely entirely upon you and give you leave beforehand to take all the measures you deem necessary. The day after to-morrow if I am alive I will send you, I do not know by whom, information as to how matters have passed off; on your part do not leave me without news of how everything is going on around you, especially with Ermolov. I again repeat that here until now everything is incomprehensibly quiet, but calm often precedes a storm. Enough of this, God's will be done! In me there must only be seen the vicar and executor of the late emperor's will and therefore I am ready for everything. I shall ever be your sincere well wisher,

NICHOLAS.

## THE ACCESSION OF NICHOLAS

The czarevitch's decisive answer was brought by Belussov, not through Riga, but by the Brest-Lithuani road; and therefore the grand duke Michael Pavlovitch was still in ignorance of the events at Nennal. The emperor Nicholas immediately sent an express after him commanding him to hasten to St. Petersburg. The return of the grand duke to the capital where his presence was of urgent necessity was thus by chance delayed.

Nicholas had now to occupy himself with the composition of his manifesto; the inexplicable had to be explained and it presented a task of no little difficulty: Karunzin and Speranski were set to work upon it. The emperor Nicholas signed the manifesto on the 25th of December, but dated it the 24th, as the day on which the question of his accession had been definitely settled by the czarevitch. It was proposed to keep the manifesto secret until the arrival of the grand duke Michael, but it was decided that the troops should take the oath of allegiance on the 26th of December; meanwhile notifications were sent to the members of the council of state, calling upon them to assemble on Sunday, December 25th, at eight in the evening, for a general secret meeting.

When the council of state had assembled at the hour designated, Prince Sopukhin announced that the grand duke Michael would be present at the sitting. The hours passed in anxious expectation; midnight approached and the expected arrival of the grand duke did not take place. Then Nicholas decided to be present at the sitting alone. Taking the place of the president, Nicholas himself began to read the manifesto announcing his acceptance of the imperial dignity in consequence of the persisted rejection of it by the czarevitch Constantine Pavlovitch. Then the emperor ordered that the czarevitch's rescript, addressed to Prince Sopukhin, president of the council, should be read. The 26th of December, 1825, had come. Commands had been issued that on that day all persons having access to the court should assemble at the Winter Palace for a *Te Deum*; eleven o'clock was the hour first named, but this was afterwards changed to two. Circum-



stances arose, however, which postponed the *Te Deum* to a still later hour. The members of the secret society decided to take advantage of the end of the interregnum and the approach of the new oath of allegiance in order to incite the troops to rebellion and to overthrow the existing order of things in Russia. The secrecy in which the negotiations with Russia had been enveloped had given occasion for various rumours and suppositions, and for the spread of false reports which occasioned alarm in society and especially in the barracks: all this favoured the undertakings and designs of the conspirators.

The only issue from the position that had been created by Nicholas in a moment of chivalrous enthusiasm "undoubtedly noble, but perhaps not entirely wise," would have been the arrival of the grand duke Constantine in the capital with the object of publicly and solemnly proclaiming his renunciation of the throne. But the czarevitch flatly refused to employ this means of extricating his brother from the difficult position in which he placed himself; Constantine considered that it was not for him to suffer from the consequences of an imprudence which was not his, and the danger of which might have been averted if matters had not been hurried on, and if he had been previously applied to for advice and instructions. Thus led into error, some of the lower ranks of the guards' regiments refused to take the oath of allegiance to Nicholas Pavlovitch, and assembled at the Petrovski square, before the senate buildings, appearing as though they were the defenders of the lawful rights of the czarevitch Constantine to the throne.

Meanwhile distinguished persons of both sexes began to drive up to the Winter Palace. Amidst the general stir and movement going on in the palace, there sat isolated and immovable three magnates, "like three monuments," writes Karamzin: Prince Lopukhin, Count Araktechiev, and Prince A. B. Kurakin. At the time when the military men had already gone out on the square, Count Araktechiev, as might have been expected, preferred to remain in the palace. "It was pitiful to look at him," writes V. R. Martchenko in his *Mémoires*.

The rioters were stubborn for a long time and would not yield to exhortation; Count Miloradovitch fell mortally wounded. It began to grow dusk; Then the emperor Nicholas, at last convinced of the impossibility of pacifying the rioters without bloodshed, gave orders with a breaking heart for the artillery to fire. A few grape-shot decided the fate of the day; the rioters were dispersed, and tranquillity at once reigned in the capital.

The *Te Deum* announced could take place only at half past six. The troops bivouacked round the palace. "Dear, dear Constantine," wrote the emperor the same evening to the czarevitch, "your will is fulfilled: I am emperor, but at what price, my God! — at the price of the blood of my subjects." Arrests were made during that night and investigations pursued to discover the leaders of the revolt. And thus in the troubles of the 26th of December, the 1st of December, 1825, was terribly recalled. "The day was one of misfortune for Russia," writes Prince Viasenski, "and the epoch which it signalised in such a bloody manner was an awful judgment for deeds, opinions, and ideas, rooted in the past and governing the present." According to the words of Karamzin, on that day Russia was saved from a calamity "which, if it had not destroyed her, would certainly have torn her to pieces." "If I am emperor even for an hour, I will show that I was worthy of it"; thus spoke Nicholas on the morning of December 26th to the commanders of the guard regiments assembled at the Winter Palace; and on that awful day he triumphantly justified his first and impressive words.

[1826 A.D.]

## TRIAL OF THE CONSPIRATORS (1826 A.D.)

The emperor Nicholas gave all possible publicity to the proceedings against the secret societies, the Southern, Northern, the United Slavonians, and the Polish; then the whole matter was transferred to the supreme criminal court, which had to pronounce sentence on the principal participators in the conspiracy. Of the accused, Rileeks, Muraviev-Alostob, Bestuzhev-Riumin, Pestel, and Kakhovski were condemned to death, and the remaining members of the secret societies brought before the court were exiled to Siberia or other places of incarceration.

No one had expected such a termination to the affair. During the whole of Alexander's reign there had not been one case of capital punishment, and it was looked upon as entirely abolished. "It is impossible to describe in words the horror and despair which have taken possession of all," writes a contemporary and eye witness of the events of 1826 in Moscow. This frame of mind was reflected in the coronation ceremonies. The emperor Nicholas appeared extremely gloomy; the future seemed more sad and fuller of anxiety than ever; all was in sharp contrast to the enthusiasm and hopes that had accompanied the coronation of Alexander in 1801.

## THE CORONATION OF NICHOLAS (1826 A.D.)

Immediately after the termination of the trial of the Dekabrists, the court proceeded to Moscow for the approaching coronation, which took place on the 3rd of September. Previously the emperor was rejoiced at the unexpected arrival of the grand duke Constantine Pavlovitch. According to Benkendorf "the czarevitch's appearance was a brilliant public testimony of his submission to the new emperor and of his conscientious renunciation of the throne; it was at the same time a precious pledge of the harmony which bound together all the members of the reigning family, a harmony conducive to the peace of the empire. The public was delighted and the *corps diplomatique* completely astounded. The people expressed their satisfaction to the czarevitch by unanimous acclamations; whilst the dignitaries of the state surrounded him with marks of respectful veneration."

The day of the coronation was signalised by an important reform in the administration of the court; the ministry of the imperial court was created, and confided to Prince P. M. Volkonski. Thus the old and tried companion of the emperor Alexander I again occupied the post of a trusty dignitary by the side of his successor. Prince Volkonski remained minister of the court until his decease, which took place in 1852. Amongst the favours and the mitigations of punishments which were granted on the 3rd of September, the state criminals who had lately been condemned were not forgotten; by special ukases the sentences of all those sent to the galleys, to penal settlements, and hard labour were mitigated. Those who had been sent to the Siberian, Orenburg, and Caucasian garrisons, both with and without deprivation of the rights of nobility, were enrolled in the regiments of the Caucasian corps.

During the emperor's stay in Moscow, the poet Pushkin, who had been banished to the village of Mikhailovski, was recalled. From that moment he regained his lost liberty, besides which the emperor Nicholas said to him: "In future you are to send me all you write — henceforth I will be your censor."

## CHANGES IN INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION

On the 18th of October, 1826, the emperor Nicholas returned to St. Petersburg; although his accession to the throne did not constitute the opening of a new era for Russia, yet certain changes were made in the system of administration which had prevailed during the last decade of the reign of Alexander I. After Count Arakcheiev had been relieved of the management of the general affairs of the state, it was to be foreseen that he would not remain long at the head of the direction of the military settlements. And thus it turned out. In the spring of 1826 Count Arakcheiev, on account of illness, was given leave to go abroad. In the report presented by him on this occasion to the emperor he announced to him economies of more than 32,000,000 rubles made on the military settlements, and concluded his epistle by observing, "Those impartial judges — posterity and the future — will pronounce a just sentence on all things."

On the return of Count Arakcheiev in the autumn from his travels abroad he did not again take up his duties. In accordance with a ukase which then followed, the staff office of the military settlements was united to the general staff of his imperial majesty, under the jurisdiction of its adjutant-general Baron Diebitsch. At the same time the Novgorod military settlement passed under the entire direction of General Prince Schahovski, who was nominated commander of the grenadier corps; the Kherson and Iekaterinoslav settlements were put under the supervision of their chief, Count Vitt (who was also commander of a separate corps), while the settlements in the villages of the Ukraine and Mohilev governments remained under the jurisdiction of their former chiefs, who bore the rank of commanders of divisions. Count Arakcheiev, when he had finally bidden adieu to his administrative career, settled on his Georgian estates, where he died in 1834.

Having delivered Russia from the administrative guardianship of Count Arakcheiev, the emperor Nicholas, in addition, delivered Russian instruction from the influence of Michael Leontievitch Magnitzki. On the 18th of May, 1826, a ukase was issued in which it was stated that "the curator of the University of Kazan and of its educational district, the actual councillor of state Magnitzki, is by our command relieved of his functions and of his position as member of the administration of schools." But the matter was not limited to this ukase. Magnitzki continued to live in Kazan and in accordance with his character he continued to intrigue as usual and indirectly to influence the university he had left. General Jeltukhin, who had been commissioned to make a detailed revision of the Kazan University, brought this fact to the emperor's knowledge. Nicholas' reply was rapid and decisive; a courier was sent with orders to the governor to arrest Magnitzki and send him to Revel under the surveillance of the commandant. Magnitzki lived there six years, having given his promise not to absent himself.

An equally sad fate overtook the champion and imitator of Magnitzki, Dmitri Pavlovitch Runitch, who had filled the office of curator of the St. Petersburg educational district. By a ukase of the 7th of July, 1826, Runitch was deprived of his functions and of the position of member of the chief administration of schools, for his incompetence in the matter of the direction of the St. Petersburg educational district. The requital experienced by Runitch for his educational labours was a terrible one; he languished beneath the consequences for sixteen years and died in 1860 in the conviction that he had formerly saved Russia, and was suffering for the good work he had accomplished in the University of St. Petersburg.



[1826 A.D.]

*Reforms in the Administration of Justice*

The lamentable condition of the administration of justice in Russia was one of the first subjects to which the careful attention of the emperor Nicholas was directed. In a speech pronounced by the sovereign many years later, in 1833, before the council of state, Nicholas Pavlovitch thus expressed himself:

"From my very accession to the throne I was obliged to turn my attention to various administrative matters, of which I had scarcely any notion. The chief subject that occupied me was naturally legislation. Even from my early youth I had constantly heard of our deficiencies in this respect, of chicanery, of extortion, of the insufficiency of the existing laws or of their admixture through the extraordinary number of ukases which were not infrequently in contradiction to one another. This incited me from the very first days of my reign to examine into the state of the commission appointed for the constitution of the laws. To my regret, the information presented to me proved to me that its labours had remained almost fruitless. It was not difficult to discover the cause of this: the deficient results proceeded chiefly from the fact that the commission always directed its attention to the formation of new laws, when in reality the old ones should have been established on a firm foundation. This inspired me above all with a desire to establish a definite aim towards which the government must direct its actions in the matter of legislation; from the methods proposed to me I selected one in entire opposition to the former methods of reform. Instead of drawing up new laws, I commanded that first those which already existed should be collected and set in order, whilst I took the matter itself, on account of its great importance, under my own immediate direction and closed the previous commission."

With this object was formed and opened on the 6th of May, 1826, the "second section of his imperial majesty's own chancery." M. A. Balongianski was appointed chief of the second section, but in reality the work itself was confided to Speranski. The emperor's choice rested on the latter, out of necessity, as he did not find anyone more capable around him. When Balongianski was appointed chief of the second section, the emperor, in conversing with his former tutor, said to him, speaking of Speranski: "See that he does not play any pranks, as in 1810." Nevertheless, in proportion to Speranski's



MARRIED WOMAN OF VALDAI

successful accomplishment of the work confided to him, the emperor Nicholas' prejudices against him gradually softened and finally gave way to sincere favour and full confidence. All the accusations and calumnies directed against Speranski were, in accordance with the emperor's own expression, "scattered like dust."

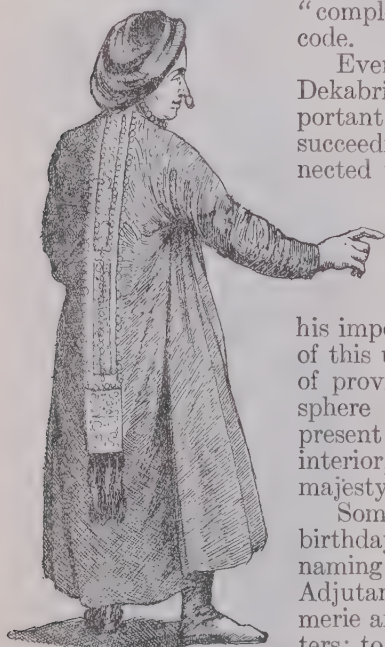
Thus the emperor Nicholas in his almost involuntary choice was favoured by a peculiarly fortunate chance and could hardly have found a person better fitted for the accomplishment of the work he had planned. The results of Speranski's fresh efforts, under completely different circumstances from those against which he had formerly contended, were the "complete collection of laws," and a systematic code.

Even before the termination of the trial of the Dekabrists, the emperor Nicholas took another important measure, which left an imprint on all the succeeding years of his reign and is directly connected with the events of the 26th of December.

On the 15th of July, 1826, a supreme edict was issued in the name of the minister of the interior Lanskoi, by which the private chancery of that ministry was abolished and transformed into the third section of his imperial majesty's own chancery. In fulfilment of this ukase, it was prescribed that the governors of provinces, in matters which entered within the sphere of the former division, should no longer present their reports to the ministry of the interior, but should submit them directly to his majesty.

Some days before, on the emperor Nicholas' birthday, the 6th of July, a supreme order appeared naming the chief of the first cuirassier division, Adjutant-general Benkendorf, chief of the gendarmerie and commandant of the emperor's headquarters; to him was confided the direction of the third section. Adjutant-general Benkendorf explains in his memoirs in the following manner the reasons for establishing the institution confided to his direc-

tion: "The emperor Nicholas aimed at the extirpation of the abuses that had crept into many branches of the administration, and was convinced by the sudden discovery of the conspiracy which had stained the first moments of the new reign with blood, of the necessity of a universal and more diligent surveillance. The emperor chose me to organise a higher police, which should protect the oppressed and guard the nation against conspiracies and conspirators. Never having thought of preparing myself for this sort of service, I had hardly the most superficial understanding of it; but the noble and beneficent motives which inspired the sovereign in his creation of this institution and the desire to be of use to him, forbade me to evade the duty to which his high confidence had called me. I set to work without delay and God helped me to fulfil my new duties to the satisfaction of the emperor and without setting general opinion against me. I succeeded in showing favours to many, in discovering many conspiracies, and averting much evil." With the creation of the new third section, the committee of the 13th of January,



A WOMAN (SAILOR) OF THE  
NOGAI TRIBE

[1826 A.D.]

1807, established by the emperor Alexander, became superfluous; and on the 29th of January a ukase was issued closing it.

The disturbances of the year 1825 did not pass without leaving traces on the peasant population; a momentary confusion ensued, freedom was talked of, and disorders arose in some provinces — a phenomenon often seen in previous times. The movement amongst the peasants incited the emperor Nicholas to publish, on the 24th of May, 1826, a manifesto in which it was declared that all “talk of exempting the villagers in the state settlements from paying taxes and of freeing landowner’s peasants and menials from subjection to their landowners are false rumours, imagined and spread by evil intentioned persons out of mere cupidity with the object of enriching themselves through these rumours at the expense of the peasants, by taking advantage of their simplicity.” It was further said in the manifesto that all classes throughout the empire must absolutely submit to the authorities placed over them, and that disturbers of the public tranquillity would be prosecuted and punished in accordance with the full severity of the laws. It was commanded that the manifesto should be read in all the churches and at the markets and fairs during a space of six months; the governors of provinces were sternly admonished to be watchful in anticipating disorders.

If, however, the emperor Nicholas was forced by circumstances to promulgate this punitive manifesto, he also issued two rescripts in the name of the minister of the interior, enjoining upon the nobility behaviour towards their peasants, which should be in accordance with the laws of Christianity, thus clearly expressing his desire to protect the peasant against the arbitrariness and tyranny of the landowners. “In all cases,” wrote the emperor: “I find it, and shall ever find it, better to prevent evil, than to pursue it by punishment when it has already arisen.”

Finally the solicitude of the emperor Nicholas for the peasant classes manifested itself by yet another action. On the 18th of December, 1826, a special secret committee was formed to which was confided the inspection of the entire state organisation and administration, with the order to represent the conclusions it arrived at as to the changes deemed necessary; the labours of the committee were to be directed also to the consideration of the peasant question. Besides this the emperor did not leave without attention what had been said by the Dekabrists, during the time of their examination before a committee of inquiry, in regard to the internal conditions of the state in the reign of Alexander I. The emperor ordered a separate memorandum of these opinions to be drawn up for him and often perused this curious document, from which he extracted much that was pertinent.<sup>b</sup>

#### WAR WITH PERSIA (1826–1828 A.D.)

The shah of Persia thought he saw in the change of rulers and the troubles by which it was accompanied circumstances favourable to the recovery of the provinces ceded to Russia by the Treaty of Gulistan. In August, 1826, he ordered his troops to move forward. The solemnity of his coronation, which was then being celebrated and whose splendour was enhanced by the presence of the czarevitch, did not prevent Nicholas from promptly organising the defence of the empire. A few weeks afterwards General Paskevitch defeated the Persians at Ielissavetpol, and in the following year, transferring the theatre of war to the enemy’s territory, he seized the celebrated convent of Etchmiadzine, the seat of the Armenian patriarch, and Erivan, one of the great towns of Armenia; he moreover penetrated as far as Tauris, capital of the Azerbaijan



and residence of the prince royal, Abbas Mirza. Then the shah asked for peace. It was signed at Turkmantchai, the 22nd of February, 1828, and advanced Russia as far as the line of the Araxes, by giving up to her the provinces of Erivan and Nakhitchevan.

#### WAR WITH TURKEY (1828-1829 A.D.)

This treaty was concluded, to the great regret of Persia, when the war with Turkey broke out. This war had been threatening for years; for, deeply affected by the violences to which the Greeks in the Ottoman Empire had been exposed ever since the heterist insurrection of 1821, and by the martyrdom which the Greek patriarch had been made to suffer, Alexander left the sword in its sheath only out of deference to the members of the Holy Alliance. His successor was thoroughly determined no longer to subordinate the direction of his cabinet's policy to the interested views of these princes and to their fears, though it is true that the latter were well founded. The Divan, by signing the Treaty of Akerman (October 6th, 1826), had momentarily averted the storm which was ready to burst; but still more irritating disputes had afterwards arisen. The conclusion of the Treaty of London of the 6th of July, 1827, in virtue of which France, England, and Russia gave existence to a Christian kingdom of Greece placed under their common protection, was shortly followed by the naval battle of Navarino, fought on the 20th of October of the same year by the combined fleets of the three powers, against Ibrahim Pasha, commander-in-chief of the Egyptian forces in the Morea; and in this memorable conflict, expected by no one, but a subject of joy to some whilst judged untoward by others, the whole of the navy which the Porte still had at its disposal was destroyed. Very soon Mahmud II, yielding to the national desire, let it be understood that he had never had any intention of lending himself to the execution of a treaty in virtue of which Moldavia, Wallachia, and Servia were almost as much the czar's vassals as his own. This was the beginning of a rupture, and Nicholas answered it by a declaration of war, which appeared June 4th, 1828, when his army had already crossed the Pruth.

The campaign of 1828, which accomplished nothing more than the taking of Braila and Varna, did not give a high idea of the strength of Russia; and when the emperor made up his mind to take part in it in person, his presence wrought no change in the feebleness of the results. But it was not the same with the campaign which followed. Not only did the Russians again pass the Danube, but after having beaten the grand vizir, Reschid Pasha, at Koul-evtcha, on the 11th of June, Diebitsch marched them across the Balkans for the first time, a feat which won him the name of *Sabalkanski*, and proceeded straight to Adrianople, where he was scarcely more than two hundred kilometres (about 125 miles) from the Ottoman capital. At the same time Paskevitch took Erzerum in Asia, and the two generals would doubtless have joined hands in Constantinople but for the efforts of diplomacy and the fear of a general conflagration. For Russia was already too powerful; she had been allowed more than was compatible with the policy of the system of balance, no doubt from the fear of incurring a grave responsibility by troubling the peace of Europe. But a prospect like that of the occupation by Russia of Constantinople and the Straits silenced this fear.

Austria was ready to send her troops to the help of the Turks, and the English also seemed likely to declare for the vanquished. It was therefore necessary to come to a halt. Russia reflected that, after all, "the sultan was

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the least costly governor-general she could have at Constantinople, ' and lent an ear to moderate conditions of peace. Nevertheless, if the Treaty of Adrianople, signed September 14th, 1829, delivered nothing to her in Europe save the mouths of the Danube, in itself a very important point, it enlarged her territories in Asia by a part of the pashalik of Akhalzikh, with the fortress of that name, besides abandoning to her those of Anapa and Pothi on the Black Sea; it considerably strengthened Muscovite influence in the principalities, and still further weakened Turkey, not only morally but also materially by the great pecuniary sacrifices to which she had to subscribe. That power, once so formidable, was henceforth at the mercy of her northern neighbour, the principal instrument of her decay.

## THE POLISH INSURRECTION (1830-1831 A.D.)

But Russia was in her turn rudely shaken by the insurrection in Poland, always her mortal enemy after she had ceased to be her rival.

It was in Moscow that the emperor Nicholas received news of the further progress of the Belgian revolution, in consequence of which the king of the Netherlands found himself obliged to ask for the assistance of his allies by virtue of the existing treaties. The emperor at once despatched orders to Count Tchernishev, Field-marshal Saken, and the czarevitch to place the army on a war footing. The czarevitch was not pleased at the martial turn given to the diplomatic negotiations; still more dissatisfied was the Polish Society of that time, which sympathised with the revolution of July; neither was the army in sympathy with the approaching campaign, which would bring it into armed collision with France in the name of the principles of the Holy Alliance. Although tranquillity apparently reigned in Warsaw, yet the secret societies continued to carry on their destructive work with success.

Various ominous signs of the approaching catastrophe were not, however, wanting; but the czarevitch continued to lull himself with impossible hopes that all was peaceful and tranquil and would remain so. As to the European powers allied to Russia, they did not enter into the matter with such decided zeal. In the present case it was the Russian autocrat alone who was ready with entire disinterestedness to take up the defence of the infringed lawful order. The other powers found it incomparably more expedient to have recourse to the co-operation of diplomatic remedies; the result was that, instead of an armed intervention, a general European conference for the settlement of the Belgian question by peaceful means took place in London.

Count Diebitsch was still in Berlin awaiting the termination of the negotiations confided to him, when they were suddenly broken off by an event



COUNT DIEBITSCH-SABALKANSKI  
(1785-1831)

upon which the field-marshal had not in the least calculated at the given moment. On the 3rd of December, 1830, Diebitsch received from the Prussian minister, Count Berastorf, news of the revolution which had taken place in Warsaw on the 29th of November: the Polish army, forming a prepared coalition, had taken up arms against Russia. There remained but one thing for Diebitsch to do and that was to hasten to St. Petersburg as quickly as possible. Meanwhile in St. Petersburg the emperor Nicholas had received only the report of the czarevitch concerning the rising of the troops and of inhabitants of Warsaw on the evening of the 7th of December, 1830.

On the next day a parade of the Preobrajenski regiment was appointed to take place, and as usual the emperor came to the riding school. At first everything proceeded in the usual manner; there were even no traces of inward agitation manifest upon the handsome face with its regular, classic profile, which preserved its habitual expression of majestic nobility. At the termination of the parade the emperor rode into the middle of the riding school, called the officers around him, and personally communicated to them the intelligence of the Warsaw rebellion: "I have already made arrangements that the troops designated by me should move on Warsaw, and if necessary you too shall go, to punish the traitors and re-establish order and the offended honour of Russia. I know that under every circumstance I can rely upon you," said the emperor. A unanimous outburst of indignation momentarily seized upon all present and then enthusiastic cries resounded: "Lead us against the rebels; we will revenge the forfeited honour of Russia." They kissed the emperor's hands and feet and the hem of his garment with shouts and cheers. The outburst of indignation was so violent that Nicholas considered it necessary to moderate it, and with the majesty that was natural to him he reminded the officers surrounding him that not all the Poles had broken their oath; that the ringleaders of the insurrection must be punished, but that vengeance must not be taken on the people: that the repentant must be pardoned and hatred not allowed.

From the subsequent reports of the grand duke the emperor learned that the czarevitch had permitted the portion of the Polish army that remained with him to return to Warsaw; in exchange for this the deputies who came to the czarevitch promised him and the Russian detachment a free passage to the frontiers of the empire. It was decided that a sufficient number of troops should be concentrated in the Polish frontier to allow of decisive measures being taken against the insurgents. Count Diebitsch was appointed commander-in-chief of the acting army, whilst the office of chief of the staff was filled by Count Tolle.

When the czarevitch reached the Russian frontier he wrote as follows to the emperor Nicholas: "And now the work of sixteen years is completely destroyed by a set of ensign-bearers, young officers, and students. I will not further enlarge on the matter, but duty commands me to bear witness to you that the landed proprietors, the rural population, and in general all holders of property of any kind are up in despair over this. The officers and generals as well as the soldiers are unable to keep from joining the general movement, being carried away by the young people and ensign-bearers who led everyone astray. In a word, the position of affairs is extremely bad, and I really do not know what will come of it. All my measures of surveillance have led to nothing, in spite of the fact that everything was beginning to be discovered. Here are we Russians at the frontier, but, great God, in what a condition! — almost barefoot, for we all came out as if at the sound of an alarm, in the hopes of returning to barracks, whilst



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instead awful marches have had to be made. The officers have been deprived of everything and have almost nothing with which to clothe themselves. I am broken hearted; at the age of fifty-one and a half years I never thought to finish my career in this lamentable manner after thirty-five and a half years of service. I pray to God that the army to which I have devoted sixteen years of my life may be brought to reason, and return to the path of duty and honour, acknowledging its previous errors, before coercive measures have to be taken. But this is too much to expect from the age in which we live, and I greatly doubt the realisation of my desires."

Any agreement with Poland became daily more impossible and both sides prepared for war. On the 17th of December the emperor Nicholas' proclamation to the Polish army and nation was issued, and on the 24th a manifesto was published offering means of reconciliation to all those who returned to their duty. Meanwhile General Chłopicki was installed as dictator in Warsaw, but he was unable to save Poland from a rupture with Russia. Two deputies were sent to St. Petersburg to enter into negotiations with the emperor Nicholas; they were the minister of finance, Prince Lubetzki and a member of the diet, Count Ezerski. But neither could these negotiations avert the bloody events of the year 1831. "It is hard to foresee the future," wrote the emperor to the czarevitch; "but weighing the relative probabilities of success, it is difficult to suppose that the new year will show itself more distressing for us than the year 1830; God grant that I may not be mistaken. I should like to see you peacefully settled in your Belvedere and order re-established throughout; but how much there yet remains to be accomplished before we are in a condition to attain to this! Which of the two must perish—for it appears inevitable that one must perish, Russia or Poland? Decide for yourself. I have exhausted all possible means in order to avert such a calamity—all means compatible with honour and my conscience—but they are exhausted. What remains for me to do?"

Soon the diet assembled in Warsaw took a decision which completed the rupture between Poland and Russia. On the 25th of January, 1831, the diet declared the Romanov dynasty to be deprived of the throne of Poland. The Poles themselves thus unbound the hands of the emperor, and the duel between Russia and Poland became inevitable. The emperor replied to the challenge by a manifesto in accordance with which the Russian troops crossed the Polish frontier, and on the 25th of February a decisive battle took place before Prague at Grokhov, by which the Polish army was obliged to retreat to Warsaw with a loss of twelve thousand men.

But Count Diebitsch did not recognise the possibility of taking advantage of the victory gained, and which would have been inevitably completed by the occupation of the Polish capital; and Sabalkanski was not fated to become prince of Warsaw. The Polish troops retreated unhindered across the only bridge to Warsaw; the new Polish commander-in-chief Skrijmetzski set out to reorganise the army, the rising spread even to the Russian governments, and the campaign, against all expectations, dragged on for six months. Meanwhile it was a war upon which depended, according to the expression used by the emperor, "the political existence of Russia."

On the 26th of May Diebitsch gained a second victory over the Polish army, which also terminated by the favourable retreat of the latter; and on the 13th of June, the emperor found occasion to write to his field-marshal: "Act at length so that I can understand you." The letter was however not read by Count Diebitsch, for on the 10th of June the field-marshal suddenly died of cholera in the village of Kleshov near Pultusk.

He was replaced by Field-marshal Count Paskevitch-Erivanski, who was as early as April, 1831, called by the emperor from Tiflis to St. Petersburg. It was decided to cross the lower Vis-Suta and move towards Warsaw. The czarevitch Constantine outlived Count Diebitsch only by a few days. He also died suddenly of cholera at Vitebsk, in the night between the 26th and 27th of June of the year 1831.

The Polish insurrection from that time daily grew nearer to its definitive conclusion; it was determined by the two days' storming of Warsaw, which took place on the 7th and 8th of September. Finally Field-marshal Paskevitch was able to communicate to the emperor the news that "Warsaw is at the feet of your imperial majesty." Prince Suvorov, aide-de-camp of the emperor, was the bearer of this intelligence to Tsarskoi-Selo on the 16th of September.



FIELD-MARSHAL PASKEVITCH  
(1782-1856)

Nicholas wrote as follows to his victorious field-marshal: "With the help of the all-merciful God, you have again raised the splendour and glory of our arms, you have punished the disloyal traitors, you have avenged Russia, you have subdued Warsaw—from henceforth you are the most serene prince of Warsaw. Let posterity remember that the honour and glory of the Russian army are inseparable from your name, and may your name preserve for everyone the memory of the day on which the name of Russia was again made glorious. This is the sincere expression of the grateful heart of your sovereign, your friend, and your old subordinate."

After the fall of Warsaw the war still continued for a while, but not for long. The chief forces of the Polish army, which had retired to Novogeorgievsk, finished by passing into Prussian territory at the end of September, and on the 21st of October the last fortress surrendered. The Polish insurrection was at an end. But the peace, attained by such heavy sacrifice, was accompanied by a new evil for Russia; in Europe appeared the Polish emigration, carrying with it hatred and vociferations against Russia and preparing the inimical conditions of public opinion in the west against the Russian government.

#### THE OUTBREAK OF CHOLERA AND THE RIOTS OCCASIONED BY IT (1830 A.D.)

The emperor had hardly returned to St. Petersburg from opening the diet in Warsaw, when suddenly a new care occupied the attention of the government. The cholera made its appearance in the empire. This terrible illness, until then known to Russia only by name and by narratives describing its devastations, brought with it still greater fear, because no one knew or could indicate either medical or police measures to be taken against it. General opinion inclined, however, towards the advantages to be derived from quarantine and isolation, such as had been employed against the plague, and the government immediately took necessary measures in this direction with the activity that the emperor's strong will managed to instil into all his disposi-

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tions. Troops were without delay stationed at various points and cordons formed from them and the local inhabitants, in order to save the governments in the interior and the two capitals from the calamity.

In spite of all precautions, however, a fresh source of grief was added to all the cares and anxieties that pressed upon the emperor at that period. Since the 26th of June the cholera had appeared in St. Petersburg and in a few days had attained menacing dimensions. This awful illness threw all classes of the population into a state of the greatest terror, particularly the common people by whom all the measures taken for the preservation of the public health — such as increased police surveillance, the surrounding of the towns with troops, and even the removal of those stricken with cholera to hospitals — were at first regarded as persecutions. Mobs began to assemble, strangers were stopped in the streets and searched for the poison they were supposed to carry on them, while doctors were publicly accused of poisoning the people. Finally, on the 4th of July, the mob, excited by rumours and suspicions, gathered together at the Hay Market and attacked the house in which a temporary cholera hospital had been established. They broke the windows, threw the furniture out into the street, wounded and cast out the sick, thrashed the hospital servants, and killed several of the doctors. The police were powerless to restore order and even the final appearance of the military governor-general Count Essen did not attain the necessary result. A battalion of the Semenov regiment forced the people to disperse from the square into the side streets, but was far from putting a stop to the disturbance.

The next day the emperor Nicholas went on a steamer from St. Petersburg to Elagium Island. When he had heard the reports of various persons as to the state of the town he got into a carriage with Adjutant-general Prince Menshikov and drove to the Preobrajenski parade-ground in the town, where a battalion of the Preobrajenski regiment was encamped. When he had thanked the troops, the emperor continued his way along the carriage road where he threatened with his displeasure some crowds and shopkeepers; from there he drove to the Hay Market where about five thousand people had assembled. Standing up in his carriage and turning to the mob, the emperor spoke as follows: "Misdeeds were committed yesterday, public order was disturbed; shame on the Russian people for forgetting the faith of their fathers and imitating the turbulence of the French and Poles! They have taught you this: seize them and take those suspected to the authorities; but wickedness has been committed here, here we have offended and angered God — let us turn to the church, down on your knees, and beg the forgiveness of the Almighty!"

The people fell on their knees and crossed themselves in contrition; the emperor prostrated himself also, and exclamations of "We have sinned, accursed ones that we are!" resounded throughout the air. Continuing his speech to the people, the emperor again admonished the crowd: "I have sworn before God to preserve the prosperity of the people entrusted to me by providence; I am answerable before God for these disorders: and therefore I will not allow them. Woe be to the disobedient!"

At this moment some men in the crowd raised their voices. The emperor then replied: "What do you want — whom do you want? Is it I? I am not afraid of anything — here I am!" and with these words he pointed to his breast. Cries of enthusiasm ensued. After this the emperor, probably as a sign of reconciliation, embraced an old man in the crowd and returned, first to Elagium and afterwards to Peterhov. The day afterwards the emperor again visited the capital. Order was re-established, but the cholera continued to



rage. Six hundred persons died daily, and it was only from the middle of July that the mortality began to diminish.

Far more dangerous in its consequences was the revolt that arose in the Novgorod military settlements. Here the cholera and rumours of poisoning only served as a pretext for rebellion; the seed of general dissatisfaction among the population belonging to this creation of Count Arakhtcheiev continued to exist in spite of all the changes introduced by the emperor Nicholas into the administration of the military settlements. A spark was sufficient to produce in the settlements an explosion of hitherto unprecedented fury, and the cholera served as the spark. Order was however finally re-established in the settlements and then the emperor Nicholas set off for them quite alone and presented himself before the assembled battalions, which had stained themselves with the blood of their officers and stood awaiting, trembling and in silence the judgment of their sovereign.<sup>b</sup>

#### THE WAR IN THE CAUCASUS (1829-1840 A.D.)

The possession of the Caucasus is a question vitally affecting the interests of Russia in her provinces beyond that range of mountains, and her ulterior projects with regard to the regions of Persia and Central Asia. Here are the terms in which this subject is handled in a report printed at St. Petersburg, and addressed to the emperor after the expedition of General Emmanuel to Elbruz in 1829:

"The Circassians (Tsherkessians) bar out Russia from the south, and may at their pleasure open or close the passage to the nations of Asia. At present their intestine dissensions, fostered by Russia, hinder them from uniting under one leader; but it must not be forgotten that, according to traditions religiously preserved amongst them, the sway of their ancestors extended as far as to the Black Sea. They believe that a mighty people, descended from their ancestors, and whose existence is verified by the ruins of Madjar, has once already overrun the fine plains adjacent to the Danube, and finally settled in Panonia. Add to this consideration their superiority in arms. Perfect horsemen, extremely well armed, inured to war by the continual freebooting they exercise against their neighbours, courageous, and disdaining the advantages of our civilisation, the imagination is appalled at the consequences which their union under one leader might have for Russia, which has no other bulwark against their ravages than a military line, too extensive to be very strong."

For the better understanding of the war which Russia has been so long waging with the mountaineers, let us glance at the topography of the Caucasus, and the respective positions of the belligerents.

The chain of the Caucasus exhibits a peculiar conformation, altogether different from that of any of the European chains. The Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Carpathians are accessible only by the valleys, and in these the inhabitants of the country find their subsistence, and agriculture develops its wealth. The contrary is the case in the Caucasus. From the fortress of Anapa on the Black Sea, all along to the Caspian, the northern slope presents only immense inclined plains, rising in terraces to a height of 3,000 or 4,000 yards above the sea level. These plains, rent on all directions by deep and narrow valleys and vertical clefts, often form real steppes, and possess on their loftiest heights rich pastures, where the inhabitants, secure from all attack, find fresh grass for their cattle in the sultriest days of summer. The valleys on the other hand are frightful abysses, the steep sides of which are

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clothed with brambles, while the bottoms are filled with rapid torrents foaming over beds of rocks and stones. Such is the singular spectacle generally presented by the northern slope of the Caucasus. This brief description may give an idea of the difficulties to be encountered by an invading army. Obligated to occupy the heights, it is incessantly checked in its march by impassable ravines, which do not allow of the employment of cavalry, and for the most part prevent the passage of artillery. The ordinary tactics of the mountaineers is to fall back before the enemy, until the nature of the ground or the want of supplies obliges the latter to begin a retrograde movement. Then it is that they attack the invaders, and, intrenched in their forests behind impregnable rocks, they inflict the most terrible carnage on them with little danger to themselves.

On the south the character of the Caucasian chain is different. From Anapa to Gagri, along the shores of the Black Sea, we observe a secondary chain composed of schistous mountains, seldom exceeding 1000 yards in height. But the nature of their soil, and of their rocks, would be enough to render them almost impracticable for European armies, even were they not covered with impenetrable forests. The inhabitants of this region, who are called Circassians, are entirely independent, and constitute one of the most warlike peoples of the Caucasus.

The great chain begins in reality at Gagri, but the mountains recede from the shore, and nothing is to be seen along the coast as far as Mingrelia but secondary hills, commanded by immense crags, that completely cut off all approach to the central part of the Caucasus. This region, so feebly defended by its topographical conformation, is Abkhasia, the inhabitants of which have been forced to submit to Russia. To the north and on the northern slope, westward of the military road from Mozdok to Tiflis, dwell a considerable number of tribes, some of them ruled by a sort of feudal system, others constituted into little republics. Those of the west, dependent on Circassia and Abadja, are in continual war with the empire, whilst the Nogaians, who inhabit the plains on the left bank of the Kuma, and the tribes of the great Kabarda, own the sovereignty of the czar; but their wavering and dubious submission cannot be relied on. In the centre, at the foot of the Elbruz, dwell the Suanetians, an unsubdued people, and near them, occupying both sides of the pass of Dariel, are the Ingutches and Ossetians, exceptional tribes, essentially different from the aboriginal peoples. Finally we have, eastward of the great Tiflis road, near the Terek, little Kabarda, and the country of the Kumicks, for the present subjugated; and then those indomitable tribes, the Lesghians and Tchetchens, of whom Schamyl is the Ab del Kadir, and who extended over the two slopes of the Caucasus to the vicinity of the Caspian.

In reality, the Kuban and the Terek, that rise from the central chain, and fall, the one into the Black Sea, the other into the Caspian, may be considered as the northern political limits of independent Caucasus. It is along those two rivers that Russia has formed her armed line, defended by Cossacks, and detachments from the regular army. The Russians have, indeed, penetrated those northern frontiers at sundry points, and have planted some forts within the country of the Lesghians and Tchetchens. But those lonely posts, in which a few unhappy garrisons are surrounded on all sides, and generally without a chance of escape, cannot be regarded as a real occupation of the soil on which they stand. They are, in fact, only so many pickets, whose business is only to watch more closely the movements of the mountaineers. In the south, from Anapa to Gagri, along the Black Sea, the imperial possessions never extended beyond a few detached forts, completely isolated, and deprived

of all means of communication by land. A rigorous blockade was established on this coast; but the Circassians, as intrepid in their frail barks as among their mountains, often passed by night through the Russian line of vessels, and reached Trebizond and Constantinople. Elsewhere, from Mingrelia to the Caspian, the frontiers are less precisely defined, and generally run parallel with the great chain of the Caucasus.

Thus limited, the Caucasus, including the territory occupied by the subject tribes, presents a surface of scarcely 5000 leagues; and it is in this narrow region that a virgin and chivalric nation, amounting at most to 2,000,000 of souls, proudly upholds its independence against the might of the Russian empire, and has for upwards of twenty years sustained one of the most obstinate struggles known to modern history.

The Russian line of the Kuban, which is exactly similar to that of the Terek, is defended by the Cossacks of the Black Sea, the poor remains of the famous Zaporogians, whom Catherine II subdued with so much difficulty, and whom she colonised at the foot of the Caucasus, as a bulwark against the incursions of the mountaineers. The line consists of small forts and watch stations; the latter are merely a kind of sentry-box raised on four posts, about fifty feet from the ground. Two Cossacks keep watch in them day and night. On the least movement of the enemy in the vast plain of reeds that fringe both banks of the river, a beacon fire is kindled on the top of the watch box. If the danger becomes more pressing, an enormous torch of straw and tar is set fire to. The signal is repeated from post to post, the whole line springs to arms, and 500 or 600 men are instantly assembled on the point threatened. These posts, composed generally of a dozen men, are very close to each other, particularly in the most dangerous places. Small forts have been erected at intervals with earthworks, and a few pieces of cannon; they contain each from 150 to 200 men.

But notwithstanding all the vigilance of the Cossacks, often aided by the troops of the line, the mountaineers not unfrequently cross the frontier and carry their incursions, which are always marked with massacre and pillage, into the adjacent provinces. There are bloody but justifiable reprisals. In 1835 a body of fifty horsemen entered the country of the Cossacks, and proceeded to a distance of 120 leagues, to plunder the German colony of Madjar and the important village of Vladimirovka, on the Kuma, and what is most remarkable they got back to their mountains without being interrupted. The same year Kisliar, on the Caspian, was sacked by the Lesghians. These daring expeditions prove of themselves how insufficient is the armed line of the Caucasus, and to what dangers that part of southern Russia is exposed.

The line of forts until lately existing along the Black Sea was quite as weak, and the Circassians there were quite as daring. They used to carry off the Russian soldiers from beneath the fire of their redoubts, and come up to the very foot of their walls to insult the garrison. *Hommage de Hell* relates that, at the time he was exploring the mouths of the Kuban, a hostile chief had the audacity to appear one day before the gates of Anapa. He did all he could to irritate the Russians, and abusing them as cowards and woman-hearted, he defied them to single combat. Exasperated by his invectives, the commandant ordered that he should be fired on with grape. The horse of the mountaineer reared and threw off his rider, who, without letting go the bridle, instantly mounted again, and, advancing still nearer to the walls, discharged his pistol almost at point-blank distance at the soldiers, and galloped off to the mountains.

As for the blockade by sea, the imperial squadron has not been expert



[1835 A.D.]

enough to render it really effectual. It was only a few armed boats, manned by Cossacks, that gave the Circassians any serious uneasiness. These Cossacks like those of the Black Sea, are descended from the Zaparogians. Previously to the last war with Turkey they were settled on the right bank of the Danube, where their ancestors had taken refuge after the destruction of their Setcha. During the campaigns of 1828-29, pains were taken to revive their national feelings, they were brought again by fair means or by force under the imperial sway, and were then settled in the forts along the Caucasian shore, the keeping of which was committed to their charge. Courageous, enterprising, and worthy rivals of their foes, they waged a most active war against the skiffs of the mountaineers in their boats, which carry crews of fifty or sixty men.

The treaty of Adrianople was in a manner the opening of a new era in the relations of Russia with the mountaineers; for it was by virtue of that treaty that the czar, already master of Anapa and Sudjuk Kaleh, pretended to the sovereignty of Circassia and of the whole seaboard of the Black Sea. True to the invariable principles of its foreign policy, the government at first employed means of corruption, and strove to seduce the various chiefs of the country by pensions, decorations, and military appointments. But the mountaineers, who had the example of the Persian provinces before their eyes, sternly rejected all the overtures of Russia, and repudiated the clauses of the convention of Adrianople; the political and commercial independence of their country became their rallying cry, and they would not treat on any other condition. All such ideas were totally at variance with Nicholas' schemes of absolute dominion; therefore he had recourse to arms to obtain by force what he had been unable to accomplish by other means.

Abkhasia, situated on the eastern coast of the Black Sea, and easily accessible, was the first invaded. A Russian force occupied the country in 1839, under the ordinary pretence of supporting one of its princes, and putting an end to anarchy. In the same year General Paskevitch, then governor-general of the Caucasus, for the first time made an armed exploration of the country of the Circassians beyond the Kuban; but he effected absolutely nothing, and his expedition only resulted in great loss of men and stores. In the following year war broke out in Daghestan with the Lesghians and the Tchetchens. The celebrated Kadi Mulah, giving himself out for a prophet, gathered together a considerable number of partisans; but unfortunately for him there was no unanimity among the tribes, and the princes were continually counteracting each other. Kadi Mulah never was able to bring more than 3,000 or 4,000 men together; nevertheless, he maintained the struggle with a courage worthy of a better fate, and Russia knows what it cost her to put down the revolt of Daghestan. As for any real progress in that part of the Caucasus, the Russians made none; they did no more than replace things on the old footing. Daghestan soon became again more hostile than ever, and the Tchetchens and Lesghians continued in separate detachments to plunder and ravage the adjacent provinces up to the time when the ascendancy of the celebrated Schamyl, the worthy successor of Kadi Mulah, gave a fresh impulse to the warlike tribes of the mountain, and rendered them more formidable than ever.

After taking possession of Anapa and Sudjuk Kaleh, the Russians thought of seizing the whole seaboard of Circassia, and especially the various points suitable for the establishment of military posts. They made themselves masters of Guelendchik and the important position of Gagri, which commands the pass between Circassia and Abkhasia. The Circassians heroically defended their territory; but how could they have withstood the guns of

the ships of war that mowed them down whilst the soldiers were landing and constructing their redoubts? The blockade of the coasts was declared in 1838, and all foreign communication with the Caucasus ostensibly intercepted. During the four following years Russia suffered heavy losses; and all her successes were limited to the establishment of some small isolated forts on the sea-coast. She then increased her army, laid down the military road from the Kuban to Guelendchik, across the last western offshoot of the Caucasus, set on foot an exploration of the enemy's whole coast, and prepared to push the war with renewed vigour.

In 1837 the emperor Nicholas visited the Caucasus. He would see for himself the theatre of a war so disastrous to his arms, and try what impression his imperial presence could make on the mountaineers. The chiefs of the country were invited to various conferences, to which they boldly repaired on the faith of the Russian parole; but instead of conciliating them by words of peace and moderation, the emperor only exasperated them by his threatening and haughty language. "Do you know," said he to them, "that I have powder enough to blow up all your mountains?"

During the three following years there was an incessant succession of expeditions. Golovin, on the frontiers of Georgia, Grabe on the north, and Racivski on the Circassian seaboard, left nothing untried to accomplish their master's orders. The sacrifices incurred by Russia were enormous; the greater part of her fleet was destroyed by a storm, but all efforts failed against the intrepidity and tactics of the mountaineers. Some new forts erected under cover of the ships, were all that resulted from these disastrous campaigns. "I was in the Caucasus in 1839," says Hommaire de Hell, "when Grabe returned from his famous expedition against Shamyl. When the army marched it had numbered 6000 men, 1,000 of whom, and 120 officers, were cut off in three months. But as the general had advanced further into the country than any of his predecessors, Russia sang pæans, and Grabe became the hero of the day, although the imperial troops had been forced to retreat and entirely evacuate the country they had invaded. All the other expeditions were similar to this one, and achieved in reality nothing but the burning and destruction of a few villages. It is true the mountaineers are far from being victorious in all their encounters with the Russians, whose artillery they cannot easily withstand; but if they are obliged to give way to numbers, or to engineering, nevertheless they remain in the end masters of the ground, and annul all the momentary advantages gained by their enemies."

The year 1840 was still more fatal to the arms of Nicholas. Almost all the new forts on the seaboard were taken by the Circassians, who bravely attacked and carried the best fortified posts without artillery. The military road from the Kuban to Guelendchik was intercepted, Fort St. Nicholas, which commanded it, was stormed and the garrison massacred. Never yet had Russia endured such heavy blows. The disasters were such that the official journals themselves, after many months' silence, were at last obliged to speak of them; but the most serious losses, the destruction of the new road from the Kuban, the taking of Fort St. Nicholas, and that of several other forts, were entirely forgotten in the official statement.

On the eastern side of the mountain the war was fully as disastrous for the invaders. The imperial army lost four hundred petty officers and soldiers, and twenty-nine officers in the battle of Valrik against the Tchetchens. The military colonies of the Terek were attacked and plundered, and when General Golovin retired to his winter quarters at the end of the campaign, he had lost more than three-fourths of his men.

[1839 A.D.]

The great Kabarda did not remain an indifferent spectator of the offensive league formed by the tribes of the Caucasus; and when Russia, suspecting with reason the unfriendly disposition of some tribes, made an armed exploration on the banks of the Laba in order to construct redoubts, and thus cut off the subjugated tribes from the others, the general found the country, wherever he advanced, but a desert. All the inhabitants had already retired to the other side of the Laba to join their warlike neighbours.<sup>d</sup>

#### THE EMPEROR'S CONSERVATIVE PATRIOTISM

However, in spite of all these disastrous campaigns, Nicholas had not lost sight of his most important task — that of consolidating internal order by reforms. His attention had been directed above all to the administration, from the heart of which he had sought especially to exterminate corruption with a severity and courage proportioned to the immensity of the evil. Then he had announced his firm desire to perfect the laws, and had charged Count Speranski to work at them under his personal direction. The digest (*svod*) promulgated in 1833 was the first fruit of these efforts and was followed by various special codes. Finally, turning his attention to public instruction, he had assigned to it as a basis the national traditions and religion and charged Uvarov, president of the Imperial Academy of Sciences, a man of learning and talent, to animate it with this spirit, so hostile to the ideas of the west, but — let us say it at once — better suited to the real needs of the country.

Nicholas, allowing himself to be ruled by this spirit, plunged further and further into a system which, though contrary to that of Peter the Great, we do not pretend absolutely to condemn on that account, and which the marquis de Custine<sup>e</sup> has highly extolled in his celebrated book, *La Russie en 1839*. "The emperor Nicholas," he said, "thought that the day of mere seeming was past for Russia, and that the whole structure of civilisation was to remake in that country. He has relaid the foundations of society. Peter, called the Great, would have overturned it a second time in order to rebuild it: Nicholas is more skilful. I am struck with admiration for this man who is secretly struggling, with all the strength of his will, against the work of Peter the Great's genius. He is restoring individuality to a nation which has strayed for more than a century in the paths of imitation."

Without ceasing to borrow diligently from Europe her inventions and arts, her progress in industry, in administration, in the conduct of land and sea armies — in a word, all the material improvements which she devises and realises, he endeavoured to close Russia to her ideas on philosophy, politics, and religion. He condemned exotic tendencies as pernicious to his states, and, without depriving himself of the services of the Germans, the principal depositaries of superior enlightenment in that country, as yet only imperfectly moulded to civilisation, he relied by preference on the party of the old Russians, which included the clergy, whom he treated with respect in spite of the inferiority of their position. Nationality, autocracy, orthodoxy — these three words, taken as the national watchword, sum up the ideas to which he subordinated his internal policy. The expression, *Holy Russia*, which has been the object of such profound astonishment to the Latin world, reflects also this spirit.

He surrounded with great solemnity those acts which he performed in his quality of head of the church in his own country, and posed as the protector of all his co-religionists in Moldavia, Wallachia, Servia, Montenegro,



and other countries. Like his ancestors of preceding dynasties, he adorned himself on solemn occasions with a gold cross which he wore diagonally on his breast. This bias was summed up in the new word *cæsaropapism*. He regarded with special enthusiasm that one act on account of which, the accusation of religious intolerance was fixed upon him — an accusation justified by many of his deeds. In consequence of the decisions of the council of Florence, and up till 1839, there were in Russia 1,500,000 United Greeks, subjected to the papal obedience. At their head was the archbishop, sometimes the metropolitan, of White Russia, and the bishop, or archbishop, of Lithuania. In 1839 these two prelates, having met in conjunction with a third, at Polotsk, the seat of the first of these eparchies, had signed a document in which they expressed the wish to unite, they and their church, with the national and primitive church, and prayed the emperor to sanction this union. Nicholas referred the matter to the holy synod, and, the latter having with great eagerness signified its approval of the act, he sanctioned it in his turn, adding these words beneath his signature: "I thank God and I authorize it." It is well known to what complaints on the part of the pope this suppression of the uniate Greek church soon afterward gave rise.<sup>c</sup>

#### UNVEILING OF THE MONUMENT AT BORODINO

The emperor Nicholas was fond of great gatherings of the troops, and an occasion for such was afforded in 1839 by the unveiling of the monument erected on the battlefield of Borodino. The thought of this muster of the troops had already occupied the emperor's mind since 1838, but at that time he had in view not merely the participation of the troops in manœuvres and exercises, but the immortalisation of the tradition of the valorous exploits of the Russian army in the defence of the fatherland against the invasion of Napoleon. On the day of the unveiling of the Borodino monument, August 26th, 120,000 men were gathered around it. The emperor invited to take part in the solemnities all the surviving comrades of Kutuzov and many foreign guests.

On the anniversary of the battle of Borodino a great review of all the troops assembled on this historic spot took place. In the morning, before the review began, the following order of his imperial majesty, written by the emperor's hand, was read to the troops:

"Children. Before you stands the monument which bears witness to the glorious deeds of your comrades. Here, on this same spot, 27 years ago, the arrogant enemy dreamed of conquering the Russian army which fought in defence of the faith, the czar and the fatherland. God punished the foolish: the bones of the insolent invaders were scattered from Moscow to the Niemen — and we entered Paris. The time has now come to render glory to a great exploit. And thus, may the eternal memory of the emperor Alexander I be immortal to us: for by his firm will Russia was saved; may the glory of your comrades who fell as heroes be also everlasting, and may their exploits serve as an example to us and our further posterity. You will ever be the hope and support of your sovereign and our common mother Russia."

This order aroused the greatest enthusiasm amongst the troops, but it was highly displeasing to the foreigners; it appeared to them strange and almost offensive, they considered that "in reality it was nothing but high sounding phrases."

[1839 A.D.]

Three days later the emperor Nicholas had the battle of Borodino reproduced. After the unveiling of the Borodino monument the laying of the first stone of the cathedral of Christ the Saviour took place in Moscow. This solemnity brought to a close the commemoration of the year 1812 which had delivered Russia from a foreign invasion and was the dawn of the liberation of Europe.

The year 1839 was remarkable for yet another important event: the reunion of the Uniates.<sup>1</sup>

#### DEATH OR RETIREMENT OF THE OLD MINISTERS

Little by little the workers in the political arena of Alexander's reign had disappeared. Count V. P. Kotchulzi, who had been president of the senate since 1827 and afterwards chancellor of the interior, died in 1834 and had been replaced by N. N. Novseltsev as president of the senate. After his death the emperor Nicholas appointed to that office Count I. V. Vasilchikov, who remained at his post until his death, which took place in 1847.

The emperor was above all grieved at the death of Speranski in the year 1837. He recognised this loss as irreparable, and in speaking of him said: "Not everyone understood Speranski or knew how to value him sufficiently; at first I myself was in this respect perhaps more in fault than anyone. I was told much of his liberal ideas; calumny even touched him in reference to the history of December 26th. But afterwards all these accusations were scattered like dust, and I found in him the most faithful, devoted and zealous servant, with vast knowledge and vast experience. Everyone now knows how great are my obligations and those of Russia to him — and the calumniators are silenced. The only reproach I could make him was his feeling against my late brother; but that too is over" . . . . . The emperor stopped without finishing his thought, which probably contained a secret, involuntary justification of Speranski.

In 1844 died another statesman who was still nearer and dearer to the emperor Nicholas; this was Count Benkendorv of whom the emperor said: "He never set me at variance with anyone, but reconciled me with many." His successor in the direction of the third section was Count A. F. Orlov; he remained at this post during all the succeeding years of the emperor Nicholas' reign.

In that same year Count E. F. Kankrin who had been minister of finance even under Alexander I was obliged on account of ill health to leave the ministry of which he had been head during twenty-two years. As his biographer justly observes Kankrin left Russia as an heritage: "Well organised finances, a firm metal currency, and a rate of exchange corresponding with the requirements of the country. Russia was in financial respects a mighty power whose credit it was impossible to injure. And all this was attained without any considerable loans, and without great increase in taxes, by the determination, the thrift and the genius of one man, who placed the welfare of the nation above all considerations and understood how to serve it."

But at the same time it must not be forgotten that all these brilliant results were attainable only because behind Count Kankrin stood the emperor Nicholas. The enemies of the minister and of his monetary reforms were many; but the snares they laid were destroyed before the all powerful will of a person who never wavered. This time that inflexible will was directed in the

[<sup>1</sup> The Uniate is a part of the Greek church which has submitted to the supremacy of the pope.]

right path, and the results showed unprecedented financial progress, in spite of the three wars which it had been impossible for Russia to avoid, despite the ideally peace-loving disposition of her ruler; and to these calamities must be added also the cholera and bad harvests. Kankrin's resignation was accompanied by important consequences; he was replaced by the incapable Vrontchenko, while Nicholas took the finances of the empire into his own hands, as he had previously acted regarding the other branches of the administration of the state.

Among the old-time servitors of Alexander I, Prince P. M. Volkonski remained longest in office. He lived until he attained the rank of field-marshal and died in 1852, having filled the office of minister of the court during twenty-five years.

One of the younger workers of the Alexandrine period, P. D. Kisselev, former chief of the staff of the second army, attained to unusual eminence in the reign of the emperor Nicholas. In 1825 his star nearly set forever, but soon it shone again with renewed brilliancy and on his return from the Danubian provinces, which he had administered since 1829, Kisselev was created minister and count. "You will be my chief of the staff for the peasant department," said the emperor to him, and with this object, on the 13th of January, 1838 there was established the ministry of state domains, formed from the department which had until that time been attached to the ministry of finance.

#### GREAT FIRE IN THE WINTER PALACE

A disastrous fire at the Winter Palace began on the evening of the 29th of December, 1837, and no human means were able to stay the flames; only the Hermitage with its collection of ancient and priceless treasures was saved. The ruins of the palace continued to burn during three days and nights. The emperor and the imperial family took up their abode in the Anitchkov palace.

The rebuilding of the Winter Palace upon its previous plan was begun immediately; the palace was consecrated on the 6th of April, 1839 and the emperor and his family were installed there as previously. As a token of gratitude to all those who had taken part in the rebuilding of the palace a medal was struck with the inscription: "I thank you." — "Work overcomes everything."

On the last day of the Easter holidays the emperor Nicholas resolved to allow visitors access to all the state rooms, galleries, etc.; and in that one day as many as 200,000 persons visited the palace between the hours of six in the evening and two in the morning.

Twice the emperor and his family passed in all directions through the palace that was thronged with the public. An eye-witness writes that "the public by prolonging their visitation for seven hours so filled the palace with damp, steamy, suffocating air that the walls, the columns, and carvings on the lower windows sweated, and streams of damp poured down on to the parquet flooring and spoiled everything, while the marble changed to a dull yellowish hue." 35,000 paper rubles were required to repair the damage. But the matter did not terminate with this; during one night that summer, fortunately while the imperial family were staying at Peterhof, the ceiling in the saloon of St. George fell down with the seventeen massive lustres depending from it.



[1851 A.D.]

## THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE CORONATION OF NICHOLAS I (1851 A.D.)

In August 1851, upon the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of his coronation the emperor Nicholas left St. Petersburg for Moscow, accompanied by his family. For the first time the journey was accomplished by the newly completed Moscow railway, constructed in accordance with the will of the emperor, and in opposition to the desires of many of his enlightened contemporaries. The opening of the railway to the public followed only on the 13th of November. In Moscow the emperor was met by Field-marshal Paskevitch, prince of Warsaw. On the eve of the festivities in honour of the anniversary of the coronation Nicholas visited the field-marshal, and addressed the following memorable words to him:

"To-morrow will complete twenty-five years of my reign — a reign which you, Ivan Feodorovitch, have made illustrious by your valiant service to Russia. It was under sorrowful prognostications that I ascended the throne of Russia and my reign had to begin with punishments and banishments. I did not find around the throne persons who could guide the czar — I was obliged to create men; I had none devoted to me. Affairs in the east required the appointment there of a man of your intellect, of your military capacity, of your will. My choice rested on you. Providence itself directed me to you. You had enemies: in spite of all that was said against you, I held fast to you, Ivan Feodorovitch. You proved, commander, that I was right. Hardly had affairs in the east quieted down when my empire was overtaken by a public calamity — the cholera. The people ascribes every misfortune to the person who governs. God knows how much suffering this national affliction cost me. The war with Poland was another grievous trial. Russian blood was shed because of our errors or because of chastisement sent from above. Our affairs were in a bad way. And again I had resource to you, Ivan Feodorovitch, as the only means of salvation for Russia: and again you did not betray my trust, again you exalted my empire. By your twenty years' administration of the Polish land you have laid the foundation for the happiness of two kindred yet hostile elements. I hope that the Russian and the Pole will constitute one Russian Empire — the Slavonic Empire; and that your name will be preserved in history beside the name of Nicholas. It is not so long ago — when western Europe was agitated by aspirations after wild, unbridled freedom; when the people overthrew lawful authority and thrones; when I decided to give a helping hand to my brother and ally, the monarch of Austria — that you, commander, led my soldiers to a new warfare: you tamed the hydra of rebellion. In six weeks you had finished the war in Hungary, you supported and strengthened the tottering throne of Austria, Ivan Feodorovitch. You are the glory of my twenty-five years' reign. You are the history of the reign of Nicholas I."

## THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS' VIEWS ON LOUIS NAPOLEON

When Prince Louis Napoléon had accomplished his *coup d'état* of the 2nd of December, 1851, and the restoration of the second empire was to be expected, the emperor Nicholas, judging by a letter which he had received from Frederick William IV, said: "Before the end of next year Louis Napoleon will become our colleague. Let him become what he likes, even the great mufti, if it pleases him, but to the title of Emperor or King I do not think he will be so imprudent as to aspire." According to the emperor's opinion, as soon as Louis Napoleon desired to make himself emperor he would become a

usurper, because he did not possess the divine right — he would be emperor in fact but never by right; in a word, “a second Louis Philippe, less the odious character of that scoundrel.”

When the French diplomatic representatives in St. Petersburg and Warsaw evidenced an intention to celebrate the 15th of August, the emperor Nicholas drew up the following resolution: “A public church service for Napoleon cannot be allowed, because he ceased to be emperor, being banished and confined to the island of St. Helena. There is no propriety in celebrating the birthday of the late Napoleon in our country, whence he was despatched with befitting honour.” The Napoleonic empire had already transcended the limits which the emperor Nicholas would at one time have allowed; it was in direct contradiction to the stipulations of the congress of Vienna, which formed the basis of the national law of Europe. The emperor’s allies, however, looked on the matter somewhat differently. Austria and Prussia recognised Napoleon III; it therefore only remained to the emperor Nicholas, against his will, to follow their example; but still he departed from the usually accepted diplomatic forms, and in his letter to Napoleon III he did not call him brother, but “*le bon ami*” (good friend). Soon on the political horizon appeared the Eastern question, artfully put forward with a secret motive by Napoleon III; his cunning calculations were justified without delay; the Russian troops crossed the Pruth in 1853, and occupied the principality, as a guarantee, until the demands presented to the Ottoman Porte by the emperor Nicholas were complied with. Austrian ingratitude opened a safe path for the snares of Anglo-French diplomacy. The Eastern War began, at first upon Turkish territory and afterwards concentrated itself in the Crimean peninsula around Sebastopol; France, England, and afterwards, in 1855, little Sardinia, in alliance with Turkey, took up arms against Russia; on the side of the allies lay the sympathy of all neutral Europe, which already dreamed of wresting Russia’s conquests from her.<sup>b</sup>

#### EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE CRIMEAN WAR

The revolution of July, 1830, by threatening Europe with the ideas then triumphing in France, had tightened the bonds, previously a little relaxed, between the czar and the two great German powers, Austria and Prussia. Independently of diplomatic conferences, the three monarchs had frequent interviews for the purpose of adopting measures to oppose the invasion of the revolutionary principle. Even whilst affecting to abandon the west to the dissolution towards which he felt it was marching, and to regard it as afflicted with approaching senility, Nicholas by no means lost sight of its development. But the East, then in combustion, remained the true mark of Russian policy. A movement was on foot for the overthrow of the declining Ottoman power, and its substitution by an Arab power, inaugurated by Muhammed Ali, the pasha of Egypt. France regarded this movement with no unfriendly eye, but Russia entered a protest. By giving the most colossal proportions to this Eastern Question, which extended as far as the countries of central Asia, the situation created grave embarrassments for the British government. For, to begin with, when, in 1833, Ibrahim Pasha, at the head of the Egyptian army, was ready to cross the Taurus and march on Constantinople, within two months the northern power (summoned to aid by that very sultan whom Russia had hitherto so greatly humiliated) landed on the Asiatic coast of the Bosphorus a body of fifteen thousand men in readiness to protect that

[1853 A.D.]

capital; then the secret treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi (July 8th, 1833) granted her, as the price of an offensive and defensive alliance with the Porte, the withdrawal in her exclusive favour of the prohibition forbidding armed vessels of foreign nations to enter the waters of Constantinople; finally, by the conclusion of the Treaty of London July 15th, 1840, which left France, still obstinately attached to the cause of Muhammed Ali, outside the European concert, she had the joy of causing the rupture of the *entente cordiale* between that country and Great Britain — but only momentarily, for a new treaty, concluded the 13th of July, 1841, likewise in London, readmitted the French government to the concert.

The events of the year 1848, by bringing back the Russians into Moldavia and Wallachia, afforded Europe new apprehensions relative to the preservation, growing daily more difficult, of the Ottoman Empire and the political balance, the latter of which was seriously threatened if not destroyed by the colossus of the north, with its population now increased to as much as sixty-five million souls. But Germany was absorbed by the serious situation of her own affairs, to which the czar was far from remaining a stranger; and the latter linked himself by new ties to Austria, in whose favour he had already renounced his share in the protectorate over the republic of Cracow, when at the request of the Vienna cabinet he marched against insurgent Hungary (June, 1849) an army which beat the insurrectionary forces, compelled them to submission, and thus closed the abyss in which one of the oldest monarchies of Christendom was about to be engulfed. Then, in 1850, chosen as arbiter between Austria and Prussia, who were on the point of a rupture, the czar turned the scale in favour of Austria, and kept Prussia in check by threats.

“Austria will soon astonish the world by her immense ingratitude”: this famous prophetic saying of Prince Felix of Schwarzenberg, prime minister of the young emperor Francis Joseph, was not slow of accomplishment. The ingratitude was a necessity which the history of Austria explains; for in her case, as for the rest of Europe, the continued and immoderate aggrandisement of Russia was the greatest of dangers. This leads us, in finishing this general glance over the history of the period, to say a word on the complications which, at the moment of the empire’s attaining its apogee, commenced for it a new phase.

We have elsewhere explained the final cause of the decay of Turkey. That decay was consummated in favour of the northern neighbour who followed with attentive gaze the progress of what she called the death struggle. Certain words pronounced by the autocrat on this subject, and consigned to diplomatic despatches, had, not long ago, a great circulation. But the influence of Russia was counterbalanced by that of France and that of Great Britain. The cabinets of Paris and Vienna obtained important concessions, we might say diplomatic triumphs, from Constantinople — the one in relation to the Holy Places, the other on the subject of Montenegro. Russian jealousy immediately awoke. According to the czar, Turkey had a choice between two things only: she must regard Prussia as either her greatest friend or her greatest enemy. To remind her of this, and to neutralise the embassy of the prince of Linanges on behalf of Austria, Nicholas sent Prince Menshikov, one of his ministers and confidants, to Constantinople. Arriving February 28th, 1853, Menshikov exhibited a haughty and irritable demeanour; and, after astonishing the Divan by his noisy opposition, put forward pretensions relative to the Holy Places which were only designed to lull the vigilance of England, but were soon followed by others more serious and exorbitant; for they amounted to nothing less than the restoration to the czar of the pro-



teetorate over all the sultan's subjects professing the Græco-Russian worship — that is to say the great majority of the inhabitants of Turkey in Europe.

#### OUTBREAK OF THE CRIMEAN WAR (1853 A.D.)

In vain the Divan protested; in vain the friendly powers interceded. Unable to obtain the satisfaction he was demanding with the extreme of violence, the Russian ambassador extraordinary quitted the Bosphorus with menace on his lips. And, in effect, on the 2nd of July, the czar's troops crossed the Pruth to occupy, contrary to all treaty stipulations, the two Danubian principalities. Nicholas was not prepared for war and did not expect to be obliged to have recourse to that last appeal; he hoped to triumph over the Divan by audacity. Moreover, he did not think the western powers were in a position to come to an understanding and to act in common. He was mistaken: Turkey's death struggle did not prevent her from making a supreme effort to sell her life dearly, if it were impossible for her to save it; and on the 26th of September the sultan declared war on the aggressor. Hostilities began in the course of the month of October, first on the Danube and afterwards in Asia, where a surprise made the Turks masters of the little maritime fort of St. Nicholas or Chefketil. The Porte was not long abandoned to its own resources, for the time of political torpor in regard to the territorial aggrandisement of the Muscovite colossus had gone by; the eyes of all were at last opened and a European crisis was inevitable. At that moment, the fleets of France and England were already at the entrance of the Dardanelles; and even before the end of October these fine naval armies passed the straits under the authority of a firman, and approached Constantinople. In consequence of the position taken up by these two states, the autocrat broke off relations with them in the beginning of February, 1854. On the 21st of the same month he informed his subjects of the fact in a manifesto, recalling to some extent, by its tone, by its biblical references, and its exalted language, the Treaty of the Holy Alliance. It may be worth while to reproduce here the following passage:

“Against Russia fighting for orthodoxy England and France enter the lists as champions of the enemies of Christianity. But Russia will not fail in her sacred vocation; if the frontier is invaded by the enemy we are ready to resist him with the energy of which our ancestors have bequeathed us the example. Are we not to-day still the same people whose valour was attested by the memorable displays of the year 1812? May the Most High aid us to prove it by our deeds. In this hope, and fighting for our oppressed brothers who confess the faith of Christ, Russia will have but one heart and voice to cry: ‘God, our Saviour! whom have we to fear? Let Christ arise and let his enemies be scattered!’”

#### FRANCE, ENGLAND, AND TURKEY IN ALLIANCE

Thus, by an almost miraculous concurrence of circumstances, an alliance was formed between France and England, those two ancient and ardent rivals. Preceded by a formal alliance with the Porte (March 12th), it was signed in London, April 10th, 1854. This was not all: this memorable document was immediately submitted to the governments of Austria and Prussia and sanctioned by a protocol signed at Vienna by the four powers, by which the justice of the cause sustained by those of the west was solemnly proclaimed:

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Austria and Prussia laid down the conditions of their eventual participation in the war in another treaty, that of Berlin, of the 20th of April, 1854, to which the Germanic Confederation on its side gave its adhesion. Finally at Baidji-Keui, on the 14th of June, 1854, the great Danubian power also concluded a treaty with the Ottoman Porte, in virtue of which she was authorised to enter into military occupation of the principalities, whether she should have previously expelled the Russian army or whether the latter should of its own will have decided to evacuate them. Russia was in the most complete isolation; the Scandinavian states, who had hitherto been her allies, declared themselves neutral; an insurrection in her favour, which was preparing in Servia, was prevented; that of the Greeks, openly favoured by King Otto, was stifled. The Turks, thus effectively protected, were able to turn all their forces on the frontiers, and to prove by heroic acts that they had not lost all the bravery of their ancestors. In return for Europe's efforts in favour of the integrity of his empire, and in order to ward off the reproach they might incur by supporting the cause of the crescent against a Christian state, the sultan as early as the 6th of June, 1854, published an edict or *irade*, by which he improved in a notable manner the condition of the rayas, and prepared for their civil freedom, as well as for a complete remodelling of the laws which, governing up to that day the internal government of the Ottoman Empire, seemed to render its preservation almost impossible.

Thus that movement of expansion to which Russia had been impelled during four centuries, and which by conquest after conquest, due either to diplomacy or the sword, had made Russian power the bugbear of Europe, finds itself suddenly arrested. "Republican or Cossack," was the famous prognostic of Napoleon.<sup>c</sup>

The immense superiority of the marines belonging to the allies made it possible to attack Russia on every sea. They bombarded the military port of Odessa on the Black Sea (April 22nd, 1854), but respected the city and the commercial port; the Russian establishments in the Caucasus had been burned by the Russians themselves. They blockaded Kronstadt on the Baltic, landed on the islands of Åland, and took the fortress of Bomarsund (August 16th, 1854).<sup>f</sup>

#### THE TAKING OF BOMARSUND

This fight had lasted from four in the morning until four in the evening, when the allies saw a white flag over the tower battlements. The commander asked an armistice of two hours, which was granted. He recommenced firing before the interval was over. The French batteries overthrew the armaments, whilst the Vincennes *chasseurs* acting as free-shooters attacked the cannoneers. Resistance ceased towards evening and the tower yielded at three o'clock in the morning. One officer and thirty men were made prisoners. On Monday no notice was taken of provocation from the fortress, but preparations were made for the morrow.

On the morning of August 15th the English attacked the north tower. In six hours three of their large cannon had been able to pierce the granite and make a breach of twenty feet. The north tower was not long in surrendering; four English and two French vessels directed their fire on the large fortress. A white flag was hoisted on the rampart nearest the sea. Two officers of the fleet were sent to the governor, who said, "I yield to the marine." This officer had only a few dead and seventy wounded, but smoke poured in through the badly constructed windows, bombs burst in the middle of the fortress,

without mentioning the carbine fire of the free-shooters. A longer resistance was useless.<sup>g</sup>

In 1855 the Russians bombarded Sveaborg. The allies attacked the fortified monastery of Solovetski, in the White Sea, and in the sea of Okhotsk they blockaded the Siberian ports, destroyed the arsenals of Petropavlovsk, and disturbed the tranquillity of the Russians on the river Amur.

Menaced by the Austrian concentration in Transylvania, and by the landing of English and French troops at Gallipoli and Varna, the Russians made a last and vain attempt to gain possession of Silistria, which they had held in a state of siege from April to July at the cost of a great number of men. In the Dobrudja an expedition directed by the French was without result from a military point of view, the soldiers being thinned out by cholera and paludal fevers. The Russians decided to evacuate the principalities, which were at once occupied by the Austrians in accord with Europe and the sultan. The war on the Danube was at an end.

#### THE SEAT OF WAR TRANSFERRED TO THE CRIMEA (1854 A.D.)

The war in the Crimea was just about to commence.<sup>f</sup> Siege-trains were ordered from England and France, transports were prepared, and other preparations were gradually made. But the cholera attacked both the armies and the fleets, which for two months lay prostrate under this dreadful scourge.

In the Black Sea, meantime, the preparations for the Crimean expedition were pressed forward with greater energy in proportion as the cholera abated. But many successive delays occurred. Originally the invading force was to have sailed on the 15th of August; then the 20th was the day; then the 22nd; then the 26th; then the 1st of September (by which time the French siege-train would have arrived at Varna); then the 2nd of September. At length all was ready; and 58,000, out of 75,000 men, cavalry, infantry, and artillery, were embarked at Baltjik on the 7th. The French numbered 25,000, the English the same; and there was a picked corps of about 8,000 Turks. In a flotilla of between two and three hundred vessels, this first and much larger part of the united army were transported up the coast to Fidonisi, or the Island of Serpents; from which point to Cape Tarkhan, in the Crimea, they would make both the shortest and the most sheltered passage. Being reviewed and found all ready at Fidonisi, the armada took its second departure on the 11th, and reached without accident the destined shore on the 14th. On that day the troops were landed prosperously at "Old Fort," some twenty miles beyond Eupatoria, or Koslov, within four or five easy days' march from Sebastopol. Upon this great fortress the columns were at once directed; while the transports returned in haste to fetch the reserves, amounting to about 15,000 men.

Contrary to the expectation of the allies, Prince Menshikov, who commanded in the Crimea, had resolved not to oppose their landing, but to await them on the left, or southern, bank of the river Alma. The nature of his position may be gathered from Lord Raglan's despatch. He says:

"In order that the gallantry exhibited by her majesty's troops, and the difficulties they had to meet, may be fairly estimated, I deem it right, even at the risk of being considered tedious, to endeavour to make you acquainted with the position the Russians had taken up.

"It crossed the great road about two miles and a half from the sea, and is very strong by nature. The bold and almost precipitous range of heights,



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of from 350 to 400 feet, that from the sea closely border the left bank of the river, here ceases and formed their left, and turning thence round a great amphitheatre or wide valley, terminates at a salient pinnacle where their right rested, and whence the descent to the plain was more gradual. The front was about two miles in extent. Across the mouth of this great opening is a lower ridge at different heights, varying from 60 to 150 feet, parallel to the river, and at distances from it of from 600 to 800 yards. The river itself is generally fordable for troops, but its banks are extremely rugged, and in most parts steep; the willows along it had been cut down, in order to prevent them from affording cover to the attacking party, and in fact everything had been done to deprive an assailant of any species of shelter. In front of the position on the right bank, at about 200 yards from the Alma, is the village of Burliuk, and near it a timber bridge, which had been partly destroyed by the enemy. The high pinnacle and ridge before alluded to was the key of the position, and consequently, there the greatest preparations had been made for defence. Half-way down the height and across its front was a trench of the extent of some hundred yards, to afford cover against an advance up the even steep slope of the hill. On the right, and a little retired, was a powerful covered battery, armed with heavy guns, which flanked the whole of the right of the position. Artillery, at the same time, was posted at the points that best commanded the passage of the river and its approaches generally. On the slopes of these hills (forming a sort of table land) were placed dense masses of the enemy's infantry, whilst on the height above was his great reserve, the whole amounting, it is supposed, to between 45,000 and 50,000 men."

It was against this fortress — for it was little less — the British, French, and Turkish forces were led, having broken up their camp at Kimishi on the 19th of September. The way led along continual steppes, affording no shelter from the burning heat of the sun, nor water to assuage the intolerable thirst suffered by all. The only relief was afforded by the muddy stream of Bulganak, which the men drank with avidity. That day an insignificant skirmish took place between a body of Cossacks and the light division. On passing over the brow of a hill, the former were discovered drawn up in order. A slight fire was opened, which wounded three or four of the allies, but a gun drove up and threw a shell with such wonderful precision in the midst of the enemy that above a dozen were knocked over by this one projectile, and the Cossacks speedily disappeared.<sup>d</sup>

#### THE BATTLE OF THE ALMA (1854 A.D.)

The allies' plan of aggression was quite as simple as the Russian plan of defence. It consisted in turning the enemy's two wings and then overwhelming them by a front attack. On the extreme right General Bosquet, in advance of the rest of the army, was to approach rapidly the Alma, cross it at a point not far from its mouth, ascend the slopes at all costs, then fall suddenly on the Russians' left, surround them, and throw them back on the centre. This movement carried out, Canrobert's and Prince Napoleon's divisions, supported by a portion of the English army, would cross the river, climb the heights between Almatamak and Burliuk, and make the grand attack. At the same moment the English army at the left of the French lines would endeavour to turn the enemy's right, and thus secure the day. Forey's division would remain in reserve ready to help either the weaker columns or those in immediate danger, as the case might be. On the even-

ing of the 19th of September Field-Marshal Saint-Arnaud had sent to each division a tracing of the proposed order of battle. The plan was so simple that the soldiers had already anticipated and guessed it. At nightfall they gathered round the camp fires and discussed the chances of the plan with gleeful excitement. They pointed out to each other the Russian camp fires, scintillating dots of light shining out on the hill sides, and tried to reckon up the enemy's number by the number of lights. A good deal of imagination mingled with their calculations, but the results did not frighten them, they were convinced that the following day they would rest victorious on the plateau.

At the first sounds of the reveille the troops of Bosquet's division were a-foot and ready to start, very proud of the place assigned them by the confidence of the commander-in-chief. The fog having somewhat lifted, at seven o'clock they left the banks of the Bulganak and marched off in quick time towards the Alma. They were not more than two kilometres distant from it when one of the field-marshal's aides-de-camp arrived hot-foot with orders to halt, as the English were not ready. Obedience was yielded with some degree of unwillingness, which grew to impatience as the halt was prolonged. It was already half-past eleven when the march was resumed. The division was formed into two columns; Autemarre's brigade marched towards Almatamak, where the French scouts had just discovered a ford; the other brigade, under Bouat, turned towards the sea, so as to cross the river near its mouth by a sand bank shown them by a steam pinnacle. From their dominating positions the Russians could see this manœuvre, but they paid no attention to it, judging that nature had provided sufficient defence for them on that side. They looked upon the whole of this movement as merely a diversion, and concentrated all their watchfulness on the main body of the army, which had hitherto remained motionless three kilometres to the rear of the Alma.

In the mean time Autemarre's brigade, close on Almatamak and hitherto hidden from the enemy by the escarpments of the neighbouring cliff, began to cross the Alma. The 3rd zouaves were the first over the ford, and began with amazing "go" to climb the plateau. This ascent, which the Russians, heavily equipped and accustomed to the level, believed impossible, was relatively easy for men accustomed time out of mind to the foot-tracks of African mountains. It was wonderful to see these strong, agile soldiers springing up the slopes, giving a helping hand to one another, clinging to tufts of grass and scrub, and profiting by the smallest foothold. The Algerian sharp-shooters followed, then the 50th foot. The most difficult matter was to get the artillery over, and the boldest faltered before such a task. By a sheer miracle of stout-heartedness and energy they managed to hoist several pieces the whole length of the escarpments. Suddenly the zouaves appeared at the top of the hill, before the very eyes of the astonished Russians, and by a brisk fire drove off the enemy's vedettes. In another moment Algerian sharp-shooters and men of the 50th foot climbed the last slopes in their turn; then the field guns, dragged up to the heights, were placed in line. At this identical moment Bouat's brigade, which had been delayed in crossing the bar, appeared on the extreme right and began to scale the cliffs nearest the sea. Only the second battalion of the Minsk infantry occupied this position, which had hitherto been held impregnable. Debouching from the little village of Aklese they ran forward; but confused by the fantastic aspect of this unexpected enemy, flurried by the gaps made in their ranks by the French long-range guns, they wasted no time over doubling back. Soon,

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running away altogether, they threw themselves on the Russian reserves, followed by the shots of French artillery and by the missiles thrown on to the plateau by the fleet at anchor near the shore.

Saint-Arnaud, from his position in the rear of the Alma, had watched the zouaves climb the hill. When they had disappeared over the crest, he had listened anxiously for the sharp-shooters to open fire. Soon the roar of cannon was heard, but it was difficult to believe that the artillery was already engaged. "Are they French guns or Russian guns?" asked the staff-officers grouped round the commander-in-chief. But the field-marshal joyfully cried: "I assure you it is Bosquet's cannon; he has reached the heights." Then searching the distance with his glasses: "I can see red trousers. Ah! there I recognise my African veteran Bosquet!" Summoning his generals, Saint-Arnaud gave then the final instructions. The sound of the guns had revived his failing strength; his voice was as strong as in his palmiest days, and his face was lighted up with confidence, a last and touching reflection of his warrior spirit. By a gesture he indicated to his officers the course of the river and the hills which shut in the horizon: "Gentlemen," he said, "this battle will be known as the battle of the Alma."

It being now one o'clock in the afternoon, the front attack was immediately begun. The first division, under command of General Canrobert, held the right; to the left was drawn up the 3rd division commanded by Prince Napoleon. Following the common plan, the latter was to attach itself to the English right, but it did so only imperfectly, on account of the slowness of the allies. Set in motion simultaneously, the two French divisions marched towards the Alma. This time the Russians had anticipated the attack and were ready to repulse it. Sheltered by clumps of trees, enclosing walls, and the gardens bordering the river, innumerable sharp-shooters directed a well-sustained fire against the enemy, and, in addition, a battery established on the edge of the plateau covered the plain with missiles. Overwhelmed by this murderous fire the French troops halted. But the artillery of the 1st and 3rd divisions shelled the ravines, compelling the Russian sharp-shooters to retreat against a high bank on the left, and by thus diverting their attention enabled the rest of the French army to advance as far as the Alma. Laying down their knapsacks the soldiers themselves sounded the river with branches of trees and boldly crossed wherever it appeared practicable. Towards two in the afternoon the 3rd division effected a crossing not far from Burluk. As to Canrobert's division, it had, almost entirely, already found a footing on the left bank a little above Almatamak. His first battalions had already reached the heights and slanted off to the right so as to join hands with Bosquet's division.

It was quite time. When Prince Menshikov was informed of the appearance of Bosquet on the heights near the mouth of the Alma, he at first refused to believe the news and only the roar of the cannon had convinced him. Realising the greatness of the danger, the Russian commander-in-chief immediately hurried to reinforce his left flank, which in his excess of confidence he had left almost uncovered. As the brigades of Autemarre and Bouat took up a position, fresh Russian troops debouched on the western side of the plateau. First a battery of light artillery, which arrived before the infantry it was summoned to support, lost half its number in a few moments; then four battalions of the Moscow infantry regiment supported by another battery. Shortly after this occurred, Prince Menshikov, having himself visited the scene of action, decided to make a fresh attempt. By his orders three battalions of the Minsk regiment, four squadrons of hussars



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and two batteries of Cossacks were drawn from the reserve to afford active support to the troops already engaged. Happily for the French these troops arrived only in dribbles, so that their impact was weakened by being broken up. Even so their little main body, launched on the plateau with no retreat possible, found itself in a position almost as critical as it was glorious. If it continued to penetrate into the Russian flank victory was assured, but if it faltered it had no other prospect than to be brought to bay on one escarpment after another and routed in the valley, beyond hope of salvation. The Russian troops were not more numerous than the French, but the twelve guns of the latter could scarcely hope to hold out against the forty pieces which the Russians had brought into this part of the field. On receiving overnight the commander-in-chief's instructions, General Bosquet had

replied: "You can count on me, but remember I cannot hold out for more than two hours."

The general weariness was great and moreover the ammunition was giving out. With growing anguish Bosquet turned his gaze towards the plain, waiting for the general attack which was to lighten his task. His joy may be imagined when he heard on the left, above Almatamak, the sharp crack of the zouaves' rifles, and saw appearing over the edge of the plateau General Canrobert's first battalions.

Help was at hand, and with help the almost certainty of victory. At that very moment a happy inspiration of Saint-Arnaud's rendered assurance sure. Judging that the moment had arrived for calling on his reserves, he sent orders to General Forey to bring up one of his brigades



ALEXANDER SERGEVITCH MENSHIKOV  
(1787-1869)

to succour Bosquet, and with the other to support General Canrobert. From that moment the tide of battle set steadily against the Russians. Surrounded on their left wing, outflanked in their centre, threatened by the French reserves, they yielded step by step, no doubt with fearful reprisals, but finally they retired. It was in vain that the Minsk and Moscow regiments, retreating obliquely, tried to resist both Bosquet's and Canrobert's divisions; these brave endeavours only prolonged the resistance without affecting the result. After losing the greater number of their leaders they were compelled to retreat behind the heights and to retire to a tower for telegraphic communication which marked the enemy's centre. There a final bloody engagement took place. At last the flags of the 3rd zouaves and the 39th foot were hoisted on the top of the tower, signal of the victory which the Russians thenceforward never disputed.<sup>h</sup>

The part taken by the British troops in the final assault is thus described by the special correspondent of the *Times*:

"The British line was struggling through the river and up the heights in masses, firm, indeed, but mowed down by the murderous fire of the batteries and by grape, round shot, shell, canister, case shot, and musketry, from some of the guns of the central battery, and from an immense and compact mass of Russian infantry. Then commenced one of the most bloody and determined struggles in the annals of war. The 2nd division, led by Sir De

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L. Evans in the most dashing manner, crossed the stream on the right. The 7th Fusiliers, led by Colonel Yea, were swept down by fifties. The 55th, 30th, and 95th, led by Brigadier Pennefather, who was in the thickest of the fight, cheering on his men, again and again were checked indeed, but never drew back in their onward progress, which was marked by a fierce roll of Minié musketry; and Brigadier Adams, with the 41st, 47th, and 49th, bravely charged up the hill, and aided them in the battle. Sir George Brown, conspicuous on a grey horse, rode in front of his light division, urging them with voice and gesture. Gallant fellows! they were worthy of such a gallant chief. The 7th, diminished by one-half, fell back to re-form their columns lost for the time; the 23rd, with eight officers dead and four wounded, were still rushing to the front, aided by the 19th, 33rd, 77th, and 88th. Down went Sir George in a cloud of dust in front of the battery. He was soon up and shouted, '23rd, I'm all right. Be sure I'll remember this day,' and led them on again, but in the shock produced by the fall of their chief the gallant regiment suffered terribly while paralysed for a moment. Meantime the Guards, on the right of the light division, and the brigade of Highlanders were storming the heights on the left. Their line was almost as regular as though they were in Hyde Park. Suddenly a tornado of round and grape rushed through from the terrible battery, and a roar of musketry from behind thinned their front ranks by dozens. It was evident that we were just able to contend against the Russians, favoured as they were by a great position. At this very time an immense mass of Russian infantry were seen moving down towards the battery. They halted. It was the crisis of the day. Sharp, angular, and solid, they looked as if they were cut out of the solid rock. It was beyond all doubt that if our infantry, harassed and thinned as they were, got into the battery they would have to encounter again a formidable fire, which they were but ill calculated to bear. Lord Raglan saw the difficulties of the situation. He asked if it would be possible to get a couple of guns to bear on these masses. The reply was, 'Yes,' and an artillery officer (Colonel Dixon) brought up two guns to fire on the Russian squares. The first shot missed, but the next, and the next, and the next cut through the ranks so cleanly, and so keenly, that a clear lane could be seen for a moment through the square. After a few rounds the square became broken, wavered to and fro, broke, and fled over the brow of the hill, leaving behind it six or seven distinct lines of dead, lying as close as possible to each other, marking the passage of the fatal messengers. This act relieved our infantry of a deadly incubus, and they continued their magnificent and fearful progress up the hill. The duke encouraged his men by voice and example, and proved himself worthy of his proud command and of the royal race from which he comes. 'Highlanders,' said Sir C. Campbell, ere they came to the charge, 'don't pull a trigger till you're within a yard of the Russians!' They charged, and well they obeyed their chieftain's wish; Sir Colin had his horse shot under him, but his men took the battery at a bound. The Russians rushed out, and left multitudes of dead behind them. The Guards had stormed the right of the battery ere the Highlanders got into the left, and it is said the Scots Fusilier Guards were the first to enter. The second and light division crowned the heights. The French turned the guns on the hill against the flying masses, which the cavalry in vain tried to cover. A few faint struggles from the scattered infantry, a few rounds of cannon and musketry and the enemy fled to the south-east, leaving three generals, three guns, 700 prisoners, and 4,000 wounded behind them. The battle of the Alma was won. It is won with a loss of nearly 3,000 killed and wounded on our side. The Russians' retreat

was covered by their cavalry, but if we had had an adequate force we could have captured many guns and multitudes of prisoners."

It appears from papers found in Prince Menshikov's carriage, that he had counted on holding his position on the Alma for at least three weeks. He had erected scaffolds from which his ladies might view the military exploits during the period of obstruction he had provided for the invading force, but he was hurried away in the midst of a flying army, in a little more than three hours.

#### THE SEIZURE OF BALAKLAVA (1854 A.D.)

Without sufficient cavalry, and having exhausted the ammunition of the artillery, the allies did not pursue the defeated foe; but rested for a couple of days, to recruit the able-bodied, succour the wounded, and bury the dead. Then they went forward towards Sebastopol. A change now took place, as remarkable an incident as any in the campaign. Learning that the enemy had established a work of some force on the Belbek, and that this river could not readily be rendered a means of communication with the fleet, and calculating that preparations would be made for the defence of Sebastopol chiefly on the north side, the commanders resolved to change the line of operations, to turn the whole position of Sebastopol, and establish themselves at Balaklava. After resting for a couple of days, they started on the march, turned to the left after the first night's bivouac, and struck across a woody country, in which the troops had to steer their way by compass; regained an open road from Bagtcheserai to Balaklava; encountered there at Khutor Mackenzia (Mackenzie's Farm) a part of the Russian army, which fled in consternation at the unexpected meeting; and were in possession of Balaklava on the 26th — within four days after leaving the heights above the Alma. Thus an important post was occupied without a blow.

Balaklava is a close port, naturally cut by the waters in the living rock; so deep that the bowsprit of a ship at anchor can almost be touched on shore, so strong that the force possessing it could retain communication with the sea in spite of any enemy. It is a proof of Menshikov's want of foresight, or of his extreme weakness after the battle of the 20th, that Balaklava was left without effectual defence. The change of operations reminds one of Nelson's manœuvre at the Nile, in attacking the enemy on the shore side, where the ships were logged with lumber and unprepared for action.

By this date, however, the allies were destined to sustain a grave loss, in the departure of Marshal Saint-Arnaud. The French commander-in-chief had succeeded in three achievements, each one of which would be sufficient to mark the great soldier. He had thrown his forces into the battle on the Alma with all the ardour of which his countrymen are capable, but with that perfect command which the great general alone retains. He had succeeded in exciting the soldierly fire of the French, and yet in preserving the friendliest feelings towards their rivals and allies, the English. He had succeeded in retaining his place on horseback, notwithstanding mortal agonies that would have subdued the courage, or at least the physical endurance, of any other man. Many can meet death, numbers can sustain torture; but the power of holding out in action against the depressing and despairing misgivings of internal maladies, is a kind of resolution which nature confers upon very few indeed, and amongst those very few Marshal Saint-Arnaud will be ranked as one of the most distinguished. He was succeeded in the command of the French army by General Canrobert, and died at sea on the 29th. By this event Lord Raglan became commander-in-chief of the allied forces in the Crimea.



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## THE ADVANCE ON SEBASTOPOL

Had Marshal Saint-Arnaud lived, it is hardly to be doubted that he would have attempted to take Sebastopol by the summary process of breaching and storming instead of the slower one of a regular siege. The former plan might have been successful, for it is now known, upon the authority of the Russians themselves, that when the allies first broke ground before the fortress its preparations for resistance were very incomplete. On the other hand, events have too painfully demonstrated that the force with which the siege was undertaken was totally inadequate, both in numbers and weight of metal. It was not sufficient to invest the place on every side, or to hinder the garrison of one of the strongest fortresses in the world from receiving unlimited reinforcements and supplies of all kinds. Hence, to use General Peyronnet Thompson's homely but very apt illustration, the operations before Sebastopol have hitherto been like the work of drawing a badger out of one end of a box, with an interminable series of badgers entering at the other.

The position occupied by the English before Sebastopol was to the right of the French, at a distance of six miles from their ships. They held the summit of a ridge, whence at long range, they could fire with some effect on the Russian outworks; but as they descended the slope, their force was broken in two or three parts, while they were exposed to a fire like that which destroyed so many brave men at the Alma. The French, on the left, rested on Cape Chersonesus, and were within three miles of their ships, in a position where, though they might suffer from the fire of the garrison, they were protected from the attacks of the Russian army in the field. The attack on the place by the land batteries and by the ships began on the 17th of October. The Russians had closed the entrance to the harbour by sinking two ships of the line and two frigates (they subsequently sank all the rest of their fleet), and the fire of the allied ships at long range produced so very little effect, whilst the casualties sustained by them were so disproportionate to the damage they inflicted, that the experiment was not repeated.

Eight days afterwards the Russians in turn became the assailants. A large reinforcement having been received under Liprandi, that general was detached to the Tchernaiia with some 30,000 troops to attack our rear. The peculiarity of the position of the allied army facilitated its efforts. It has already been explained that Balaklava is at some distance from the lines of the besiegers. The road connecting the two runs through a gorge in the heights which constitute the rear of the British position, and which overlook the small grassy plain that lies to the north of the inlet of Balaklava. The possession of the port and the connecting road are essential to the success of the siege. To defend them, Lord Raglan had placed a body of marines and sailors with some heavy guns on the heights above the village and landing place of Balaklava; beneath the heights he had stationed the 93rd Highlanders, under Sir Colin Campbell, who barred the road down to the village. The plain running northward towards the Tchernaiia is intersected by a low, irregular ridge, about two miles and a half from the village, and running nearly at right angles to the rear of the heights on the north-western slopes of which lay the British army. This ridge in the plain was defended by four redoubts, intervening between the Tchernaiia and the British cavalry encamped on the southern part of the plain; and the rising ground in their rear was held by the zouaves, who had entrenched themselves at right angles with the redoubts. The extreme right of our position was on the road to Kamara; the centre about

Kadakoi, with the Turkish redoubts in front; the left on the eastern slopes of the high lands running up to the Inkerman ravine.

#### THE BATTLE OF BALAKLAVA

The object of the Russians was to turn the right and seize Balaklava, burn the shipping in the port, and, cutting off our communication with the sea, establish themselves in our rear. To accomplish this, General Liprandi gathered up his troops behind the defiles at Tchorgun on the Tchernaiia. Here, having previously reconnoitred our position, he divided his forces on the morning of the 25th of October, directing one body by the great military road, the other by Kamara, and debouching upon the plain near the Turkish redoubts. The redoubts were armed with two or three heavy ship-guns, and each manned by about 250 Turks. The Russians coming on with the dawn, some 12,000 strong, with from thirty to forty field-guns, attacked the redoubts with horse artillery, and carried them in succession; the Turks firing a few shots, and then flying in disorder under a fire of artillery and the swords of the Cossacks. Sir Colin Campbell, aroused by the firing, instantly drew up the 93rd in front of the village of Kadakoi; and the affrighted Turks rallied for a moment on the flanks of that "living wall of brass," to use the language of a French writer, presented by the Highlanders. But the redoubts being taken, the enemy's artillery advanced and opened fire; and the cavalry came rapidly up. As the 93rd was within range, Sir Colin Campbell drew them a little backward behind the crest of the hill. The British cavalry lay to the left of the Highlanders, and a large body of Russian cavalry menaced both. The larger section went towards the encampment of the British cavalry, and were met at once by the heavy brigade, under General Scarlett. A brief but brilliant encounter followed: for a moment the Greys and Enniskillens in the first line seemed swallowed up, in another they reappeared victorious. The long, dense line of the Russian horse had lapped over their flanks; but the second British line, consisting of the 4th and 5th Dragoons, charging, the Russians were broken and rapidly made off. While this was proceeding, a body of some 400 cavalry rode at the Highlanders, who, not deigning to form square, mounted the crest of the hill, behind which they had taken shelter, fired in line two deep, and sent the enemy flying.

But the fighting was not yet over. Seven guns taken in the redoubts yet remained in the possession of the enemy; and Lord Raglan sent an order to Lord Lucan to prevent the enemy from carrying off the guns, if possible. The order was wrongly interpreted as a peremptory order to *charge*, and in that sense it was repeated by Lord Lucan to Lord Cardigan, who obeyed it and charged into the very centre of the enemy's position, with a desperate sacrifice of men, but not without inflicting severe blows upon the enemy. Nor was the loss of life entirely a waste. To the Russians the incident proved the unmeasured daring of the foe they had to face; to the British troops it showed the lengths to which discipline and fidelity can be carried. The light cavalry brigade mustered 607 sabres that morning; in the twenty minutes occupied by the charge and the return, they lost 335 horses, and had nearly as many officers and men killed or wounded. The heavy dragoons and the Chasseurs d'Afrique covered the retreat of the bleeding remnant of this daring band. It was now nearly noon: the fourth division, under Sir George Cathcart, and the first division, under the Duke of Cambridge, had come up; and the Russians abandoned all the redoubts, except the furthest one to the right. Nothing more was done that day. Looking to the extent of the position pre-

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viously occupied, Lord Raglan determined to contract his line of defence to the immediate vicinity of Balaklava and the steeps in the right rear of the British army.

Next day the enemy sallied forth from Sebastopol, 7000 or 8000 strong, and attacked the right flank of the British army; but, steadily met by the second division under Sir De Lacy Evans, supported by the brigade of Guards, a regiment of Rifles, two guns from the light division, and two French battalions, the Russians were gallantly repelled, and then chased down to the slope, with a loss of some 600 killed and wounded, and 80 prisoners.

#### THE BATTLE OF INKERMAN (NOVEMBER 5TH, 1854)

Another fierce engagement, the most important of all in which the belligerents have yet been engaged, took place on the 5th of November. For some days previously, the Russians, who already possessed a large force in the prolonged fortifications, and others to the rear of the allies in the neighbourhood of Balaklava, had been observed to receive large reinforcements, which, added to Liprandi's corps on the Russian left, of 30,000 or more, and the garrison, would probably justify Lord Raglan's estimate of 60,000 men arrayed against the allies on the memorable 5th of November. To augment the weight of the force brought down to crush the besiegers, the now useless army of the Danube had been withdrawn from Moldavia, leaving Bessarabia still defended by its special army, but not, it is supposed, entirely exhausting the reinforcements to be brought from the interior. The effort of Menshikov to throw his strength into a succession of powerful and, if possible, decisive blows, is shown by the advance of Dannenberg's army in the very lightest order, augmenting the numbers about Sebastopol without much regard either to their equipment or provision. The aim was to bear down by accumulated pressure; and it was with such a view that the batteries resumed the bombardment of the allies in their besieged camp, a strong force from the garrison moved out to act with Dannenberg's army, and Liprandi made a feint, that might have been, had it succeeded, a penetrating attack towards the rear; and as it was, it did busy a portion of the British and French forces. Thus the allies were to be occupied all round, while the weak, unintrenched, and unfortified point in their position towards the valley of the Inkerman was to be penetrated by a force of great weight and momentum.<sup>d</sup>

The English encampments were established between Karabelnaia and the valley of the Tchernaiia, on a plateau called Inkerman, which two ravines narrowed at the south in a way which made it a kind of isthmus. Two strong Russian columns, consisting together of thirty-six thousand men, converged in this direction. The first came out from Karabelnaia; the second descended from the heights on the opposite bank of the Tchernaiia and crossed that river near its mouth in the bay.

They had to join in order to turn the English camp and take it from the back. Their movements were badly planned; each acted on its own initiative instead of joining. However, the English were in extreme danger. The Karabelnaia column surprised one of their divisions and nearly overwhelmed it by force of numbers. With a small reinforcement the English disputed every inch of ground with desperation and the struggle was prolonged through rain and fog, till the Russian general Soimonov was mortally wounded; fear struck his battalions: they ceased to advance, then retreated, not receiving any orders, and did not return to the combat.



The column which came from the opposite side of the Tchernaiia, and which General Pavlov commanded, had in the meantime commenced its attack on the other part of the English camp. Here were furious shocks and long alternations of success and defeat. Although the English right had been joined by their left, having got rid of the Karabelnaia column, the inequality of numbers was still great. The English had driven back the advance guard of Pavlov's column to the valley of the Tchernaiia; but the greater part of this column, supported by an immense artillery (nearly one hundred guns) pushed forward its closely serried battalions with such violence that in the end they were masters of an earthwork, which protected the right side of the English camp (a battery of sand bags).

Had the Russians remained in this position, the allies would have lost the day. Till then the English had made it their pride to keep up the struggle without the help of the French. There was not a moment to lose; two of their generals were killed, several no longer able to fight; the soldiers were exhausted. Lord Raglan called the French, who were awaiting the signal.

General Bosquet, who commanded the corps nearest the English, sent out the first two battalions he had at hand. It would have been too late if the enemy had passed the fortification they had seized and had extended beyond the isthmus. The Russians had been less active than brave. The French foot soldiers renewed the marvellous charge of the English cavalry at Balaklava. In their vehemence, they drove the greater number of the Russians far behind the battery of sand bags; they were repulsed in their turn by the mass of the enemy; but the movement of the latter had nevertheless been checked. The Russian leaders were not able to manœuvre promptly enough to place themselves, as they might have done, between the English and the new reinforcements of French.

The French battalions arrived in double quick time with that agility already shown at Alma by the soldier trained in African wars. The Russians repulsed a second attack; they succumbed under a third made with more reinforcements. One of their regiments was precipitated by the French zouaves and turcos from the summit of the rocks into a deep ravine where it was shattered. The rest of the Russian troops made a slow and painful retreat under the terrible fire of the French artillery.

This sanguinary day cost the Russians twelve thousand men, killed, wounded, or missing. The English lost about twenty-six hundred men, the French seventeen to eighteen hundred. Beside their decisive intervention on the plateau of Inkerman, the French troops had repulsed a sortie of the garrison at Sebastopol.

According to military historians, the check of the Russians was due, to a great extent, to their want of mobility and their incapacity for manœuvring; the pedantic and circumstantial tactics imposed on them by Nicholas only served to hinder them in presence of the enemy.

The allies, victorious, but suffering after such a victory, suspended the assault and decided to keep on the defensive until the arrival of new forces. They completed the circumvallation which protected the plateau of Chersonesus, from Inkerman to Balaklava; the Russians had retired completely; the French protected themselves on the town side by a line of contravallation.<sup>2</sup>

While the allies were occupied in digging trenches, laying mines, and increasing the number of their batteries, the Russians, directed by the able Todleben, strengthened those defences of the city that were already in existence and under the fire of the enemy erected new ones. The allies, in spite of the sufferings incident to a severe winter, established themselves more and

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more securely, and on a strip of sandy coast prepared to defy all the forces of the empire of the czar.

On the 26th of December, 1825, Nicholas had been consecrated by the blood of conspirators as the armed apostle of the principle of authority, the destroying angel of counter-revolution. This was a part that he played not without glory for thirty years, having put down the Polish, Hungarian, and Rumanian revolutions and prevented Prussia from yielding to the seductions of the German revolution. He had obstructed if not destroyed the French Revolution in all its legal manifestations, the monarchy of July, the republic, and the empire. He had saved the Austrian Empire and prevented the creation of a democratic German empire. Like Don Quixote he was chivalrous, generous, disinterested, but represented a superannuated principle that was out of place in the modern world. Day by day his character as chief of a chimerical alliance became more of an anachronism; particularly since 1848 aspirations of the people had been in direct contradiction to his theories of patriarchal despotism. In Europe this contradiction had diminished the glory of the czar, but in Russia his authority remained unimpaired owing to his successes in Turkey, Persia, Caucasus, Poland, and Hungary. All complaints against the police were forgotten as well as the restrictions laid on the press, and all efforts to control the government in matters of diplomacy, wars, and administration were relinquished; it was believed that the laborious monarch would foresee everything and bring all affairs of state to a fortunate conclusion. Indeed the success of this policy was sufficient to silence the opposition offered by a few timid souls, and to furnish justification for blind confidence in the existing government.

The disasters in the East were a terrible awakening; invincible as the Russian fleet had hitherto been considered, it was obliged to take refuge in its own ports or to be sunk in the harbour of Sebastopol. The army had been conquered at Alma by the allies and at Silistria by the despised Turks; a body of western troops fifty thousand strong was insolently established before Sebastopol, and of the two former allies Prussia was neutral and Austria had turned traitor. The enforced silence of the press for the last thirty years had favoured the committal of dishonest acts by employes, the organisation of the army had been destroyed by administrative corruption. Everything had been expected of the government, and now the Crimean War intervened and threatened complete bankruptcy to autocracy; absolute patriarchal monarchy was obliged to retreat before the Anglo-French invasion. The higher the hopes entertained for the conquest of Constantinople, the deliverance of Jerusalem and the extension of the Slavonic empire, the more cruel the disappointment. At this moment a prodigious activity manifested itself throughout Russia, tongues were unloosed, and a great manuscript literature was passed secretly from hand to hand, bringing audacious accusations against the government and all the hierarchy of officials:

"Awake, O Russia!" exhorted one of these anonymous pamphlets; "awake from your deep sleep of ignorance and apathy. Long enough we have been in bondage to the successors of the Tatar khans; rise to your full height before the throne of the despot and demand of him a reckoning for the national disaster. Tell him plainly that his throne is not God's altar and that God has not condemned our race to eternal slavery. Russia, O czar, had given into your hands the supreme power, and how have you exerted it? Blinded by ignorance and passion, you have sought power for its own sake and have forgotten the interests of the country. You have consumed your life in reviewing troops, in altering uniforms, and in signing your name to the legislative

projects of ignorant charlatans. You have created the detestable institution of press-censorship that you might enjoy peace and remain in ignorance of the needs and complaints of your people. You have buried Truth and rolled a great stone to the door of her sepulchre, and in the vanity of your heart you have exclaimed, 'For her there shall be no resurrection!' Notwithstanding, Truth rose on the third day and left the ranks of the dead. Czar, appear before the tribunal of history and of God! You have trodden truth under foot, and refused to others liberty while you were yourself a slave to passion. By your obstinacy and pride you have exhausted Russia and armed the rest of the world against her. Bow your haughty head to the dust and implore forgiveness, ask advice. Throw yourself upon the mercy of your people; with them lies your only hope of safety!"<sup>f</sup>

#### DEATH OF THE EMPEROR NICHOLAS I

The chivalrous soul of the Emperor Nicholas could not reconcile itself to the complete wreck of all its political and spiritual ideals. Nicholas fell a sacrifice to his persistent pursuit of traditions bequeathed to him by the Alexandrine policy of the last decade.

On the 2nd of March, 1855, Russia, and all European nations, were dismayed by the unexpected news of the sudden death of the emperor Nicholas.<sup>b</sup> "Serve Russia!" were his last words to his son and heir. "I wished to overcome all national afflictions, to leave you a peaceful, well-organized and happy empire. . . Providence has ordained otherwise!"<sup>j</sup>

#### ESTIMATES OF NICHOLAS

Skrine,<sup>k</sup> reviewing the life of Nicholas in the light of the evolutionary philosophy of our own time, declares that the autocrat failed because in a progressive century he had become an anachronism. He believes, however, that Nicholas I died as grandly as he had lived, in the firm assurance that he had done his duty. While he ruled his subjects with a rod of iron, he was ever ready to serve them with an unselfishness which has no parallel in history.

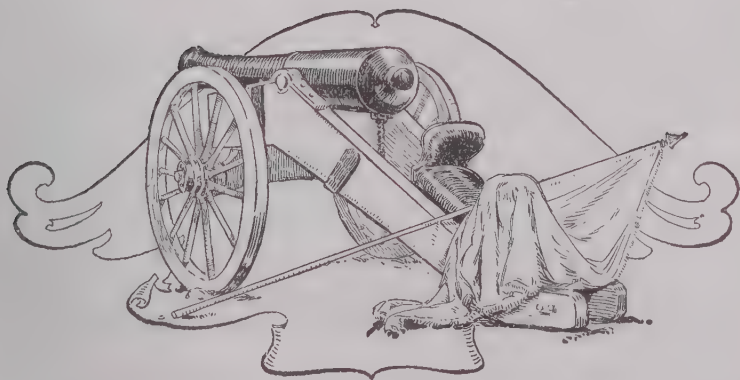
Sweeping assertions such as these are usually to be taken with some measure of allowance. In the present case we may quote, by way of antidote, the estimate of Nicholas that appeared in the London *Times* of March 3rd, 1855: "In the long array of history, and among those figures dimly seen along the ages of the past which bear imperishable traces of their guilt and their doom, none stands a more visible mark of retributive justice than he who has abruptly passed from the scene of human affairs. Nicholas ascended the throne in the prime of life, and he won his crown by his own daring composure in the face of great dangers. The conduct of the Emperor Nicholas during those eventful and perilous years, from 1848 to 1851, raised him higher than he had ever stood before; he was regarded as one of the wisest, as well as one of the most powerful, sovereigns of Europe, and those even who detested his despotic government could not deny that he had shown moderation, temper, and a strong desire for peace. No sovereign ever succeeded in inspiring his own subjects of the Muscovite race with a more fanatical attachment to his person, and it is perfectly true that wherever the lofty stature and imperial port of the czar was seen throughout his dominions, he was hailed as a demigod rather than as a man. His pride rose with his station and his power, and at times he seemed possessed with

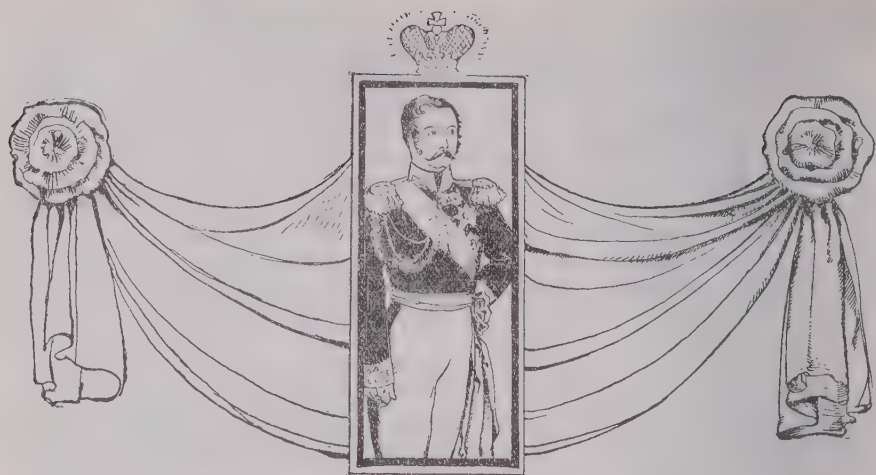


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hallucinations acting upon a mystical and excitable nature, as if he indeed transcended the appointed limits of all human greatness.

“By what marvellous fatality, by what infatuation could it then happen that a ruler of men already past the illusions of youth, versed in the affairs of Europe, and professedly solicitous to maintain the constituted order of things, suddenly descended from his exalted position, committed acts of astonishing imprudence and injustice, destroyed his own influence throughout the world, and died at last without a friend? He was warned early, frequently, and emphatically, that if he failed to control that indomitable pride which gave a pernicious import to his smallest actions, he would fall under the ban of Europe; and it is impossible to doubt that the agonising sense of humiliation and remorse at the loss of all he had reason to prize has terminated his life. It is one of the most solemn and forcible examples of the tie which links human greatness to human frailty; and throughout all future time the reign of Nicholas of Russia will be remembered as an instance of the miserable ending of a career which has been sacrificed to bad and destructive passions, when it might have been prolonged in peace, good fame, and honour.”<sup>a</sup>





## CHAPTER XII

### ALEXANDER II, THE CZAR LIBERATOR

[1855-1881 A.D.]

In recalling to memory all that the Russian nation passed through during the reign of the emperor Alexander II, and comparing the position and condition of Russia at the end of the reign with what they were in the beginning, it is impossible not to marvel at the beneficent change which took place throughout all the branches of national life during that short space of time. The liberation of the peasants from the dependence of serfdom, which had weighed on them for some centuries, and the organisation of their existence, the abolition of shameful and cruel corporal punishments, the introduction of provincial and territorial institutions, of the self-government of towns, the new tribunals and general military service, without mentioning other less important reforms, innovations and improvements accomplished by the will of the Czar Liberator, had an immeasurable influence upon the intellectual and moral regeneration of the people, and, it may be said, gave to Russia a complete inward revival. — SCHUMACHER.<sup>a</sup>

BORN in 1818, Alexander came to power at the age of thirty-seven under circumstances of the greatest difficulty both at home and abroad. "Your burden will be a heavy one," his father had said to him when dying. Alexander's first care was to terminate under honourable conditions the war that was exhausting Russia. At the news of the death of Nicholas the value of stocks and bonds rose in every exchange in Europe; and the general peaceful mood was not disturbed by the new emperor's proclamation that he would "endeavour to carry out the views of his illustrious predecessors, Peter, Catherine, the beloved Alexander, and our father of imperishable memory." A new conference took place at Vienna between the representatives of Austria, Russia, and the two western powers. France demanded the neutralisation of

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the Black Sea, or the limitation of the naval powers that the czar might place there. "Before limiting our forces," replied Gortchakov and Titov, the representatives of Russia, "take from us Sebastopol!"

The siege continued. Sardinia in its turn sent 20,000 men to the East. Austria agreed to defend the principalities against Russia, and Prussia agreed to support Austria. On the 16th of May Pélissier succeeded Canrobert as general-in-chief of the French forces. During the night of the 22nd of May the Russians made two sorties, which were repulsed; all the allied forces occupied the left bank of the Tchernaiia, and an expedition was sent out which destroyed the military posts of Kertch and Jenikale, occupied the Sea of Azov, and bombarded Taganrog, leaving the Russians no route by which to receive supplies save that of Perekop. The Turks occupied Anapa and incited the Circassians to revolt.

Pélissier had announced that he would gain possession of Sebastopol, and on the 7th of June he took by storm the Mamelon Vert (Green Hillock) and the Ouvrages Blancs (White Works), on the 18th he sent the French to attack Malakov and the English to lay siege to the great Redan, but both expeditions were repulsed with a loss of 3,000 men. On the 16th of August the Italian contingent distinguished itself in the battle of Traktir on the Tchernaiia. The last day of Sebastopol had arrived. Eight hundred and seventy-four cannon directed their thunder against the bastions and the city; and the Russians, who displayed a stoical intrepidity that nothing could shake, lost 18,000 men from the effects of the bombardment alone. A million and a half of projectiles were thrown upon the city. The French had dug 80 kilometres of trenches and sunk 1,251 metres of mines before the Mast bastion alone, and their parallels had been extended to within thirty metres of Malakov. Under a terrible fire, the noise of which could be heard at a distance of a hundred kilometres, the Russian bastions crumbled away, and their artillerists and reserve soldiers fell by thousands. Korinlov, Istomin, and Nakhimov succumbed. The besieged had not even time to substitute good cannon for those that had been damaged, and could scarcely accomplish the burial of their dead. The very eve of the crisis that was to end all had arrived.<sup>b</sup>

During the protracted siege of Sebastopol death had claimed Marshal Saint-Arnaud; the French commander general Canrobert succeeded him, and he was now superseded by General Pélissier. Lord Raglan had fallen a victim to cholera, and General Simpson was now in command of the English army.

In these weary months of waiting there had been many sanguinary encounters both by day and by night, and repeated bombardments. But it was not until September the 8th, 1855, that the grand assault was made.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE FALL OF SEBASTOPOL

At half-past eleven in the morning (September 8) all the trenches before the Karabel faubourg were occupied by the attacking force. Pélissier, surrounded by his staff, was installed on the Green Mamelon. In the sixth parallel was Bosquet, attentive to everything and influencing everyone around him by his calm energy. The troops, excited, eager, with their clothes loosened so as to fight the better, filled beforehand with the rage of battle (for the long siege had tried their patience), impatiently awaited the signal. From time to time bayonets showed above the parapets. "Down with the bayonets," shouted Bosquet, who feared to reveal to the enemy the position of the French: then he added more gently: "Have patience! the time will



come." It had as a fact almost come, being now on the stroke of noon. "Forward!" cried Bosquet, and immediately his colours as commandant were planted on the parallel. The order flew from mouth to mouth; drums beat, trumpets sounded; the officers with naked swords led their troops out of the trenches.

The Malakov garrison at that time was composed of 500 artillery, certain militiamen or workmen, and 1400 infantry belonging to the Modlin, Praga and Zamosc regiments. After being prepared for an attack at daybreak the garrison was no longer upon the alert. Only the gunners remained by their guns, with a few riflemen along the ramparts. All the rest were hidden in their bomb-proof shelters and were about finishing their dinner. Having become accustomed to alarms, they were resting at comparative ease, and, yielding to that lassitude which often overtakes the mind and will after a night of anxious watching. They did not move except to salute the commandant of the fort, General Bessau, who was making an examination of the casemates and bestowing the cross of St. George on the most deserving. Suddenly, on the stroke of noon, the sharp crack of the French rifles rent the air, and the zouaves in their brilliantly coloured uniforms were seen bounding up the Malakov slopes. "The French are upon us! We are attacked!" cried the guard. Before the defenders of the bastion had even had time to pick up their arms, the zouaves had thrown themselves on the work. They cleared the fosse, and without waiting for ladders scaled the escarp and precipitated themselves through the embrasures. The Russian gunners stood to their guns, defending themselves with stones, pickaxes, and sponges. Meantime the men of the Modlin regiment rushed from their shelters and massed themselves towards the front of the fort. There took place one of those hand-to-hand fights, so rare in the history of battles, a desperate, merciless fight, full of terrible episodes. But the Russians were hampered by their long cloaks; the assailants, more active than they, dodged the blows of their enemies, surrounded them, closed with them, and little by little gained ground. The number of assailants momentarily increased. Immediately following the zouaves, almost side by side with them, appeared a battalion of the 7th line regiment, supporting the African troops with energy and bravery. General Bessau fell, mortally wounded, nearly all the other Russian leading officers were killed. Pressed and outflanked on every side the besieged fell back, surrendering the terre-plein, and retiring beyond the first traverses, and the colours of the 1st zouaves were hoisted on the captured redoubt. The battle had lasted only half an hour.

During this same space of time Dulac's division had invaded the Little Redan and driven back the riflemen as far as the second enceinte; whilst La Motterouge's division took possession of the curtain between the Malakov and the Little Redan. From this post of observation the commander-in-chief had seen the French eagle planted on the Malakov; he had also witnessed the triumphant passage of Dulac's and La Motterouge's divisions. Immediately he hoisted the queen's colours on the Green Mamelon. This was the signal for which the English were waiting.

At the sight of it they poured out of their trenches; with the intrepid coolness characteristic of their temperament and their country. First came their rifles, next the men with scaling ladders, then the attacking columns composed of the light division and the 2nd division. In making their attack our allies were at a double disadvantage; in the first place the Russians were on the alert throughout the length of their line of defence, and, secondly, a distance of 200 yards lay between them and the Great Redan. A murderous

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fire greeted them, and before they could reach the work the ground was strewn with their red coats. They continued to advance notwithstanding, doubled to the fosse, scaled it, drew up their ladders, reached the now almost demolished salient-angle and routed the battalions of the Vladimir regiment. Before them stretched a great space, open and exposed; beyond it were the bomb-proof shelters from which the Russians kept up their hottest and best directed fire. Vainly the attacking party strove to push their undertaking further: vainly even did they strain every nerve to maintain the ground they had gained. After an hour and a half of futile attempts they fell back on their trenches.

Whilst the English were being foiled at the Great Redan, Levaillant's division approached the central bastion at about two o'clock and met with no better fate. At first Couston's brigade succeeded in getting possession of the Schwartz redoubt, to the left of the bastion; it even fought a battle in the gully known as the Town Gully. But the commanding officer was wounded, reinforcements arrived for the enemy, and it was brought back to the foremost parallels. To the right of the bastion Trocher's brigade had invaded the Bielkine lunette and gained the bastion itself, but could no longer maintain its advantage. Like General Couston, General Trocher was wounded, and the Russian reprisals shattered his unhappy regiments. A second attempt was not more happy, and orders came from the commander-in-chief forbidding a continuance of such bloody efforts.

And indeed where was the use of persisting against the town when the principal engagement had been fought in the Karabel faubourg, an engagement which, according to whether it succeeded or failed, would save or compromise everything else?

At the Little Redan fortune had made the French columns pay dearly for their early success. Barely mistress of the bastion, Dulac's division had been assailed by a heavy fire from the batteries of the *Maison-en-Croix* and of the three vessels moored in the roads. Moreover the Russians had brought up a large number of field-pieces to all the more favourable points, whilst a considerable number of reserve troops debouched from the Uchakov gully. Outnumbered, crushed by showers of missiles, and finally compelled to evacuate a redoubt filled with their dead, our troops had retired to their place-of-arms. At the curtain La Motterouge's division had itself given way before the attacks of the enemy. New columns were formed from the débris of Saint-Pol's brigade, which had already lost its general, de Marolles' brigade, and the guards division. A little later arrived at full gallop two batteries of the Lancaster artillery which, by the hotness of their fire, strove to work havoc in the enemy's columns, and, above all, to disperse the fog. The Little Redan was taken, lost, retaken, abandoned. The bloodshed was terrific. General



ALEXANDER II  
(1818-1881)

de Marolles was killed, Generals Bourbaki, Bisson, Mellinet and de Pontevès wounded, the latter mortally; the trenches were so heaped with dead that it was almost impossible to move in them. Atop of all this General Bosquet was wounded in the right side by the bursting of a shell. He was obliged to relinquish his command, and a rumour even got about that he was dying. Shortly after a loud report was heard from the direction of the curtain. A powder-magazine had exploded, claiming fresh victims; General de la Motterouge was among the wounded. So many casualties, the loss of so many officers, the difficulty of fighting in a narrow space choked up with dead and dying, even extreme exhaustion, all combined to dissuade from a renewed attack on the Little Redan. Only a portion of La Motterouge's division partially held its own on the ramparts.

It was now three o'clock. Judging only by the results as a whole the allies had to count more disappointments than successes. The English had been beaten back at the Great Redan. The central bastion withstood all attacks. And finally, in the Karabel faubourg the Little Redan, already carried, had just slipped from our grasp. But, notwithstanding, there was more joy than depression amongst those surrounding the commander-in-chief. All eyes were turned obstinately towards the Malakov. Were the Malakov safely held, not only would the other checks be made good but the advantage of the day would rest with the allied army; for the occupation of this dominant position would render all further resistance impossible. Now, according to all accounts, MacMahon was keeping safe hold of his prize and strengthening himself there.

He had maintained his position, God only knows at what cost of valour. We have related how the terre-plein fell into the hands of the allies, and how this brilliant success had determined the great attack. But inside the work, fortified and improved with so much care during the long days of siege, the Russians had thrown up a multitude of traverses beneath which were their bomb-proof shelters, which formed all over the fort so many trenches easy of defence. The salient-angle once occupied, it would be necessary to carry one by one these traverses behind which were drawn up what remained of the Modlin regiment and the Praga and Zamosc battalions. Happily General MacMahon had recalled the 2nd, Vinoy's, division. Thanks to these reinforcements he had been enabled to force back the enemy, dislodge them from their positions and drive them towards the gorge of the redoubt.

There an engagement had taken place more terrible than any throughout the day. Driven to bay at the extremity of the work, the Russians had, by a series of heroic rushes, attempted to retake the fort, the veritable palladium of their city. Whilst MacMahon hastily ordered up Wimpfen's brigade, and the zouaves of the guard, in short all the reserves, the Muscovite officers sacrificed themselves one after the other in their efforts to avert a total defeat. First it was General Lisenko with a few remnants of the Warsaw, Briansk and Ieletz regiments; then General Krulov with four battalions of the Ladoga regiment; lastly General Iuverov with the same men newly led on to battle. Lisenko was mortally wounded, Krulov dangerously so, Iuverov killed. In the end the Malakov gorge was ours. The engineers began at once to put it in a state of defence: the capitulation of the little garrison of the tower, isolated in the midst of the fort, completed the victory. A supreme effort made a little later by General de Martinau with the Azov and Odessa regiments only served to demonstrate the powerlessness of our enemies to wrest the magnificent prize from us.

And magnificent it certainly was. The corpses heaped around the for-



[1855 A.D.]

truss showed plainly enough the Russians' obstinate intention to defend or re-capture it. Notwithstanding the fact that our triumph was complete the fusilade had not ceased. There were still certain volunteers risking their lives around the Mamelon, meditating some desperate stroke. "Give us cartridges," they cried: "Let someone lead us again to battle." But nearly all their officers were either dead or in the ambulances, and the remainder scarcely troubled to answer them. Not that they were indifferent to so crushing a defeat, but after such desperate fighting an immense weariness had overtaken them, and, having done all they could to avert their fate they now submitted to it impassively.

Towards four o'clock Prince Gortchakov arrived on these scenes of confusion and woe. On receiving the first intelligence of the assault he had crossed the roads and had been able to follow all the varying chances of the fight. For a long time he surveyed the Karabelnaia, as if to gauge the defensive strength of the faubourg; for a yet longer time he contemplated the Malakov, so lately the pride of the Russians and now lost to them. Neither the still hot firing which killed one of his officers at his side, nor the time which pressed availed to cut short this searching examination.

At last, judging that the town was no longer tenable he decided on consummating the sacrifice. The moment seemed to him a favourable one, for two reasons: the success gained at the Great and Little Redans and the safeguarded central bastion, had established the honour of the Muscovite arms; whereas the extreme weariness of the allies guaranteed that the remainder of the day and the ensuing night would be allowed by them to pass without further offensive action. The Russian commander-in-chief therefore resolved to evacuate Sebastopol and to make all his troops cross over to the northern bank. The idea once conceived he hurried to the Nicholas battery to secure the immediate execution of his orders.

At his post of observation on the Green Mamelon, Pélissier had learnt of MacMahon's signal success, and this great advantage, somewhat counterbalanced it is true by the checks received in other engagements, filled all hearts with hope. Nevertheless, by reason of this multitude of engagements, victory appeared to be, though probable, still uncertain. Would MacMahon be able to maintain his position at the Malakov? Might not some exploding mine change the triumph into a catastrophe? Would not the defeated Russians defend themselves from behind their second enceinte, in their streets, in their houses even? And would not the battle of September 8 have a yet more bloody morrow? No answer was forthcoming to these questions, and faces that had begun to brighten grew troubled.

Things were at this stage when, towards the end of the day, General Martimprey turning his glasses towards the town thought he detected an unaccustomed movement on the great bridge spanning the roads. Glasses were passed from hand to hand and, despite the first shades of evening, long processions of soldiers, waggons, carriages, guns, could be distinctly seen wending their way towards the northern bank. The bridge gave under the weight, and shaken by a high wind swayed beneath the swell which from time to time submerged and almost swamped it. In spite of this hindrance the march continued, whilst ferry-boats filled with people crossed to the northern bank, and then returned empty to fetch other passengers. The rapidly falling darkness prevented further observation, but the spectators felt no doubt that they were watching the retreat of the Russians.

They had not all retreated, however. At this supreme moment Gortchakov bethought himself of Moscow. Several volunteer corps and several

detachments of sappers and marines were left behind, not to give battle to an already victorious enemy, but to level to the dust the city it was no longer possible to defend. As night fell the work of devastation was begun. Powder-magazines were blown up. The cannon and siege trains that could not be removed were sunk in the bay. All that remained of the North Sea squadron was sunk; even the *Empress Marie* was not spared, that splendid vessel which was commanded by the glorious Nahkimov at the battle of Sinope. Only the war steamers were saved and taken across to the northern bank. The blowing up of the Paul battery completed the work of destruction. When all was finished the great bridge was broken up. Then the executors of those savage orders departed in boats for the further shore. With them went the generals who up to that moment had remained at Sebastopol to guard the retreat. Of this number was Count Osten-Sacken, governor of the

town, who was one of the last to leave, as a captain abandons his burning ship only when all the hands have left.

The explosions of that terrible night had kept the allies on the alert in their camp, and had triumphed over their immense fatigue. At daybreak on the 9th of September, Sebastopol, already nearly deserted, appeared to them as an immense heap of ruins from which shot up tongues of flame kindled by the incendiaries. For a long time French and English contemplated with a mixture of joy and horror those ruins which attested the greatness of their triumph and also the tenacity of their enemies. Beyond the roadstead, on the northern heights, appeared the Russians, vanquished but still menacing.



PRINCE A. M. GORTCHAKOV

(1798-1883)

On the morrow, September 10th, 1855 — after 332 days of siege, three set battles, and three assaults more bloody even than the battles — Pélissier, as marshal of France, in the name of the emperor, planted his country's flag among the smoking ruins.<sup>e</sup>

With the fall of Sebastopol the war was practically at an end. Hostilities continued for some time longer, but neither side won any material advantage. The allies were not in complete accord on the question of the continuance of the war, England being inclined to push matters to a complete overthrow of Russia, while France was ready to talk about terms of peace. Lord Palmerston himself was a strenuous opponent of peace, and declared that Russia had not been sufficiently humbled. At this juncture Prince A. M. Gortchakov, the Russian ambassador at Vienna, taking advantage of the divided councils of the allies, urged Austria to act as peacemaker. The emperor Francis Joseph thereupon took the occasion to press upon Russia an acceptance of the four conditions on which Turkey was prepared to make peace, backing the communication with an implied threat of war in case of denial. On January 16th, 1856, the czar, much against his will, signified his acceptance of Austrian intervention. The preliminaries of peace were signed on February 1st and on the 25th of the same month representatives of the great powers assembled at Paris to settle the details of the peace. Negotiations proceeded

[1856 A.D.]

for over a month, France and Russia drawing together and Austria insisting upon the maximum of Russian cessions.<sup>a</sup>

Under the Treaty of Paris, March 30th, 1856, the powers bound themselves not to intervene singly in the administration of Turkey, to respect her independence and territorial status, and to treat disputes between any of them and the Porte as matters of general interest. A Hatti-sherif, or ordinance, had been obtained by England from the sultan before the congress opened, which guaranteed equal religious privileges to all his subjects. This was set forth as an article in the treaty. Russia renounced her claims to a protectorate over Turkish Christians. She abandoned similar pretensions with regard to the Danubian principalities, which were in future to be governed by hospodars elected under European control. She surrendered to Moldavia the southern portion of Bessarabia, which had been ceded under the Treaty of Bucharest, retaining however the principal trade-routes southwards and the fortress of Khotin. The navigation of the Danube was declared free to all nations, and placed under an European commission.

A clause, through which Russia drew her pen as soon as an opportunity presented itself, declared the Black Sea neutral and closed it to men-of-war of all nations. Russia surrendered Kars to Turkey, but regained the portion of the Crimea in the allies' occupation. By a separate act she undertook not to fortify the Åland Isles or to make them a naval station. Thanks to the astuteness of her diplomacy, she scored a decided success against England in securing the insertion of articles which limited the scope of naval warfare. The Treaty of Paris abolished privateering, and provided that a neutral flag should protect the enemy's goods, while neutral property, even under a hostile flag, was exempted from capture. "Contraband of war" was indeed excepted, but no attempt was made to define the meaning of this ambiguous phrase. The recognition of a blockade by neutrals was to be conditional on its effectiveness.<sup>g</sup>

#### AMELIORATION IN THE CONDITION OF THE SOLDIER

On the 26th of August, 1856, the emperor Alexander Nikolaivitch placed on his head, in the cathedral of the Assumption at Moscow, the imperial crown and received the sacrament of anointing with the Holy Chrism. The sacred day of the coronation was one of rejoicing and hitherto unprecedented favours and therefore left the most joyful remembrance in the hearts of the people.

When he had taken upon himself the imperial crown, the emperor Alexander II immediately set about the preparation of those great administrative reforms, which were so full of humanity and justice, which made his reign illustrious and which immortalised his name.

Solicitous for the welfare of his people, the emperor first of all directed his attention to the improvement of the condition of the soldier and entered upon a series of reforms in the organisation and administration of that army, which was so dear to his heart, with the object of raising the moral spirit of the troops, of arousing the lower ranks to the consciousness of their dignity and in general of placing the military profession upon its proper elevated footing.

As the preserver of order in the state during times of peace and the defender of the country in time of war, the soldier is justly proud of his profession; he should not be given cause for mortification by finding beside him in the service men condemned to the ranks as punishment for vicious



behaviour. Yet in previous times men were frequently made soldiers by way of punishment for some crime instead of being banished to the settlements: fugitives, vagabonds, horse stealers, thieves, swindlers, and such vicious persons found a place in the ranks of the army.

The emperor Alexander II put an end to this shameful state of things: by the imperial manifesto of 1860 the enrolment of soldiers as a punishment for crimes and offences, an abuse which had attained vast dimensions, was

abolished and replaced by other forms of punishment. But the czar's chief care was to bring to fulfilment his most sacred idea, one which he cherished day and night: to give liberty to the peasants who were dependent as serfs upon the landowners; to abolish the law of serfdom. Amongst the great administrative reforms accomplished during the reign of the emperor Alexander II, the liberation of the peasants occupies incontestably the first place and served as the chief foundation for all the reforms that followed. All further changes were directly or indirectly called forth by the abolition of the law of serfdom. This glorious accomplishment which gave new life to Russia, which breathed a new soul into the millions of Russian peasantry, was the most important of all the great deeds of the emperor Alexander II, and the brightest jewel in the crown of his glory.

#### THE EMANCIPATION OF THE SERFS (1861 A.D.)

The predecessors of Alexander II had already felt all the evils of the law of serfdom and had not unfrequently aimed, if not directly at its abolition, at least at the amelioration of the position of the peasant serfs and

their gradual preservation against the arbitrariness of the landowners' authority. But all these beneficent measures were insufficient for the abolition of the firmly established order; they only limited the rights of serfdom, put a certain restraint upon it, but did not abolish the right of the possession of serfs. The glory of the complete emancipation of the peasants from the dependency of serfdom, the great and difficult initiative of the entire abolition of the law of serfdom in Russia belongs wholly to the emperor Alexander II.

The question of the abolition of the law of serfdom constituted the chief care of the emperor Alexander II during the first years of his reign; all the course of the work in connection with the matter of the peasants testified to what firmness of will, immovable convictions and persistency were brought



A PEASANT COSTUME

[1861 A.D.]

by the emperor himself into this matter which he regarded as "sacred and most vital" for Russia.

The emperor spoke many times in public on the peasant question during the time when the measure was under discussion. The sovereign's speeches all displayed his firm, inflexible intention of bringing the work he had conceived to a successful termination; they had kept up the courage of those labouring for the peasantry reforms, attracted the wavering, kept opponents in check, and thus had an enormous influence both on public opinion and on the course of local and general work in the matter of peasant reforms.

The solution of the peasant question which was of such vital importance to Russia, presented many difficulties. Of course it would have been far easier to master the problem if the emperor had desired to solve it as it had already been solved in some kingdoms of western Europe, where the peasants had been at one time in the same position as the Russian serfs; there the peasants had only been declared individually free, the land remained the property of the landowner. But such was not the will of the emperor Alexander II. He desired that the interests of the landlords should be as far as possible guarded, and also that the emancipated peasants should be endowed with a fixed quantity of land; not converted into homeless, landless labourers.

Much labour had to be expended over this great problem before an issue was found for its successful solution. The chief executor of the emperor's preconceived plans in the matter of the peasant question was Adjutant-General J. T. Rostovtsev, in whom Alexander found an enlightened and boundlessly devoted assistant. In his turn Rostovtsev found a most zealous and talented collaborator in the person of N. A. Milutin, who warmly took up the cause of the emancipation of the peasants and who, after the death of Rostovtsev in 1860, became the chief director of all the work upon this question. The emperor attentively followed the course of the preparatory labours on the peasant reforms and without giving any serious heed to the wiles and opposition of the obstinate partisans of the law of serfdom, he firmly and unwaveringly directed these labours to the object marked out.

But of course it was impossible to accomplish so vast a work at once. Four years passed in the indispensable preparatory work. The thoughts of the sovereign were full of this administrative measure; his heart must have been frequently overwhelmed with anxieties and fears in regard to the successful solution of the peasant question. But the czar's will never weakened, his love for his people was never exhausted, and the great, holy work of the emancipation of the rural population of Russia from the bondage of serfdom, and the organisation of this population into a new form of existence was at last brought to a successful conclusion.

On the 19th of February, 1861, in the sixth year of the reign of the emperor Alexander II, all doubts were resolved. On that memorable day, which can never be forgotten in Russia, was accomplished the greatest event in the destinies of the Russian people: the emperor Alexander II, after having fervently prayed in solitude, signed the imperial manifesto for the abolition of the right of serfdom over the peasants living on the landlords' estates and for granting to these peasants the rights of a free agricultural status. Through the initiative and persistent efforts of their czar more than twenty-two million Russian peasants were liberated from the burden of serfdom, which had weighed on them and their forebears for nearly three centuries. They obtained their freedom and together with it the possibility of enjoying the fruits of their free labour, that is, of working for themselves, for their own profit and advantage and of governing themselves and their actions

according to their own will and discernment. Freedom was given to the Russian peasant by the emperor Alexander II himself; it was not given under him, but by him; he personally maintained the right of his people to freedom, personally broke the chains of serfdom; the initiative of this great work, its direction and its execution belong wholly to the emperor. We repeat, the laws of serfdom crumbled away at his royal word alone. Together with the imperial manifesto of the 19th of February, 1861, were promulgated in both capitals and afterwards throughout all Russia, laws for the organization of the liberated peasants into the social order, entitled "General regulations concerning the peasants issuing from the dependence of serfdom." Upon the basis of these laws and in particular by virtue of the reforms that followed, the liberated peasants were thus granted personal, social, and individual rights which placed them almost on a footing of equality with the other classes of the state.

### *Laws and Social Rights Granted to the Peasants*

In conferring upon the liberated peasants the individual rights, common to all citizens of the empire, the czar was solicitous for the establishment of laws actually conducive to the security and amelioration of their condition, indissolubly bound up as it had been with the use and enjoyment of the land. With this object in view it was established that the peasant should have a share in the perpetual enjoyment of the farm settlements and arable land, in accordance with the qualities of the land of each locality and with local requirements. But as the peasants had not means to give the landowner at once all the value due for their share of the land, and on the other hand as the prospect of receiving the sum allotted, in small proportions during a period of thirty to forty years, was not an alluring one for the landowner, the state took upon itself the office of intermediary between the landowners and the liberated peasants and paid the landowner in redeemable paper all the sums due to him and inscribed them as long term debts against the peasants, who were under the obligation of paying them off by yearly instalments.

Together with the reservation of individual and property rights to the emancipated peasants, a special peasant government was established for them. The peasants received the right of disposing independently of their agricultural and public work, and of choosing from amongst themselves the wisest and most reliable persons for conducting their affairs under the direction of peasant assemblies. And as in the life of the Russian peasants many ancient customs and rules are preserved which are esteemed and observed as sacred, being the product of the experience of their forefathers, the emperor granted them also their own district peasant tribunals which decide upon purely local questions and arbitrate according to the conscience and traditions of these communities.

The imperial manifesto was, as has already been said, signed on the 19th of February, 1861, but it was universally proclaimed only on the 5th of March of the same year; the news of the emancipation evoked an indescribable enthusiasm, a touching gratitude in the people towards their liberator throughout the whole length of the Russian land, beginning with the capital and finishing with the last poor little hamlet.<sup>a</sup>

Having thus summarised the results achieved by this remarkable manifesto, we give below a literal translation of the full text of the document itself.<sup>a</sup>



[1861 A.D.]

*Text of the Imperial Proclamation*

Manifesto of the Emancipation of the Serfs:

By the Grace of God  
 We, Alexander the Second,  
 Emperor and Autocrat  
 Of All the Russias,  
 King of Poland, Grand Duke of Finland,  
 et cætera, et cætera, et cætera,  
 Make known to all Our faithful subjects.

Having been called by God's Providence and the sacred law of succession to the throne of our forefathers and All the Russias, We have in accordance with this calling vowed to comprehend in Our royal love and care all Our faithful subjects of every calling and condition, from him who nobly wields the sword in the defence of the fatherland to the modest worker with the tools of the artisan, from him who serves in the highest service of the state to him who draws the furrow over the field with the plough.

Upon examining into the position of the various callings and conditions of the state structure, We have observed that the legislation of the state, while organising actively and well the higher and middle classes by determining their duties, rights and privileges, has not attained to an equal activity in regard to the people bound to the soil and called serfs because they, partly through ancient laws, partly from custom, are hereditarily settled under the authority of the landowners, upon whom at the same time the obligation lies to provide for their welfare. The rights of the landowners have been until now extensive and not defined with any exactitude by the law, the place of which has been taken instead by tradition, custom and the good will of the landowner. In the most favourable cases there have proceeded from this state of things kind, patriarchal relations of sincere and true guardianship and beneficence on the part of the landlord, and good tempered obedience on the part of the peasant. But with the increasing complexity of manners and customs, with the increasing diversity of relations, the lessening of direct intercourse between the landowners and peasants, the occasional falling of the landowner's rights into the hands of persons who only seek their own profit, these good relations have weakened, and a path has been opened for



A STREET VENDER

an arbitrariness which is burdensome to the peasants and unfavourable to their welfare, and to which the peasants have responded by insensibility to improvement in their own existence.

These matters were observed also by Our ever to be remembered predecessors and they took measures to effect a change for the better in the position of the peasants; but these measures were indecisive. In many cases they depended on the co-operation of the landowners; in others they concerned only particular localities and were instituted to meet special requirements or else as experiments. Thus the emperor Alexander I issued a regulation concerning the freedom of agriculturists, and Our deceased parent Nicholas I, who rests in God, a regulation as to the obligations of peasants. In the western governments inventory rules have defined the distribution of the peasants by the land and their obligations. But the regulations concerning the freedom of agriculturists and the obligations of peasants have been carried out only to a very limited extent.

Thus, We have become convinced that the amelioration of the condition of the serfs or people bound to the soil, is for us a testament of Our predecessors and a lot appointed to Us, through the course of circumstances, by the hand of Providence.

We have entered upon this work by an act showing Our confidence in the Russian nobility, Our confidence in their devotion to the throne, which has been proved by great trials, and in their readiness to make large sacrifices for the good of the country. We left the nobility, at its own request, responsible for the new legislation in behalf of the peasantry. It thus became the duty of the nobles to limit their rights over the peasants and to take up the difficulties of the reformation; and this involved a sacrifice of their own interests. But Our confidence has been justified. In the government committees, invested with the confidence of the nobility of each government, the nobility has voluntarily renounced its rights over the persons of the serfs. In these committees when the necessary information had been collected, propositions were drawn up for the new code regulating the conditions of persons bound to the soil, and their relations to the landowners.

These propositions, which, as might have been expected from the nature of the matter, were very various, have been compared, brought into harmony, arranged in a regular form, amended and completed in the higher commission appointed for this matter; and the new propositions thus constituted in the interests of landowners, peasants, and menials have been examined in the council of state.

Calling upon God to assist us, We have decided to bring this work to its accomplishment.

In virtue of the new regulations, the serfs will receive at the proper time the full rights of free villagers.

The landowners while preserving the rights of property over all the land belonging to them, will leave the peasants, in return for the dues established, in perpetual enjoyment of their farm settlements; Moreover, in order to ensure the security of their existence and the fulfilment of their obligations before the Government, the quantity of arable land and other necessaries allotted will be determined by regulation.

Thus profiting by a share of the land, the peasants are in return obliged to pay in to the landowner certain dues determined by the regulations. In this condition which is transitory the peasants are denominated as temporarily bound to work for the landlords.

Together with this they are given the right to buy their farm settlements,

[1861 A.D.]

and with the consent of the landlords they can acquire as property the arable land and other appendages, allotted for their perpetual enjoyment. By such acquisitions of certain determined quantities of land, the peasants are freed from any obligations to the landowners on the land purchased and enter into the position of free peasant-proprietors.

By special regulation in regard to menials or domestic servants, a transitory position is determined for them adapted to their occupations and requirements; after the expiration of a space of two years from the day of the issue of this regulation, they will receive full emancipation and exemption from taxes.

These are the chief principles by which are determined the future organisation of the peasants and the menials. They indicate in detail the rights granted to the peasants and menials and the duties laid upon them in respect to the government and the landlords.

Although these regulations, general, local and special as well as supplementary rules for certain particular localities, for the estates of small landed proprietors, and for peasants working in their landlords' manufactories are as far as possible adapted to the economic requirements, yet in order to preserve the usual order, We leave to the landlords the option of making a voluntary agreement with the peasants regarding land and dues.

As the new system, on account of the inevitable multitude of changes it involves, cannot be at once introduced, but requires time for adjustment, therefore in order to avoid disturbance in public and private affairs, the order existing until now shall be preserved for two years, when, after the completion of the necessary preparations, the new laws shall go into force.

For the lawful attainment of this, We have considered it well to command that:

1. In every government a government council on peasant affairs shall be opened, having the supreme direction of the affairs of the peasant societies installed on the landowners' territories.
2. Arbiters of peace are to be nominated in the districts, and district assemblies formed from them in order to investigate on the spot into any misunderstandings and disputes which may arise in the fulfilment of the regulations.
3. Besides this, communal councils are to be established on the landowners' estates, in order that, while leaving the village communities in their present formation, *Volost*<sup>1</sup> councils should be opened in the principal villages, uniting the smaller village communities under one *Volost* administration.
4. A charter shall be drawn up in each village specifying, on the basis of the local regulations, the quantity of land appointed for the perpetual enjoyment of the peasants, and the dues to be paid the landowner.
5. These charters shall be executive, and brought into operation within a space of two years from the day of the issue of this manifesto.
6. Until the expiration of this term, the peasants and menials are to remain



A WOMAN OF KAMCHATKA

[<sup>1</sup> A district containing several villages.]



in their previous condition of subjection to the landlords and indisputably to fulfil their former obligations.

7. The landowners are to see that order is maintained on their estates, and preserve the right of the dispensation of justice until the formation and opening of the *Volost* tribunals.

In contemplating the inevitable difficulties of the reform, We first of all lay Our trust in God's most gracious Providence, which protects Russia.

After this We rely on the valiant zeal of the Honourable body of the Nobility, to whom We cannot but testify the gratitude it has earned from Us and from the whole country for its disinterested action in the realisation of Our preconceived plans. Russia will not forget that it has voluntarily, incited only by respect for the dignity of man and Christian love for its neighbour, renounced serfdom and laid the foundation of the new agricultural future of the peasant. We believe unquestioningly that it will continue its good work by ensuring the orderly accomplishment of the new regulations, in the spirit of peace and benevolence; and that each landowner will complete within, the limits of his own estate, the great civic movement of the whole body, by organising the existence of the peasants settled on his lands, and that of his domestic servants, upon conditions advantageous to both sides, thus setting the rural population a good example, and encouraging it in the exact and conscientious fulfilment of the state regulations.

The examples that We have in view of the generous solicitude of the landlords for the welfare of the peasants, and the gratitude of the peasants for the beneficent solicitude of the landlords, confirm in Us the hope that mutual, spontaneous agreement will solve the greater number of difficulties; difficulties which are inevitable in the adaptation of general rules to the diversity of conditions existent in separate estates; and that by this means the transition from the old order to the new will be facilitated, and that for the future, mutual confidence, good understanding and unanimous striving for the common welfare will be consolidated.

For the more convenient accomplishment of those agreements between the landlords and peasants, by which the latter will acquire property, together with the farms and agricultural appendages, assistance will also be afforded by the government, on the basis of special rules, by the payment of loans, and the transfer of debts lying on the estates.

We rely upon the good sense of Our people. When the government's idea of the abolition of serfdom became spread amongst the peasants who were unprepared for it, it aroused partial misunderstandings. Some thought of liberty and forgot all about obligations. But the mass of the people did not waver in the conviction, that by natural reasoning, a society that freely enjoyed benefits must mutually minister to the welfare of society by the fulfilment of certain obligations, and that in accordance with the Christian law, *every soul must be subject unto the higher powers* (Rom. xiii, 1), must *render therefore to all their dues*, and especially to whom are due *tribute, custom, fear, honour* (v. 7); that the lawfully acquired rights of the landowners cannot be taken from them without fitting recompense for their voluntary concession; and that it would be opposed to all justice to avail oneself of the land belonging to the landlord without rendering certain obligations in return for it.

And now we hopefully expect that the serfs, in view of the new future opening for them, will understand and gratefully receive the great sacrifice made by the honourable nobility for the improvement of their condition.

They will understand, that having received a firmer foundation of property and greater freedom in the disposition of their agricultural labours, they have

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become bound, before society and themselves to complete the beneficence of the new law by a faithful, well-intentioned and diligent use of the rights conferred by it upon them. The most beneficent law cannot make people happy and prosperous, if they do not themselves labour to establish their felicity under the protection of the law. Competence and ease are not acquired and increased otherwise than by unremitting labour, a wise use of powers and means, strict thrift and an honest, God-fearing life.

The executors of this new system will see that it is accomplished in an orderly and tranquil manner, so that the attention of the agriculturists may not be drawn off from their necessary agricultural occupations. May they carefully cultivate the earth, and gather its fruits in order that afterwards from well-filled granaries the seed may be taken for sowing the land that is for their perpetual enjoyment, or that will be acquired by them as their own property.

Sign yourselves with the sign of the cross, orthodox people, and call upon God with Us for His blessing on your free labour, on your homes and on the public welfare.

Given in St. Petersburg, on the nineteenth day of February in the year one thousand eight hundred and sixty-one from the birth of Christ, and the seventh of Our reign.

ALEXANDER./

## EFFECTS OF THE NEW CONDITIONS

Let us now turn our attention to the epoch in which this law was published. As regards the effect of the new law on the mind of the population, it was soon evidenced, that the cultivated classes, burdened as they were with sacrifices for the work of reform, expressed their joy and satisfaction at this great acquisition, far more readily than the peasants, whom it immediately concerned. The disaffected portion of the Russian nobility was and remained decidedly in the minority, especially under the first impression of the great and decided step that had been taken, and no one ventured to manifest disapproval. Public opinion had declared itself too decidedly in favour of the government for any one to venture on opposition. On the contrary, the number was by no means unimportant, of those among the nobles and officials, who exceeded even the demands of the government, and who could not suppress their vexation, that their desire that the lands possessed by the community should be gratuitously transferred into their property, had been disregarded. Although these voices were not distinctly audible until a later period, still from the first they had influence, because they could reckon on the sympathies of the freed portion of the population. Moreover a great part of the nobles, at that time, looked for a rich compensation for the sacrifice they had made; they hoped to be able to excite public opinion in favour of the embryo demand for the restoration of a constitution, and by its assistance to reach the desired goal. Thus the disaffected feelings of the hitherto ruling classes were veiled, and maintained in one balance, by hopes of the future; at the most a small band of stubborn adherents to the system of Nicholas grumbled at the liberalism come into fashion, could not conceal their vexation at the loss of their revenues, and used every effort to recover their lost influence in the court circles.

The Russian peasant received the important tidings of the breaking of his fetters with profound silence; and some time elapsed before he had made up his mind what position to assume with regard to it. Partly, the habitual

want of freedom had become too inveterate, and was too deeply rooted, to be at once cast aside; and partly, the attention of the people was too eagerly directed to the still pending agricultural arrangements with the proprietors, for the publication of the emancipation edict to make at once any evident impression. The effect of the emancipation act was felt most strongly and evidently in the two capitals of the empire; here there were thousands of serfs living (as merchants, second-hand dealers, artisans, drivers, servants, etc.) who had been obliged to purchase with high obroc-payments the right of seeking their gain, and were always in danger of being recalled by the will of their masters and constrained to return to the old position of dependence. To these, the advantages of the newly established arrangement of things were manifest, and the fruits of it could at once be enjoyed; the emancipation law limited the duration of their dependence to merely two years, and fixed an unimportant obroc-sum for this transition period. From these town-serfs, therefore, proceeded the first exhibitions of thankfulness and joy, the first ovations to the "liberating czar." But here also the weak, womanish character of the Slavonic race, did not belie itself; there was no idea of passionate outbursts. The St. Petersburg descriptions of those momentous February days tell most characteristically of intoxicated bands of bearded cab-drivers and artisans, who reeled through the streets, humming as they went "Volyushka, Volyushka," (literally, "beloved freedom"). Truly effective, however, was the shout of rejoicing, with which the masses of the people received the emperor when he quitted the winter-palace, on the 19th of February, in order to be present at the reading of the emancipation-ukase in the Kazan church; and subsequently, the addresses sent to the emperor by the drivers and lower class of citizens in the two capitals, who had been freed from serfdom.

Although this law had been published throughout the whole empire on the same day in all churches, and the peace-mediators (*mirovuye-Posredniki*) had at once proceeded to regulate the agricultural questions; the first more important manifestations in the country did not occur until two months later, in the end of April, 1861. These were manifestations of dissatisfaction and disappointment, which appeared east of the Volga, and had the districts of Kazan and Nijni-Novgorod for their principal centre. In all probability they were revolutionary agitators from the higher and more cultivated classes who first scattered the seeds of discontent. The people were persuaded that the true emancipation-ukase of the czar had been craftily intercepted by the nobles and officials; that the will of the czar was to consign to the peasants, without compensation or hindrance, the land they had hitherto cultivated. These doctrines fell on a soil all the more ready, as the services yielded to the masters were in the eyes of the people of a purely personal nature, and were no equivalents for the lands conceded to the communities. "We belong to the proprietors, but the common land belongs to us," was the creed of the peasant; hence the feeling was, that the abolition of personal servitude was synonymous with the establishment of free property. In the Kazan district, matters soon reached a pitch of open refusal to obedience; and when the magistrates interfered, they amounted to attempts at resistance. Popular discontent assumed at once a genuinely national stamp; it found a leader in a new Pugatchev, the peasant Anton Petrov, who personated the czar (who had fled from St. Petersburg, pursued by the boyars); and within a short time he had gathered round him 10,000 men. After vain attempts to bring back the infatuated men by gentle means to obedience, military power was obliged to be employed. Some battalions, led by Count Apraxin, marched



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through the insurgent country, and took the ringleader prisoner; and after Petrov had fallen into their hands, and had been immediately shot, order was again so completely established, that in May nothing further was thought of this episode. The peasants returned to their obedience, and everywhere the arrangements of the peace-arbitrator were complied with. Yet the idea of the perfect freedom hoped for, was not yet wholly forgotten; the Volga districts remained for some time longer the scene of revolutionary experiments, which excited the people with the hope of a "new freedom" still to be expected and held fast to the old idea of a gratuitous division of the soil. Under the title *Zemliā i Volgā* (Land and Freedom), there appeared from time to time secretly published pamphlets, which endeavoured to give the agrarian question a revolutionary colouring, and which were numerous circulated, in the eastern districts especially. These manifestations of a propaganda, secretly inflaming the public mind, we shall meet with again in other places, and under other forms.

In general, the completion of the arrangement between peasant and lord was unexpectedly quick, and favourable in its course. Little as it can be asserted, that the Russian peasant subsequently made a just use of his new-born liberty, or that agricultural progress exhibited any favourable influence from it; still it is evident, that the peasant population manifested in the arrangement good-will, a just insight into the state of affairs, and great tractableness; and that this matter was justly conceived and handled by those entrusted with it. The execution of the law of the 19th of February, 1861, was not placed in the hands of ordinary magistrates, but was consigned to officials, who were selected *ad hoc* from the number of landed proprietors, and were furnished with extensive authority. It was a happy idea, and one of decided and lasting importance, that these peace mediators, or arbitrators, as they were called, were not reckoned in the service of the state, and were not fettered to the orders of the bureaucratic hierarchy. For the first time in Russia, men of the most different calling, and social position, stood side by side with equal right to join hands for the execution of a patriotic work, which promised neither title, rank, nor advancement. Generals in command, and mere lieutenants, councillors of the state, and simple titular councillors, once the choice of their fellow-citizens and class-equals fell on them, demanded leave of absence from service, in order to undertake, according to the law, the demarcation between the estates of the nobles and the lands of the community within definite districts, and to induce both parties to agree; it was only where this result could not be attained, that the strict orders of the regulations were enforced, and the co-operation of higher authority was appealed to.<sup>b</sup>

#### ABOLITION OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT (1863 A.D.)

The first reform that followed on the abolition of the law of serfdom, which had been an unsurmountable obstacle to any improvement and reform in the political organisation of the state, was the abolition of the cruel and shameful corporal punishments which were formerly allotted for crimes.

In the beginning of the reign of Alexander II attention had been directed to the fact that corporal punishment as a punitive measure did not accomplish the reformation amendment of the criminal, but only dishonoured the personality of the man, lowered his feeling of honour and destroyed in him the sense of his manhood.

The emperor began by diminishing the number of offences amenable to

corporal punishment; the new position which had been given to the peasants by the abolition of serfdom, soon led to the almost total suppression of corporal punishment for them.

On the 29th of April, 1863, an imperial ukase followed, by which corporal punishment was entirely abolished as a punitive measure, determined by the sentence of the public tribunals. By this memorable ukase, which will ever remain a glorious monument in the legislation of Russia, were abolished by the will of the czar-liberator, the last traces of slavery in Russia; the running of the gauntlet, the spur, the lash, the cat, the branding of the human body, all passed away into eternal oblivion; the punishment of the rod, to which persons belonging to the class not exempt from corporal punishment had hitherto been subjected, was replaced for them by arrest or confinement in prison, and was preserved only in two or three cases and then in the most moderate measure.

#### REFORMS IN THE COURTS OF JUSTICE

Almost simultaneously with the establishment of the provincial and territorial institutions, the emperor Alexander II recognised it as indispensable for the welfare of his people, to reform the existing judiciary system and law proceedings, to render all his subjects equal before the legal authorities, and to afford them all the same protection of the tribunals and the law.

Ancient Russian tribunals, as is well known, were far from being distinguished either by their uprightness or the rapidity of their procedure. It is hardly necessary to remind readers that justice was administered in secret, behind closed doors, besides which not merely outsiders were refused admittance to the courts, but even the persons implicated and interested in the affair. Such chancery secrecy resulted in great lack of truth and justice in the tribunals. Taking advantage of the secrecy of the proceedings, the judges allowed themselves to commit every possible abuse: they extorted money from the suitors, behaved unfairly and against their own consciences, distorted facts and afterwards decided the affair in accordance with their own views and pleasure, that is, as was most advantageous and convenient to them. Another great defect in the ancient Russian tribunals was due to the fact that the entire procedure was carried on in them exclusively on paper, upon the foundation of notes alone; verbal explanations were not permitted in the tribunals. This complicated form of written procedure led to litigations of incredible length; the most trivial lawsuit sometimes dragged on for years, requiring enormous expenditure and often in the end ruining the litigants. In a like manner, the accused, not infrequently innocent people, and only suspected of some crime or offence, had to languish for years in prison, awaiting the termination of their affairs before the courts.

The emperor Alexander II was well aware of all these defects and imperfections in the ancient courts of justice, and as a true friend of humanity could not remain indifferent to such an order of things. He therefore desired that there should be established in Russia a system of justice that would be "speedy, righteous, merciful, and equitable." The reign of truth and mercy in the tribunals could be attained only by a complete reorganisation of the ancient tribunals, in consequence of which, by command of the czar, new legal statutes were composed, and received the imperial confirmation towards the end of November, 1864.

The enormous superiority of the new tribunals over the old ones was at once evident. The new courts, carrying on their business in public, punished

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crimes without respect of persons; all Russian subjects were recognised as equal before the law and the courts. The appearance of justices of the peace had a particular importance for the people newly liberated from the dependence of serfdom; they afforded the hitherto poor and almost defenceless lower classes a possibility of protecting themselves against every kind of offence, violence and oppression, and of claiming their legal rights almost without trouble or expense.

## THE POLISH INSURRECTION OF 1863

In spite of his ardent reformatory activity in the interior of the empire, the emperor Alexander II did not neglect foreign policy. Although, at the conclusion of the Crimean war, the emperor had recognised the necessity of a prolonged peace for Russia, and therefore continually endeavoured to avoid becoming entangled in the affairs of nations, nevertheless in all cases where the interests of Russia were affected, he firmly and calmly declared his requirements, and by means of peaceful persuasions maintained the honour and interests of his country.

The suppression of the Polish rebellion of 1863 is particularly remarkable in this respect: The amelioration of conditions in Poland had occupied Alexander II immediately after his accession to the throne, and he had at once eliminated inequalities of legislation between his Russian and Polish subjects: all that was granted to Russia was granted also to the kingdom of Poland.

All these favours aroused a feeling of gratitude in the more moderate and wiser portion of the population. But they were not received in the same spirit by those Poles who dreamed of the re-establishment of the ancient Poland with its former frontiers, and of giving entire self-government to the kingdom by means of its separation from Russia, and the formation of a separate state. These persons looked with hostility upon all the actions of the Russian government and, with the design of entering into an open conflict with

Russia, secretly began to incite the people of Poland to revolt.

In January, 1863, a fresh insurrection burst forth in Poland. But the revolutionaries were unsuccessful, and the Russian troops defeated them at every point, taking 300 prisoners and a considerable number of guns. Being desirous of again trying mild measures, and in the hope of at last bringing the Poles to reason, the emperor declared that pardon would be granted to all who laid down their arms by the 13th of May. But the term allotted expired without good sense having triumphed. Then Count Birg was appointed viceroy in Warsaw, and Adjutant-General Muraviev, governor-general of the northwest border. Under the direction of these two men, the conflict took a more decided character and the suppression of the rebellion was made effective.



A MESTCHER COSTUME



Meanwhile, when the insurrection was already almost put down by the Russian troops, three great western European powers—England, France and Austria—expressed their sympathy with the Polish movement and at the same time gave the Poles hopes of assistance. Having concerted together, and being besides supported by Turkey, these powers simultaneously sent the Russian government threatening exactions for concessions to Poland. Naturally, these pretensions on the part of the powers were offensive to Russian national honour. A feeling of profound indignation and wounded dignity took possession of the Russian nation, and readiness was expressed to sacrifice everything to the defence of the fatherland. Prince A. M. Gortchakov showed himself a worthy champion of Alexander II in the resistance shown to the European powers.

Meeting with such decided opposition to their interference, the powers became convinced that the entire Russian nation stood behind the czar, and they were obliged to withdraw their exactions. The final suppression of the Polish insurrection became thenceforth a matter of internal policy. Complete tranquillity was restored in Poland in the year 1864.

Following on these events a series of measures was undertaken tending to the gradual union of the kingdom of Poland with the Russian empire. The most beneficial of all these measures was the ukase of the 2nd of March, 1864, for the reorganisation of the peasantry in the kingdom of Poland.

Strictly speaking, the law of serfdom had been abolished in Poland as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, but the freedom the peasants had then received was no better than servitude; they were individually free, but had no share in the possession of land. By virtue of the ukase of the 2nd of March, 1864, the land of which the peasants had the use became their property, and the compensation to the landowners was defrayed by the state.

Upon this important measure followed a series of other measures, contributing to the development of the general welfare of Poland; and finally in 1869 it was declared by the imperial will that measures should be taken for the complete union of the kingdom of Poland with the other parts of the empire, by which the definitive pacification of Poland was completed.

#### THE SUBJECTION OF THE CAUCASUS (1864 A.D.)

The subjection of the Caucasus took place in the year after the suppression of the Polish insurrection.

Of all the nations that populated the Caucasus, only the Georgians and Armenians had succeeded, some centuries before the birth of Christ, in establishing independent kingdoms. But being surrounded by powerful and warlike mountaineers and bounded on the south by the dominions of Persia and Turkey, the kingdoms of Georgia and Armenia had gradually fallen into decay, and therefore Georgia itself turned to Russia, as professing the same religion, with the request to be received into the empire. Yielding to the urgent request of the unfortunate country, the emperor Paul I, who was then reigning in Russia, annexed Georgia in 1800 A.D.

After the annexation of Georgia to Russia, the mountain people made their appearance from the north and south amongst Russian possessions, but by continuing their previous plundering and incursions into Russian territory, they hindered relations between the Caucasus and the empire. Thus, in order to secure the tranquil possession of Georgia nothing remained but to

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subject to Russian domination those wild tribes of the Mohammedan faith which lived in the mountains separating Russia from the Caucasus. Therefore during the first years of the nineteenth century there commenced an almost continuously persistent and truly heroic struggle of the Russian army against the Caucasian tribes, which was prolonged for more than sixty years until that definitive subjection of the Caucasus which took place during the reign of Alexander II.

### *The Taking of Schamyl*

The struggle against the Caucasian mountaineers was rendered peculiarly difficult at that time by the appearance of Schamyl as their leader, uniting as he did all the qualities of a brave and experienced soldier to his spiritual calling. The possessor of an iron will and an astonishing skill in ruling over the wild mountain tribes, Schamyl converted them into an organ of war which he directed against the Russians. Added to this he fortified the almost impregnable mountains, constructed excellent fortresses and established powder-works, foundries, etc. Seeing all this the Russians began to carry on a regular warfare against the mountaineers. The commander-in-chief in the Caucasus, who also exercised the functions of Caucasian viceroy, was Adjutant-general Prince Bariatski, with whose nomination the war took a decisive turn.

Prince Bariatski directed his efforts first of all against the eastern group of the Caucasian mountains. The general aggressive movement of the Russian army, which was accomplished after mature reflection, soon placed Schamyl in an embarrassing position which put an end to the fascination he had exercised over the mountaineers, who had hitherto been blindly devoted to him. One tribe after another fell away from Schamyl and declared its submission to Russia. Defeated and pressed on every side, Schamyl fled to Daghestan, the extreme eastern province of the Caucasus, on the shores of the Caspian Sea and took refuge with his family and a little band of adherents in the village of Gunib situated on the heights of an inaccessible mountain, where he decided to defend himself to the last. Meanwhile, the Russian troops, which had indefatigably pursued Schamyl, finally besieged him at Gunib and surrounded the village itself with a thick chain of soldiers. Upon the proposal of the commander-in-chief to put an end to the useless defence, and to spare the village the horrors of an assault, Schamyl, hitherto deemed invincible, saw his hopeless position, left his refuge, and surrendered himself as prisoner on the 6th of September, 1859, throwing himself upon the mercy of the czar. The taking of Schamyl produced an impression of astonishment on all the mountain tribes: the whole Caucasus trembled with desire for peace. After the taking of Gunib, and the captivity of Schamyl the whole eastern portion of the Caucasus submitted to the Russian domination.

After this all the efforts of the Russian troops were immediately directed towards the western Caucasus, adjoining the eastern shore of the Black Sea; but the definitive subjection of this part of the Caucasus required yet four years of uninterrupted and unrelaxed conflicts. Meanwhile, at the beginning of the year 1863, Field-marshal Prince Bariatski was on account of impaired health replaced by a new Caucasian viceroy in the person of the emperor's youngest brother, the grand duke Michael Nikolaivitch, after which the aggressive movements of the Russian troops proceeded with such rapidity, that the entire conquest of the western portion of the Caucasus was accomplished in the spring of the year 1864. Thus ended the costly and bloody Caucasian war, and since then all the Caucasus has belonged to Russia.

## WARS WITH KHOKAND AND BOKHARA

Following on the subjection of the Caucasus, Russia began to settle accounts with three small neighbouring Mohammedan khanates, those of Khokand, Bokhara, and Khiva. These khanates were situated amidst the arid, sandy steppes of central Asia and were populated by half savage robber tribes who continually made audacious incursions upon Russian central Asian frontier possessions, attacking Russian mercantile caravans, and plundering the merchants, either killing or carrying them into captivity and selling them as slaves. All this greatly hindered Russian trade with Asia, it destroyed the tranquillity of Russian frontier possessions and therefore had long been a source of preoccupation and disquietude on the part of the Russian government.

Therefore, in 1864, two small detachments of Russian troops, under the command of Colonel Tchernaiiev and General Verevkin, were despatched from two sides for the punishment of the hostile tribes and the preservation of the Russian eastern frontier from their plundering incursions. Colonel Tchernaiiev, by storm, took the Khokand fortress of Auliet, while General Verevkin seized the Khokand town of Turkestan. In the following year, 1865, General Tchernaiiev took by assault one of the most important towns of the Khokand khanate — Tashkend — after which the khan of Khokand ceased hostilities and declared his submission to the Russian czar.

Then, however, one of the khanates neighbouring upon that of Khokand — Bokhara — began to disturb peace on the Russian frontiers and it became necessary to quiet it. A detachment of Russian troops under the command of General Romanovski was sent against Bokhara.

The war with Bokhara was as successful as that with Khokand. In the year 1866 the chief forces of the emir of Bokhara were utterly defeated and the Russians took some towns and fortresses. But it was only after the Russian troops had taken the ancient, famous, and wealthy town of Samarkand, that the emir finally submitted, being bound by a special treaty to allow the Russian merchants entire liberty to trade in the Bokharan possessions, and to abolish slavery throughout his dominions. This greatly raised the prestige of the czar in Asia.

The newly conquered territories in central Asia (in Khokand and Bokhara) were joined to the Russian possessions, and from them was formed (in 1867) the special government general of Turkestan, with Tashkend for its chief town.<sup>d</sup>

## A GLANCE AT THE PAST HISTORY OF BOKHARA

It may be of interest to recall in a few words the past history of the somewhat important territory thus acquired by Russia. We have already become acquainted with Bokhara in ancient history under the name of Sogdiana; afterwards in Persian history it appears as Transoxania, or by the Arabic name of Mawarra an-nahr. The country was conquered by the Arabs in the early part of the eighth century, and towards the end of the ninth it was conquered by Ismail, the founder of the Samanids dynasty, who became emir of Bokhara and Kharezmi (Khiva) in 893. Towards the end of the eleventh century the celebrated Seljuk sultan Malik Shah conquered the country beyond the Oxus, and in 1216 it came for a short time under the power of the Kharezmian prince, Muhammed Kutbuddin. In about 1220 the land was subdued by Jenghiz Khan and incorporated into the khanate of



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Jagatai. Bokhara remained under the successors of Jenghiz until the whole country was overrun and conquered by Timur (Tamerlane), who selected Samarkand as his capital and raised it to a high stage of prosperity. The descendants of Timur ruled in the country until about the year 1500, when they were overthrown by the Usbeg Tatars under Muhammed Shaibani, a descendant of Shaiban, the fifth son of Juji. Muhammed ruled over Transoxania, Ferghana, Khwarizm and Hissar, but in 1510 he was defeated and killed by Shah Ismail, the founder of the Persian dynasty of Sufi.

The Shaibani dynasty ruled for nearly a century when it was replaced by the dynasty of Astrakhan, a house related to the Shaibanis by marriage. Under two rulers of this family—Inan Kuli Khan and Subhankuli Khan—Bokhara recovered somewhat of its former glory, and Subhankuli ruled over Khiva also for a time. In 1740 Bokhara had been so reduced under weak rulers that it offered its submission to Nadir Shah of Persia, and after his death the Astrakhan dynasty was overthrown by the house of Mangit (1784), which is the dynasty at present ruling in the country. Under the first sovereign of this family, Mir Maasum, Bokhara enjoyed a certain degree of prosperity, although the ruler was a cruel tyrant and a bigoted ascetic. He led a curious life of pretended piety, living in filth and misery although surrounded by wealth. He conquered and almost exterminated the city of Merv and invaded and devastated Khorassan. At his death in 1802 he was succeeded by his son Saïd, a weak ruler who lived until 1826. He was succeeded by one of the worst tyrants who ever occupied a throne—the emir Nasrullah Bahuder; he was cruel, lustful, treacherous, hypocritical, ungrateful to friends, whom he rewarded for service by putting them to death—in short, he appears to have had all the vices it is possible for a human being to have. It was during his reign that England and Russia tried to acquire influence in Bokhara. Two English envoys, Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, were executed in 1842 after several years' imprisonment in a loathsome dungeon. The Russian envoy did indeed come away alive from the court of the tyrant but he succeeded in gaining no concessions for his country. Nasrullah died in 1860, his last act being to have his wife killed and her head brought to his bedside. He was succeeded by his son Mozaffer-eddin, during whose reign the Russian conquest took place.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE CONQUEST OF KHIVA (1873 A.D.)

After Khokand and Bokhara came the turn of Khiva. In the early spring of 1873 three detachments of Russian troops marched on Khiva from different sides under the command of the governor-general of Turkestan, Adjutant-general V. P. von Kaufmann. Incredible privations and difficulties had to be borne and overcome by the Russian troops during this march across the steppes. First they endured frosts and snowstorms, and then under the sun's burning rays they courageously accomplished in the space of one month a thousand versts march across a desert, and finally reached the borders of the khanate of Khiva in the beginning of May. In three weeks' time the entire khanate was subjugated; some of the towns were taken after a combat, others surrendered without resistance, and on the 10th of June the capital of the khanate—Khiva—fell. The Russian troops entered the town in triumph, covered with fresh glory.

After the taking of Khiva by the Russians, the khan of Khiva fled to the steppes, but he afterwards returned and declared his submission, in consequence of which he was reinstated on his throne. But in spite of this a por-

tion of the Khivan possessions fell to Russia. Besides this, the khan had to acknowledge a partial dependence upon Russia, he was obliged to reimburse her by a considerable sum of money for the expenses incurred in the campaign, and to allow the Russian merchants to trade freely in his dominions; he was pledged to discountenance plundering, to set at liberty all prisoners and slaves, and to abolish throughout his possessions forever all traffic in slaves. Thus, through the medium of the Czar Liberator, freedom was brought into central Asia—the land of slavery and of arbitrary rule. The complete pacification of a great country was accomplished.

#### THE RUSSO-TURKISH WAR (1877-1878 A.D.)

Besides the wars already enumerated, Russia had, under the reign of the Czar Liberator, to carry on another war, which entailed innumerable sacrifices.

In the summer of 1875, the Slavonians of the two Turkish dependencies of Bosnia and Herzegovina, inhabited by Servian races, rose against their oppressors, the Turks, and decided to take up arms in defence of their faith, freedom, and property, and the honour of their wives and daughters, and to endeavour to obtain equal rights with the Mussulman subjects of Turkey.

In the summer of 1876 the neighbouring Slavonian principalities of Montenegro and Servia came to the aid of the Bosnians and Herzegovinians, and declared war against Turkey. The Montenegrins were under the leadership of their Prince Nicholas, and the Servian troops under the command of the Russian General Tcherniaiev, the hero of Tashkend, who volunteered his services to the Slavonians.

Although Montenegro, which was small in the number of its sons, but mighty by their bravery and their love of freedom, had more than once defeated the Turkish army, Servia with her few troops could not stand against the Turkish troops, which definitively overcame the Servian forces and were about to invade the frontiers of Servia. Russia, however, did not allow this invasion to take place, and in October, 1876, the emperor Alexander II required from the Turkish sultan the immediate cessation of further hostilities against the Servians, and in order to support these demands he ordered that a portion of the Russian army should be placed on a war footing. The decisive action of the czar towards the Turkish government at once stopped the invasion of the Turkish hordes into Servia, and a two months' armistice was concluded between Servia and Turkey.

But in spite of this, the Turks continued their cruelties amongst the Christians of the Balkans; defenceless Bulgaria in particular suffered from the fury of the Turks. They traversed the country with fire and sword, striving to stifle the movement taking place there by the savage slaughter of thousands of the inhabitants, without distinction of sex or age.

For a long while Russia endeavoured to avert the situation, without having recourse to arms, in order—as Alexander II expressed it—“to avoid shedding the precious blood of the sons of Russia.” But all his efforts were unsuccessful, all means of arbitration were exhausted and also the patience of that most peace-loving of monarchs, the emperor Alexander II. He found himself obliged to declare war against Turkey and to advance his troops towards the Turkish frontier. On the 19th of April, 1877, the emperor joined his army at Kishinev, where it had been commanded to assemble, and on the 24th of the same month, after public prayers, he informed the troops of their approaching entry upon the frontiers of Turkey. Thus commenced the Russo-

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Turkish war, which was carried on simultaneously in two parts of the world—in Europe and in Asia.

The commander-in-chief of the Russian troops upon the Asiatic theatre of the war was the grand-duke Michael Nikolaivitch, governor of the Caucasus. A few days after the issue of the manifesto declaring war, the Russian troops had occupied the Turkish fortress of Bajazet without a struggle (April 30th), and had proceeded to besiege the first class fortress of Kars, justly regarded as one of the chief points of support of the Turkish army in Asia Minor, after which at the beginning of May they took by assault another sufficiently important Turkish fortress—that of Ardahan.

As to the Danubian army, of which the grand-duke Nicholas Nikolaivitch was appointed commander-in-chief, on the very day of the declaration of war it entered into the principality of Roumania, which was subject to Turkey, and directed its march towards the Danube. At the passage of the Danube, the problem consisted in diverting the attention of the Turks from the spot where the chief forces of the Russian army were to cross. This was accomplished with entire success; complete secrecy was maintained, and during the night between the 26th and 27th of June the Russian troops crossed the Danube with the assistance of pontoons and rafts, at a point where the Turks least expected it, namely from Zinnitzi (between the fortresses of Rustchuk and Nikopol) to Sistova; the Russian losses in this great undertaking did not exceed 1,000 men fallen from the ranks. Having thus crossed the Danube and disembarked on the enemy's shores, the Russian troops, without giving their adversaries time to recover, began to move into the heart of Bulgaria, and took town after town and fortress after fortress from the Turks.

But in Asia as well as in Europe the first brilliant successes of the Russians were followed by some serious reverses, which like the victories were first manifested upon the Asiatic seat of the war. The most serious reverse of the Russians in Asia was the unsuccessful attack (June 25th) upon the Turkish stronghold near Zeven, after which the Russian troops were obliged to raise for a time even the siege of Kars, and to retire within their own frontiers. But the temporary reverses of the Russian troops on the European theatre of the war were far more important. The most serious reverse during the entire period of the Eastern war was the attack of the Russian troops upon Plevna. Plevna was an insignificant Bulgarian town. The Russian troops hoped easily to overcome it, and on the 20th of July a small detachment of them attacked Plevna. But it turned out that the Turks had already managed to concentrate considerable forces within the little town, under the command of the best of their leaders, the gifted and resolute Osman-Pasha, added to which the most talented European engineers had constructed round Plevna, in the space of a few days, a network of fortifications, rendering Plevna an impregnable position. In consequence of this the first attack of the Russian troops on Plevna was repulsed by the Turks; the losses of the Russians amounted to three thousand killed.

Ten days later (on the 30th of July) the Russian troops made a second attack against Plevna. But this time again the attack resulted in a like defeat; the enemy's forces, which far exceeded those of the Russians, repelled all the assaults of the Russian troops, added to which this second attack on Plevna cost the Russians 7,500 men. Following upon this, with the arrival of fresh reinforcements for the army encamped before Plevna, a third and final heroic effort was made to take this fortified position by storm. The chief part in the attack was taken by the brave young general Skobelev and his detachment. But in spite of his brilliant action, in spite of the heroism



and self-sacrifice displayed by his soldiers, this assault also was unsuccessful. On the 12th of September, Skobelev repulsed five furious attacks by the whole mass of Turks, but not receiving assistance, he was obliged to retreat. This last reverse cost the Russians as many as 3,000 killed and nearly 10,000 wounded. But following on these reverses came a rapidly successive series of victories of the Russian troops over the Turkish, both in Asia and in Europe.

The crowning success of the Russian troops in Asia was the fall on the 18th of November of the terrible stronghold of Kars, which was taken by General Loris-Melikov, after a heroic assault by night. All Europe recognised the taking of Kars as one of the greatest and most difficult of military exploits ever achieved. At the same time, on the European theatre of the war, on the southern slope of the Balkans a great Turkish body of troops was concentrated under the command of the talented leader Suleiman Pasha, with the object of retaking at any cost the Shipka pass, which was occupied by a small Russian detachment. During the space of seven days (from the 21st to the 28th of August) the Turks endeavoured to wrest from the Russians the Shipka pass, and a series of furious attacks was made with this object. On the first two days a handful of heroes, who defended the heights of Shipka, repulsed all the desperate efforts of Suleiman Pasha's entire army! The echo of the incessant artillery fire became one endless roll of thunder. The Russian ranks dwindled and were exhausted from wounds and fatigue. It was at that time that the Russian gunners, under the command of General Radetzki came to their assistance, and by the 24th of August fresh reinforcements arrived. The Turks' insane attacks still continued during the 25th, 26th and 27th, but on the evening of the 27th of August all was suddenly quiet, the Turks had become convinced that they could not overcome the steadfastness and bravery of the Russian troops defending the Shipka pass, and had retired.

Meanwhile, after the third attempt on Plevna, it was decided not to renew any more such dearly bought attacks, but to limit operations to encircling the Turkish positions in order to cut off communication between Plevna and the surrounding places, and thus to starve the Turks into surrender.

At the end of October General Gurko's division, amongst which were the guards, took Gorni Dubinak, Telisch and a series of other Turkish strongholds, situated to the southwest of Plevna and protecting the Sophia road, along which reinforcements and stores had hitherto been brought into Plevna, and thus to cut off entirely all communications between that town and the outside. After less than a month's time all the provisions that the Turks had in Plevna were definitively exhausted. On the morning of the 10th of December, Osman Pasha, being desirous of penetrating through the Russian lines to the Danube, made a violent attempt to get out of Plevna. He cut his way through, but after some hours of desperate fighting — during which he was wounded in the leg — he was thrown back and compelled to surrender, with all his army to the number of more than 40,000 men. This heated action cost the Russians 600 men killed, and double that amount wounded.

Taking deeply to heart the successes of his valiant army and the holy work for which it was fighting, the emperor Alexander II had at the end of May, 1877, at the very commencement, that is, of the war, arrived in Bulgaria, and in spite of the weak state of his health had remained all the while amongst the acting army of the Danube, sharing all reverses and privations of military life on the march.

"I go as a brother of mercy," said the czar when he set off for the active

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army. And actually, leaving to others all the martial glory of victory over the enemy, the emperor concentrated his attention upon the sick and wounded soldiers to whom he showed himself not a brother, but a very father of mercy. Zealously visiting the sick and wounded soldiers in the hospitals and ambulances, the emperor showed them heartfelt sympathy, comforted, encouraged, and sustained the sufferers, listened to their tales with fatherly love, and with his own hand rewarded those who had distinguished themselves by their services in battle.

The wounded and their families were the object of the emperor Alexander's unwearied care. He was rejoiced when the provisions sent out for the use of the wounded by the empress Marie Alexandrovna arrived from St. Petersburg. Alexander unfailingly distributed them himself, carefully inquiring of each soldier what he wanted, what he liked, and strove to satisfy each sufferer: to the musicians he gave accordions, to the readers books, to the smokers tobacco pouches, to the non-smokers tea, dainties, etc. Both soldiers and officers were as pleased as children at receiving presents from the hand of the royal "brother of mercy," and listening to his cordial, gracious words. The soldiers' love for the emperor, their joy and rapture at seeing him acted like living water on the wounded; everyone that could move strove to rise, to stand up, to take courage; they stretched out their hands to the czar, kissed his raiment and blessed his name. It was only after the fall of Plevna when the war clearly inclined to the advantage of the Russians, and further success was entirely secured that the emperor, bidding farewell to his troops, left the active army and in the beginning of December, 1877, returned to Russia.

Immediately after the taking of Plevna it was decided that, without losing time, the Balkans should be crossed. Meanwhile a severe winter had already set in and the Turks did not even admit the possibility of the Russian troops crossing the Balkans at such a time. But here again all the valour of the Russian army was displayed. To take a whole army across the Balkans in winter was a work of the very greatest difficulty and danger; but to cross the Trievna pass had never yet been attempted by any army in the world. Strictly speaking, the chief part of the Russian army crossed the Balkans at two other points, but it was part of the Russian strategy to carry an insignificant portion of the troops across by the Trievna pass in order that the attention of the Turks should be diverted from the chief army, and the passage of the latter thus be facilitated. The accomplishment of this terribly difficult and almost impossible feat was entrusted to General Kartzov's division. On the night between the 3rd and 4th of January the division moved on its road. After having reached by incredible efforts the very summit of the pass, where a short time was spent, on the 7th of January General Kartzov's division stormed the Turkish redoubt, forced their way into it and drove out the Turks. After this the Russians had to descend to the so-called Valley of Roses on the southern slope of the Balkans, which was even much steeper than the northern. As soon as the Russians had come down from Trievna, the Turks abandoned their positions at the feet of the Great Balkans, and General Kartzov's division entered into communication on one side with General Gurko's division, and on the other with the Shipka division of General Radetzki. -

After descending the Balkans to the Valley of Roses, General Radetzki, together with General Skobelev, who had come to his assistance after the fall of Plevna, attacked on the 9th of January an army of 40,000 Turks at Kezanlik, who after a stubborn resistance were defeated and taken prisoners. After having devastated and scattered the Turkish army of Shipka and

accomplished the feat unexampled in history of the passage of the Balkans, the Russian army continued its victorious advance; Adrianople, the second capital of the Turkish empire, was taken without a struggle and the troops drew near to Constantinople itself. Then, on the 3rd of March, 1878, at a little place called San Stefano, at ten versts from Constantinople, Turkey signed the conditions of peace offered her by Russia.

Meanwhile the great European powers required that three conditions of peace should be submitted to their consideration, and thus the treaty of San Stefano showed itself to be only a preliminary one; the great European powers ratified it only after considerable changes. These altered conditions of peace were signed in 1878 by the plenipotentiaries of all the great powers at the Congress of Berlin; after which on the 8th of February, 1879, a final treaty of peace, based on these same conditions, was signed at Constantinople between Russia and Turkey.

The emperor Alexander might certainly with full right have insisted on the ratification of the treaty of peace of San Stefano without any alterations; but then Russia would have incurred a fresh war with Europe, while the emperor deeply felt the necessity of peace. It was time to give the Russian people rest after they had made such sacrifices in the struggle for their Slavonian brethren! Pitying his people, the emperor decided — however painful it might be to him — not to insist on all that had been gained at the price of Russian blood and confirmed by the treaty of San Stefano with Turkey, but consented in Berlin to great concessions which did not, however, in any way interfere with the liberation of the Christian population of Turkey.

By the treaties of San Stefano and Berlin, that part of Bessarabia was returned to Russia which, by the Peace of Paris in 1856, had been ceded to her by Turkey after the Crimean campaign. Thanks to this, Russia again reached the mouths of the river Danube; in Asia she acquired a portion of the Turkish possessions, with the port of Batum and the fortress of Kars, which guaranteed her security and future development. Finally, in compensating for the military expenditure incurred by Russia, Turkey was bound to pay her an indemnity of 300 million rubles.

Thus terminated the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878 — that decisive struggle for the liberation of the Slavonians of the Balkan peninsula, and although in consequence of the interference of Europe Russia was far from attaining what she had a right to expect after the enormous sacrifices she had made, and the glorious victories she had gained, nevertheless the great and sacred object of the war was attained; on the memorable day of the emancipation of the peasants in Russia, also the Slavonian nations of the Balkan peninsula were liberated, by the help of Russia and her great monarch, from the Turkish yoke which had oppressed them for ages. To the emperor Alexander II, who gave freedom to many millions of his own subjects, was allotted also the glorious rôle of liberator of the Balkan Christians, by whom he was a second time named the Czar Liberator!

#### SPREAD OF EDUCATION AND CIVILISATION

The new order of things established in Russia, thanks to the great reforms of Emperor Alexander II, called forth a particular want of educated, enlightened men. They were necessary to the wise interpretation and execution of the luminous ideas of the czar-liberator.

Recognising that the spread of education amongst the people is an indispensable condition of its prosperity, the emperor Alexander II, who had



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become convinced by a personal survey of Russia, that one of the chief obstacles to her progress lay in the ignorance of the people, wished to give to his subjects the means for the highest degree of enlightenment. This solicitude was expressed in a radical reform of all the educational establishments of the empire, beginning with the university and finishing with the national schools. Properly speaking, it may be asserted that the primary national schools and village schools were created during the reign of Alexander II, for until his reign the primary education of the people was in a sad condition, and amongst them an almost total ignorance prevailed.

His legislation for the education of the masses should justly be numbered amongst the most important works of the Czar Liberator. But many were the other reforms accomplished by him that also had a great and beneficent signification for the Russian people. During the reign of the emperor Alexander II the country which had until then but few means of intercommunication, became covered with a network of railways. In conjunction with the extraordinarily rapid development of railway communication, the postal service was perfected, the telegraph made its appearance, while commerce and trade acquired wide development. Finally, essential changes and improvements were introduced into the financial administration of the empire; the police was reorganised and certain modifications were granted to the press, in consequence of which there was a powerful awakening in the intellectual life of the people.

#### THE DEATH OF ALEXANDER II

In studying the wars which took place during the reign of Alexander II, it is impossible not to remark that they were all entered upon and carried on, not under the influence of ambition, not with the thirst for conquest, but exclusively out of a feeling of humanity, in order to preserve those living on the frontiers of the Russian empire from the plundering incursions of half savage Asiatic tribes (as was the case in the subjection of the Caucasus, of Khokand, Bokhara, and Khiva), or for the deliverance of the oppressed coreligionists of Russia (as, for example, the deliverance of the Slavonians of the Balkans).

The emperor Alexander II was actively solicitous for the welfare of his subjects during the twenty-six years of his glorious reign, never losing sight of the exaltation of the country and the consolidation of the prosperity of the nation. But in spite of the indefatigable labours and fatherly care of the emperor Alexander II, in spite of the enormous services he rendered to the country, of his boundless goodness of heart, his great clemency and unusual humanity — amongst the Russian people were to be found those who had



A WINTER COSTUME

more than once tried by violence to shake the existing state and social organisation of Russia and who did not stop at any crime for the attainment of their ends. Their boundless audacity finally reached the last limits, and they dared more than once to make attempts on the life of the Czar-Liberator.

On the 2nd of March, 1880, the 25th year of the reign of the emperor Alexander II was accomplished, and this memorable day was celebrated with heartfelt enthusiasm in both capitals and throughout the whole Russian Empire. But amongst the millions of joyous Russian hearts, for one man alone in Russia the festivity was not a festivity. That man was the czar himself, the creator of the happiness of many millions of Russians and the cause of the rejoicings. The emperor did not doubt the sincere affection of the people towards him; he knew and felt that Russia loved her czar with all her soul; but at the same time he knew and felt, that in spite of all the glory of his reign, in spite of the great measures he had accomplished, the Russian land bore a handful of malcontents, whose designs it was beyond the power of anyone to arrest.

The fatal 13th of March, 1881, came. About one o'clock in the afternoon the emperor drove in a carriage from the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg, accompanied by his usual escort, to the Michael riding school to assist at a grand military parade, appointed to take place that day. Coming out of the riding school at the end of the parade, at about a quarter to three, and learning that the grand duke Michael Nikolaivitch, who was present at the parade intended to visit the grand duchess Catherine Mikhailovna at the Mikhailovski palace, the emperor proposed to his brother that they should go together. After spending about half an hour at the Mikhailovski palace the emperor came out alone, without the grand duke and told the coachman to "drive home by the same way." The carriage set off along the Catherine canal, in the direction of the Theatre bridge.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, at a distance of about 350 feet from the corner of the Engineer street, the emperor's carriage as it drove along the side of the canal, past the garden of the Mikhailovski palace, came alongside a young man at the foot-path of the canal; he afterwards turned out to be the citizen Nicholas Ivanovitch Rissakov. When he came on a line with the imperial carriage, Rissakov turned his face towards it, and before the escort could notice anything, quickly threw beneath the feet of the horses harnessed to the carriage something white like snow, which afterwards turned out to be an explosive instrument wrapped up in a handkerchief. At the same instant a deafening crash, like a salvo of artillery, resounded; two Cossacks riding behind the czar's equipage fell from their horses wounded, and a fourteen year old peasant boy, mortally wounded, lay groaning on the pavement; a thick cloud of snow and splinters filled the air. The emperor's carriage appeared much damaged by the explosion, all the four windows and the little glass behind were broken, the frame of the door was splintered at the side and back, the side of the carriage was broken and the bottom seriously injured. When he had thrown the explosive instrument under the carriage, Rissakov began to run off in the direction of the Nevski Prospect, but at a few yards from the spot where the explosion had taken place, he slipped, fell, and was seized by some soldiers who came up. The emperor himself was entirely uninjured. He ordered the coachman to stop the horses, opened the left door, got out of the carriage, and went to the spot where Rissakov was already surrounded by a crowd of people.

Then, when the emperor, desiring to examine the spot where the explosion had taken place, had left Rissakov, and had made a few steps along the path-

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way of the canal, another man — who turned out to be a Pole named Grinevetzki — waiting till the emperor was at a distance of two yards from him, raised his arms and threw something on the footpath at the very feet of the emperor. At the same moment, not more than four or five minutes after the first explosion, another deafening explosion was heard, after which a mass of smoke, snow and scraps of clothing enveloped everything for some moments. When the column of smoke dispersed, to the stricken gaze of the spectators a truly awful sight was presented: about twenty men more or less severely wounded by the two explosions lay on the pavement, and amongst them was the emperor. Leaning his back against the railing of the canal, without his cap or riding cloak, half sitting on the footpath, was the monarch; he was covered with blood and breathing with difficulty; the bare legs of the august martyr were both broken, the blood flowed copiously from them, and his face was covered with blood. The cap and cloak that had fallen from the emperor's head and shoulders, and of which there remained but blood-stained and burnt fragments, lay beside him.

At the sight of such an unexpected, such an incredible disaster, not only the uninjured, but also the sufferers from the explosion rushed to the emperor's help. Raising the wounded emperor, who was already losing consciousness, the persons who surrounded him, with the grand duke Michael, who had arrived on the spot, carried him to the sledge of Colonel Dvorginski, who had been following the emperor's equipage. Leaning over the emperor's shoulder, the grand duke inquired if he heard, to which the emperor replied, "I hear," and then in answer to the question of how he felt the emperor said: "Quicker . . . to the palace," and then as if answering the proposal to take him to the nearest house to get help, the emperor said, "Take me to the palace to die . . . there." These were the last words of the dying monarch, heard by an eye-witness of the awful crime of the 13th of March. After this the emperor was placed in Colonel Dvorginzi's sledge and transported to the Winter Palace. When the palace was reached the emperor was already unconscious, and at 25 minutes of 4 o'clock Alexander II was no more.

The emperor Alexander II was great not only as the czar of a nation of many millions, but by a life devoted to the welfare of his subjects; he was great as the incarnation of goodness, love and clemency. The autocratic monarch of one of the vastest empires of the world, this czar was governed in all his actions by the dictates of his loving heart. Showing himself a great example of self-sacrificing human love, he lived only in order to exalt the land of Russia, to alleviate the necessities and consolidate the welfare of his people.<sup>d</sup>





## CHAPTER XIII

### REACTION, EXPANSION, AND THE WAR WITH JAPAN

[1881-1904 A.D.]

IN the history of Russia the period extending from 1882 to 1902 was much less eventful than the thirty years immediately preceding. The reign of Alexander II had been a time of important administrative reforms and of great economic, social, and intellectual changes in the life of the nation. Serfage had been abolished, the emancipated peasantry had been made communal proprietors of the soil, a democratic system of rural and municipal self-government for local affairs had been introduced, the tribunals of all degrees had been radically reorganised, means had been taken for developing more energetically the vast natural resources of the country, public instruction had received an unprecedented impetus, a considerable amount of liberty had been accorded to the press, a liberal spirit had been suddenly evoked and had spread rapidly among all sections of the educated classes, a new imaginative and critical literature dealing largely with economic, philosophical, and social questions had sprung into existence, and for a time the young generation fondly imagined that Russia, awakening from her traditional lethargy, was about to overtake, and soon to surpass, on the paths of national progress, the more advanced nations of western Europe.

These sanguine expectations were not fully realised. The economic and moral condition of the peasantry was not much improved, and in many districts there were signs of positive impoverishment and demoralisation. Local self-government, after a short period of feverish and not always well-directed activity, showed symptoms of organic exhaustion. The reformed tribunals, though incomparably better than their predecessors, did not give universal satisfaction. In the imperial administration the corruption and long-established abuses which had momentarily vanished began to reappear. Industrial enterprises did not always succeed. Education produced many unforeseen and undesirable practical results. The liberty of the press not unfrequently degenerated into license. The liberal spirit, which had at first confined itself to demanding feasible reforms, soon soared into the region of socialistic dreaming and revolutionary projects.

In short, it became only too evident that there was no royal road to

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national prosperity, and that Russia, like other nations, must be content to advance slowly and laboriously along the rough path of painful experience. In these circumstances sanguine enthusiasm naturally gave way to despondency, and the reforming zeal of the government was replaced by tendencies of a decidedly reactionary kind. Already in the last years of the reign of Alexander II, these tendencies had found expression in ukases and ministerial circulars, and zealous liberalism was more and more discountenanced in the official world. Partly from a feeling of despondency, and partly from a conviction that the country required rest in order to judge the practical results of the reforms already accomplished, the czar refrained from initiating any new legislation of an important kind, and the government gave it to be understood that the period of radical reforms was closed.

In the younger ranks of the educated classes this state of things had produced much dissatisfaction, which soon found expression in revolutionary agitation. At first the agitation was of an academic character, and was dealt with by the press censure, but it gradually took the form of secret associations, and the police had to interfere. There were no great, well-organised secret societies, but there were many small groups, composed chiefly of male and female students of the universities and technical schools, which worked independently for a common purpose. That purpose was the overthrow of the existing régime and the reorganisation of society on collectivist principles. Finding that the walls of autocracy could not be overturned by blasts of revolutionary trumpets, the young enthusiasts determined to seek the support of the masses, or, as they termed it, "to go in among the people" (*idti v narod*). Under the guise of doctors, midwives, teachers, governesses, factory hands, or common labourers, they sought to make proselytes among the peasantry and the workmen in the industrial centres by revolutionary pamphlets and oral explanations.

For a time the propaganda had very little success, because the uneducated peasants and factory workers could not easily understand the phraseology and principles of scientific socialism; but when the propagandists descended to a lower platform and spread rumours that the czar had given all the land to the peasants, and that the proprietors were preventing his benevolent intentions from being carried into effect, there was a serious danger of agrarian disturbances, and energetic measures were adopted by the authorities. Wholesale arrests were made by the police, and many of the accused were imprisoned or exiled to distant provinces, some by the regular judicial procedure, and others by so-called "administrative procedure," without trial. The activity of the police and the sufferings of the victims naturally produced intense excitement and bitterness among those who escaped, and a secret body calling itself the executive committee announced in its clandestinely printed organs that those who distinguished themselves by endeavouring to suppress the propaganda would be removed. A number of officials had been condemned to death by this secret terrorist tribunal, and in some cases its sentences were carried out. As these terrorist measures had quite the opposite of the desired effect, repeated attempts had been made on the life of the emperor. At last, on the 13th of March, 1881, the carefully-laid plans of the conspirators, [as related in the last chapter], were successful.

#### THE REACTIONARY POLICY UNDER ALEXANDER III

Finding repressive police measures insufficient to suppress the revolutionary movement, Alexander II had entertained the idea of giving a certain

satisfaction to moderate liberal opinion without restricting his autocratic power. With this object in view he had appointed General Loris-Melikov, who was credited with liberal views, minister of the interior, and on the morning of his death he had signed a ukase creating several commissions, composed of high official personages and eminent private individuals, who should prepare reforms in various branches of the administration.

His son and successor Alexander III (1881-94), who had never shown much sympathy with liberalism in any form, entered frankly on a reactionary policy, which was pursued consistently during the whole of his reign. He could not, of course, undo the great reforms of his predecessor, but he amended them in such a way as to counteract what he considered the exaggerations of liberalism. Local self-government in the village communes, the rural districts, and the towns was carefully restricted, and placed to a greater extent under the control of the regular officials.



ALEXANDER III

(1845-1894)

The reformers of the previous reign had endeavoured to make the emancipated peasantry administratively and economically independent of the landed proprietors; the conservatives of this later era, proceeding on the assumption that the peasants did not know how to make a proper use of the liberty prematurely conferred upon them, endeavoured to re-establish the influence of the landed proprietors by appointing from amongst them "land-chiefs," who were to exercise over the peasants of their district a certain amount of patriarchal jurisdiction. The reformers of the previous reign had sought to make the new local administration (*zemstvo*) a system of genuine

rural self-government and a basis for future parliamentary institutions; these later conservatives transformed it into a mere branch of the ordinary state administration, and took precautions against its ever assuming a political character. Even municipal institutions, which had never shown much vitality, were subjected to similar restrictions. In short, the various forms of local self-government, which were intended to raise the nation gradually to the higher political level of western Europe, were condemned as unsuited to the national character and traditions, and as productive of disorder and demoralisation. They were accordingly replaced in great measure by the old autocratic methods of administration, and much of the administrative corruption which had been cured, or at least repressed, by the reform enthusiasm again flourished luxuriantly.

In a small but influential section of the educated classes there was a conviction that the revolutionary tendencies, which culminated in nihilism and anarchism, proceeded from the adoption of cosmopolitan rather than national principles in all spheres of educational and administrative activity, and that the best remedy for the evils from which the country was suffering was to be found in a return to the three great principles of nationality, orthodoxy, and autocracy. This doctrine, which had been invented by the Slavophiles



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of a previous generation, was early instilled into the mind of Alexander III by Pobiedonostsev, who was one of his teachers, and later his most trusted adviser, and its influence can be traced in all the more important acts of the government during that monarch's reign. His determination to maintain autocracy was officially proclaimed a few days after his accession. Nationality and eastern orthodoxy, which are so closely connected as to be almost blended together in the Russian mind, received not less attention.

#### THE RUSSIFICATION OF THE PROVINCES

Even in European Russia the regions near the frontier contain a great variety of nationalities, languages, and religions. In Finland the population is composed of Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking Protestants; the Baltic provinces are inhabited by German-speaking, Lett-speaking, and Esth-speaking Lutherans; the inhabitants of the southwestern provinces are chiefly Polish-speaking Roman Catholics and Yiddish-speaking Jews; in the Crimea and on the middle Volga there are a considerable number of Tatar-speaking Mohammedans; and in the Caucasus there is a conglomeration of races and languages such as is to be found on no other portion of the earth's surface. Until recent times these various nationalities were allowed to retain unmolested the language, religion, and peculiar local administration of their ancestors, but when the new nationality doctrine came into fashion attempts were made to spread among them the language, religion, and administrative institutions of the dominant race. In the reigns of Nicholas I and Alexander II these attempts were merely occasional and intermittent; under Alexander III they were made systematically and with very little consideration for the feelings, wishes, and interests of the people concerned. The local institutions were assimilated to those of the purely Russian provinces; the use of the Russian language was made obligatory in the administration, in the tribunals, and to some extent in the schools; the spread of eastern orthodoxy was encouraged by the authorities, whilst the other confessions were placed under severe restrictions; foreigners were prohibited from possessing landed property, and in some provinces administrative measures were taken for making the land pass into the hands of orthodox Russians. In this process some of the local officials displayed probably an amount of zeal beyond the intentions of the government, but any attempt to oppose the movement was rigorously punished.

Of all the various races the Jews were the most severely treated. The great majority of them had long been confined to the western and southwestern provinces. In the rest of the country they had not been allowed to reside in the villages, because their habits of keeping vodka-shops and lending money at usurious interest were found to demoralise the peasantry, and even in the towns their number and occupations had been restricted by the authorities. But, partly from the usual laxity of the administration and partly from the readiness of the Jews to conciliate the needy officials, the rules had been by no means strictly applied. As soon as this fact became known to Alexander III he ordered the rules to be strictly carried out, without considering what an enormous amount of hardship and suffering such an order entailed. He also caused new rules to be enacted by which his Jewish subjects were heavily handicapped in education and professional advancement. In short, complete russification of all non-Russian populations and institutions was the chief aim of the government in home affairs.

## FOREIGN POLICY; THE FRENCH ALLIANCE

In the foreign policy of the empire Alexander III likewise introduced considerable changes. During his father's reign its main objects were: in the west, the maintenance of the alliance with Germany; in south-eastern Europe, the recovery of what had been lost by the Crimean war, the gradual weakening of the sultan's authority, and the increase of Russian influence among the minor slav nationalities; in Asia, the gradual but cautious expansion of Russian domination. In the reign of Alexander III the first of these objects was abandoned. Already, before his accession, the bonds of friendship which united Russia to Germany had been weakened by the action of Bismarck in giving to the cabinet of St. Petersburg at the Berlin congress less diplomatic support than was expected, and by the Austro-German treaty of alliance (October, 1879), concluded avowedly for the purpose of opposing Russian aggression; but the old relations were partly re-established by secret negotiations in 1880, by a meeting of the young czar and the old emperor at Dantzic in 1881, and by the meeting of the three emperors at Skiernewice in 1884, by which the Three Emperors' League was reconstituted for a term of three years.

Gradually, however, a great change took place in the czar's views with regard to the German alliance. He suspected Bismarck of harbouring hostile designs against Russia, and he came to recognise that the permanent weakening of France was not in accordance with Russian political interests. He determined, therefore, to oppose any further disturbance of the balance of power in favour of Germany, and when the treaty of Skiernewice expired in 1887, he declined to renew it. From that time Russia gravitated slowly towards an alliance with France, and sought to create a counterpoise against the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy. The czar was reluctant to bind himself by a formal treaty, because the French government did not offer the requisite guarantees of stability, and because he feared that it might be induced, by the prospects of Russian support, to assume an aggressive attitude towards Germany. He recognised, however, that in the event of a great European war the two nations would in all probability be found fighting on the same side, and that if they made no preparations for concerted military action they would be placed at a grave disadvantage in comparison with their opponents of the Triple Alliance, who were believed to have already worked out an elaborate plan of campaign. In view of this contingency the Russian and French military authorities studied the military questions in common, and the result of their labours was the preparation of a military convention, which was finally ratified in 1894. During this period the relations between the two governments and the two countries became much more cordial. In the summer of 1891 the visit to Kronstad of a French squadron under Admiral Gervais was made the occasion for an enthusiastic demonstration in favour of a Franco-Russian alliance; and two years later (October, 1893) a still more enthusiastic reception was given to the Russian admiral Avelan and his officers when they visited Toulon and Paris. But it was not till after the death of Alexander III that the word "alliance" was used publicly by official personages. In 1895 the term was first publicly employed by Ribot, then president of the council, in the chamber of deputies, but the expressions he used were so vague that they did not entirely remove the prevailing doubts as to the existence of a formal treaty. Two years later (August, 1897), during the official visit of President Félix Faure to St. Petersburg, a little more

[1881 A.D.]

light was thrown on the subject. In the complimentary speeches delivered by the president of the French Republic and the czar, France and Russia were referred to as allies, and the term *nations alliées* was afterwards repeatedly used on occasions of a similar kind.

In south-eastern Europe Alexander III adopted an attitude of reserve and expectancy. He greatly increased and strengthened his Black Sea fleet, so as to be ready for any emergency that might arise, and in June, 1886, contrary to the declaration made in the Treaty of Berlin (Article 59), he ordered Batum to be transformed into a fortified naval port, but in the Balkan Peninsula he persistently refrained, under a good deal of provocation, from any intervention that might lead to a European war. The Bulgarian government, first under Prince Alexander and afterwards under the direction of Stambolov, pursued systematically an anti-Russian policy, but the cabinet of St. Petersburg confined itself officially to breaking off diplomatic relations and making diplomatic protests, and unofficially to giving tacit encouragement to revolutionary agitation. In Asia, during the reign of Alexander III, the expansion of Russian domination made considerable progress.<sup>b</sup>

#### THE CONQUEST OF THE TEKKE-TURCOMANS (1877-1881 A.D.)

Transcaspia is the official name given to the territory east of the Caspian which was annexed by Russia in 1881 shortly after the accession of Alexander III. The country was inhabited by the Turcomans—a branch of the Turkish race—who have been identified with the old Parthians. They were a brave but wild and lawless people, bands of whom would frequently sweep down upon a peaceful village, kill the men, and carry off the women and children to be sold as slaves in Bokhara and Khiva. Whole villages were sometimes wiped out in this way. The marauding raids of the Turcomans were a constant menace to the northern frontier of Persia and we frequently find the Persians engaged in war with them. The great Nadir Shah was himself a Turcoman. In 1861 the Persians had made a final attack on the Turcomans or Tekkes, as they are commonly called, and defeated them.

The Russian conquest of the Central Asian khanates, however, materially altered the situation of these nomadic robbers; they could no longer sell slaves in Bokhara, as the Russian laws forbade slavery, neither could they carry on their depredations in lands guarded by the Russians, hence they turned to Persia and offered her their allegiance in return for her support against these civilised intruders. But they were now a serious obstacle in the way of these same Russians. Caravans from Bokhara and the East, to reach the Caspian, had to cross the Turcoman desert or else make a long detour to the north, and these plundering tribes seriously interfered with commerce.

In 1877 General Lomakin was sent against the Tekkes, but the Russo-Turkish war intervened before he had accomplished anything. In 1878 Lomakin attacked Dengil Tepe, was defeated by the Tekkes, and forced to retreat. The natives were greatly encouraged by this victory, their raids increased, and they tried to stir up the Bokharans and Khivans to revolt. The Russians now undertook more vigorous measures. General Skobelev was put in charge of the campaign, a portable railway was started from the shores of the Caspian towards the Amu Daria, a large force of artillery was conveyed to the front, and a water distillery—of the greatest service in this waterless region—was established at Krasnovodsk. Colonel Kuropatkin,



who had been on Skobelev's staff in the Russo-Turkish war, came by forced marches to assist his former chief.

The Turcomans were entrenched in three camps—Yangi Kala, Dangil Teppe, and Geok Teppe. The Russians began the main attack on January 1st, 1881, charging first upon Yangi Kala. The Tekkes fought with the greatest bravery, but the Russian artillery forced them to evacuate. The Turcoman sorties were made usually a little after sunset and the attacks were exceedingly fierce. The Tekkes had their wives and children in camp with them, huddled in their felt tents, and their sufferings under the continual artillery fire must have been terrible. Finally upon January 24th, after three weeks of fighting, the Russians were successful, the Tekkes were routed



CATHEDRAL OF THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL

with great loss to both Russians and Turcomans. There are different estimates given as the total number killed.

Beverdidge's figures, given below, cannot be far from right. He uses this siege to illustrate the Russian method of conquest. Their method, he says, "is to wage war while war exists and to employ the methods of peace only when war is over. Skobelev at Geok Teppe refused to accept the surrender of the heroic Tekkes who had terrorised Central Asia for centuries, and he slaughtered more than twenty thousand men, women and children in twenty days. It seemed quite terrible and was as terrible as it seemed; but it is hard to see that it is much worse to destroy 20,000 men, women, and children and secure peace for all time than it is to kill that number during twenty years and in the process increase the irritation, the disorder, and the feud. For from the red day of Geok Teppe to this hour, order, law, safety to travellers, security of commerce and all other things which help to make

[1885-1894 A.D.]

up civilisation have existed in Central Asia, as firmly guarded as they are in the United States. War is bad under any circumstances, but if it must be it should be thorough, that it may be brief and not fruitless."

After calling attention to the efficacy of this method in Manchuria during the Boxer movement, the author continues: "It is worth the attention of all men that when Russia has once inflicted her punishment there has seldom been any recurrence of insurrection. Where Russian law and order and system have been established they have remained, upheld not by the bayonets of the soldiers who established them, but by the hands of the very people among whom and against whose resistance they were planted. Among all the defects of Russian civilisation, its virtues are striking and elemental, and one of the chief of them is stability."

The country of the Turcomans thus conquered was annexed to the Russian Empire, the final annexation of Merv taking place in 1884.<sup>a</sup> Alexander III then allowed the military authorities to push forward in the direction of Afghanistan, until in March, 1885, an engagement took place between Russian and Afghan forces at Penjdeh. Thereupon the British government, which had been for some time carrying on negotiations with the cabinet of St. Petersburg for a delimitation of the Russo-Afghan frontier, intervened energetically and prepared for war; but a compromise was effected, and after more than two years of negotiation a delimitation convention was signed at St. Petersburg on July 20th, 1887. The forward movement of Russia was thus stopped in the direction of Herat, but it continued with great activity farther east in the region of the Pamir, until another Anglo-Russian convention was signed in 1895. During the whole reign of Alexander III the increase of territory in central Asia is calculated by Russian authorities at 429,895 square kilometres.

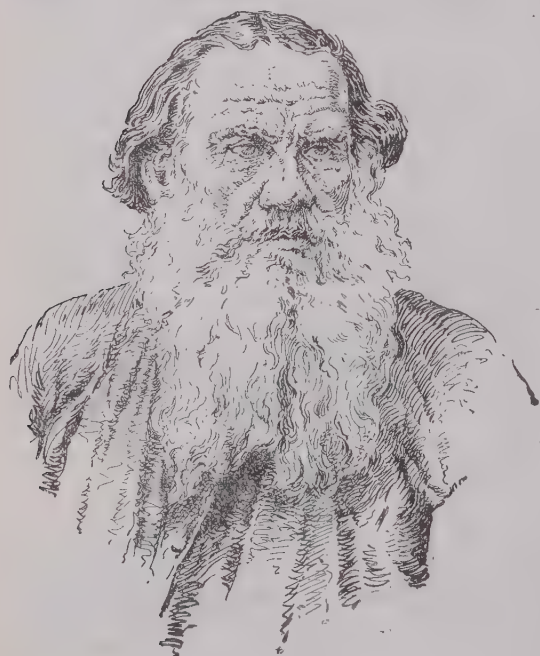
#### ACCESSION OF NICHOLAS II (1894 A.D.)

On November 1st, 1894, Alexander III died, and was succeeded by his son, Nicholas II, who, partly from similarity of character and partly from veneration for his father's memory, continued the existing lines of policy in home and foreign affairs. The expectation entertained in many quarters that great legislative changes would at once be made in a liberal sense was not realised. When an influential deputation from the province of Tver, which had long enjoyed a reputation for liberalism, ventured to hint in a loyal address that the time had come for changes in the existing autocratic régime they received a reply which showed that the emperor had no intention of making any such changes. Private suggestions in the same sense, offered directly and respectfully, were no better received and no important changes were made in the legislation of the preceding reign. But a great alteration took place noiselessly in the manner of carrying out the laws and ministerial circulars.

Though resembling his father in the main points of his character, the young czar was of a more humane disposition, and he was much less of a doctrinaire. With his father's aspiration of making holy Russia a homogeneous empire he thoroughly sympathised in principle, but he disliked the systematic persecution of Jews, heretics, and schismatics to which it gave rise, and he let it be understood, without any formal order or proclamation, that the severe measures hitherto employed would not meet with his approval. The officials were not slow to take the hint, and their undue zeal at once disappeared. Nicholas II showed, however, that his father's policy of russi-

[1895-1896 A.D.]

fication was neither to be reversed nor to be abandoned. When an influential deputation was sent from Finland to St. Petersburg to represent to him respectfully that the officials were infringing the local rights and privileges solemnly accorded at the time of the annexation, it was refused an audience, and the leaders of the movement were informed indirectly that local interests must be subordinated to the general welfare of the empire. In accordance with this declaration, the policy of russification in Finland was steadily maintained and caused much disappointment, not only to the Finlanders, but also to the other nationalities who desired the preservation of their ancient rights.



COUNT LYEFF TOLSTOI

(1828—)

In foreign affairs Nicholas II likewise continued the policy of his predecessor, with certain modifications suggested by the change of circumstances. He strengthened the cordial understanding with France by a formal agreement, the terms of which were not divulged, but he never encouraged the French government in any aggressive designs, and he maintained friendly relations with Germany. In the Balkan Peninsula a slight change of attitude took place. Alexander III, indignant at what he considered the ingratitude of the Slav nationalities, remained coldly aloof, as far as possible, from all intervention in their affairs. About three months after his death, De Giers, who thoroughly approved of this attitude, died (January 26th, 1895), and his suc-

cessor, Prince Lobanov, minister of foreign affairs from March 19th, 1895, to August 30th, 1896, endeavoured to recover what he considered Russia's legitimate influence in the Slav world.

For this purpose Russian diplomacy became more active in south-eastern Europe. The result was perceived first in Montenegro and Servia, and then in Bulgaria. Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria had long been anxious to legalise his position by a reconciliation, and as soon as he got rid of Stambulov he made advances to the Russian government. They were well received, and a reconciliation was effected on certain conditions, the first of which was that Prince Ferdinand's eldest son and heir should become a member of the Eastern orthodox church. As another means of opposing Western influence in south-eastern Europe, Prince Lobanov inclined to the policy of protecting rather than weakening the Ottoman empire. When the British government seemed disposed to use coercive measures for the protection of the Armenians,



[1897 A.D.]

he gave it clearly to be understood that any such proceeding would be opposed by Russia.

After Prince Lobanov's death and the appointment of Count Muraviev as his successor in January, 1897, this tendency of Russian policy became less marked. In April, 1897, it is true, when the Greeks provoked a war with Turkey, they received no support from St. Petersburg, but at the close of the war the czar showed himself more friendly to them; and afterwards, when it proved extremely difficult to find a suitable person as governor-general of Crete he recommended the appointment of his cousin, Prince George of Greece — a selection which was pretty sure to accelerate the union of the island with the Hellenic kingdom. How far the recommendation was due to personal feeling, as opposed to political considerations, it is impossible to say.

In Asia, after the accession of Nicholas II the expansion of Russia, following the line of least resistance and stimulated by the construction of the Siberian railway, was effected at the expense of China. As a necessary basis for a strong foreign policy the army was systematically strengthened. At one moment the schemes for military reorganisation involved such an enormous expenditure that the czar conceived the idea of an agreement among the great powers to arrest the increase of national armaments. The idea was communicated to the powers somewhat abruptly by Count Muraviev, Prince Lobanov's successor in the direction of foreign affairs, and an international conference was held at the Hague to discuss the subject; but it had very little practical result, and certainly did not attain the primary object in view. [Its final act is given in the appendix to this volume.]

A sketch of the recent history of Russia, however brief, would be incomplete without some mention of the remarkable industrial progress made during the period under consideration. Protected by high tariffs and fostered by the introduction of foreign capital, Russian manufacturing industry made enormous strides. By way of illustration a few figures may be cited. In the space of ten years (1887-1897) the number of workers employed in the various branches of industrial enterprise rose from 1,318,048 to 2,098,262. The consumption of cotton for spinning purposes, which was only 117 million kilograms in 1886, was 257 millions in 1898, and the number of spindles, according to the weekly journal *Russia* of August 2nd, 1902, was estimated at that date at 6,970,000. Thanks chiefly to this growth of the cotton industry, the town of Łódz, which was little more than a big village in 1875, has now a population of over 300,000. The iron, steel, and petroleum industries have likewise made enormous progress. Between 1892 and 1900 the estimated value of metallic articles manufactured in the country rose from 142 millions to 276 millions of rubles. As is generally the case in such circumstances, protection led to temporary over-production, which brought about a financial and economic crisis; but if we may accept certain figures given by Henry Norman,<sup>d</sup> the crisis could not have been very severe, for he states that "no fewer than 580 companies declared a dividend during the first nine months of 1901, their total nominal capital being £105,000,000, and the average dividend no less than 10.1 per cent." Much of this progress is due to the intelligence and energy of M. Witte, minister of finance.<sup>b</sup>

#### KUROPATKIN ON THE RUSSIAN POLICY OF EXPANSION

In connection with the Russian advance in Asia with its climax in the war with Japan, it may be interesting to notice an address made by General Kuropatkin to a party of English tourists at Askabad in November, 1897.

Its protestations of peaceful intent will come as a surprise to many who have seen in the Russian advance only an insatiable land-hunger. General Kuropatkin, whose fortune it was seven years later to command the Russian army in the war with Japan, said in part, as quoted in a recent work: "The policy of our government in Central Asia, since the accession of the

late czar, has been eminently one of peace; and recourse has never been had to arms until every other means of gaining a given object had failed. The principles which govern the policy of Russia are very simple. They are the maintenance of peace, of order, and of prosperity in all classes of the population. The means employed to compass these ends are equally free from complexity. Those who fill responsible positions are expressly informed by our government that the assumption of sovereignty over alien nationalities must not be attempted without very serious deliberation, inasmuch as such become, on annexation, Russian subjects, children of the czar, and invested with every privilege enjoyed by citizens of the empire. His majesty has enjoined on his representatives, as their first duty, a fatherly care of his Asiatic subjects. In order to prevent the possibility of internal discord, we have disarmed the natives, and no pains have been spared to induce them to adopt peaceful pursuits. The fruits of this action are



A RUSSIAN CHILD

already visible. A solitary traveller can now cross central Asia, from the Caspian to the Siberian frontier, without incurring the smallest risk of attack.

"We may boast with perfect truth that the thirty-five years during which central Asia has enjoyed the blessings of a firm and civilised rule, have been years of sustained progress, of daily-increasing strength in bonds of attachment and goodwill, which unite these subject peoples to the inhabitants of other Russian provinces. Between 1885 and 1888 we established a stable and logical frontier with the aid of Great Britain; and in the twelve years which have since elapsed there have been no expeditions throughout its length of 600 miles bordering on Persia, and 400 on Afghanistan. The latter country contains much inflammable material, but we have taken every means in our power to ensure that the internal disorders of that state shall

[1900-1902 A.D.]

not react on our frontier. So scrupulous is our regard for the *status quo*, that whole tribes have cast themselves on our protection in vain.

"Piruzkuhis, Khezaris, and Jamshidis have crossed our borders in troops of as many as 1,000 families, but we have always repatriated such refugees. There have been similar cases in our dealings with Persian subjects. Turkestan proper has been free from war since the occupation of Farghana — twenty-one years ago. The Bokhara frontier has remained intact since the capture of Samarkand in 1868. The last complication on the Persian border dates from 1829 — nearly 70 years ago. Throughout our frontier conterminous with China we have had no disturbance for more than a century. I am led to mention these significant facts in order to show that our policy in Asia is essentially a peaceful one, and that we are perfectly satisfied with our present boundaries. And I may claim to speak with authority, apart from my official position, for I have been personally concerned in all our important military and political movements in Central Asia since 1868, when, only twenty, I took part in storming Samarkand."e

#### RUSSIA IN MANCHURIA

Russian advance in the Far East has been going on so steadily and so quietly that few realise to what an extent north-eastern Asia is becoming russianised. Russian ships are seen in Chinese and Japanese harbours, Russian banks are found on Chinese territory, Russian railways are connecting those remote parts of the world with Europe, and, most important of all, Russian peasants are being landed in the Far East. The russification movement is especially active in Manchuria, which province has become prominent in the last few years. Although on a map of Asia Manchuria does not look very large, it covers nearly as much space as France and Germany together. Beveridge<sup>c</sup> recently said of it: "It is an empire more favourably situated as to its climatic conditions than any part of Asia. It is in the same latitude as southern Canada and the northern portion of the United States. Its northern limits are about the same as the northern limits of Quebec. Its southern limits are about the same as the southern limits of Maryland. It is bounded on the north by the richest portions of Siberia, which not many years ago was itself a part of the dominion of the Manchus; for several hundred miles on the east by the grain-fields of the Ussuri district of Russian Siberia, also until recently a part of the Chinese Empire; on the east and south by Korea, over which the world's next great war will probably be fought, and soon; on the west by Mongolia, and on the south by Korea, China, and the gulfs and extensions of the Yellow Sea, which touches or commands much of that empire. On these gulfs are two of the finest military and commercial ports of Asia, or the world — Port Arthur and Talienwan, or, as the Russians call it, Dalny."

Russian designs upon Manchuria first became prominent after the Chino-Japanese war when Russia objected to Japan's acquiring any territory in that quarter. During the Boxer uprising in 1900 Russian troops overran Manchuria and in a convention concluded between Russia and China at the end of the movement, the civil and military administration of the province was placed practically under the control of Russia. Owing to objections on the part of the other powers, however, Russia withdrew this convention and another was signed in place of it on April 8th, 1902. According to this Manchuria was to remain "an integral portion of the Chinese Empire"; China pledged herself



to protect the railway and all Russian subjects and their enterprises in Manchuria, while Russia for her part agreed to withdraw her troops gradually. This agreement on the part of Russia remained a promise only. In the meanwhile Manchuria was rapidly becoming russified. The important cities along the railway such as New-Chwang, Mukden, Liauyang and Kirin became centres of Russian forces, Russian immigrants built and inhabited whole towns laid out like European cities with all modern improvements. Harbin, which in 1897 was a collection of mud huts, became a Russian city and a centre of Manchurian trade.

#### THE WAR WITH JAPAN

Russia's policy in the Far East was the cause of friction with England and the United States, and especially with Japan; relations with the latter becoming more and more strained until they finally led to a war which broke out in February, 1904. In April of the preceding year Russia's representative at Peking presented certain demands to the Chinese government which virtually excluded all foreigners — except Russians — from Manchuria, and were a plain violation of the principle of the "open door" which Russia had pledged herself to maintain in that province. Owing to the opposition of the United States and Japan, however, most of these demands were withdrawn and permission was granted to open two Manchurian ports, although this was not carried out. In Korea also Russia opposed Japan, refusing to allow her to open the port of Wi-ju to foreign trade, and objecting to a Japanese telegraph from Seoul to Fusan, although Russia herself laid a telegraph line on Korean territory.

In August, 1903, Russia took the important step of establishing a special vice-royalty in the Amur provinces which had been leased to her in the Liaotung peninsula. Vice-admiral Alexiev was appointed as first Russian viceroy of the Far East, and was invested with civil and military authority which made him to a great extent independent of St. Petersburg.

In September the Russian ambassador at Peking had announced that New-Chwang and Mukden would be evacuated on October 8th, but that date passed and Russian troops were still there, while Russia continued to strengthen her army and navy in the Far East. Japan demanded that Russia should evacuate Manchuria in agreement with her promises and that she should discontinue her aggressive attitude in Korea.

Russia's answers to Japan's repeated demands were evasive, and on January 8th, 1904, Japan sent a final note to Russia and, receiving no reply, withdrew her minister and legation from St. Petersburg on February 6th, 1904. On February 7th both governments issued statements announcing the severance of diplomatic relations. On February 8th the main Japanese fleet, under Vice-admiral Togo, opened the war by surprising the Russian fleet at Port Arthur in a state of unpreparedness, and inflicting much damage.

The attack was repeated on the following day with a repetition of the result of the first day's assault. On the same day Admiral Uruu and a small Japanese squadron attacked and destroyed two Russian cruisers in the harbour of Chemulpo. Thus at the very outset the Japanese had secured a decided advantage over their opponents on the sea. At once the cry arose in Russia that Japan, by not giving official notice of the proposed attack had violated international law, but neutral nations generally saw in Russia's complaint only an attempt to excuse her defeats, and held that the severing of diplomatic relations was warning enough. Still that the Russians were not

[1904 A.D.]

entirely crippled was shown by the fact that within a fortnight their squadron of four cruisers at Vladivostok cut its way out of the ice, which was supposed to hold it captive, and harried the Japanese coast. But this danger did not hinder the transportation of Japanese troops to Korea, which began on February 18th. The following month saw a continuation of Japanese successes and of Russian losses. Several times Admiral Togo attacked Port Arthur, at one time or another almost all of the Russian ships of war sustaining more or less serious damage. Vladivostok was bombarded, and a succession of minor engagements took place between the outposts of the two opposing armies advancing toward one another from opposite sides of the Yalu river. On February 24th Admiral Togo made an unsuccessful attempt to "bottle up" the Russian fleet in the harbour of Port Arthur by sinking five old steamships in the channel. Early in March, General Kuropatkin, the Russian minister of war, was appointed by the czar to the supreme command of the Russian armies in Manchuria to succeed Viceroy Alexiev and Admiral Makarov was at the same time appointed to the command of the fleet. By the end of the month the Japanese had, on the Manchurian border, in Korea, with which country they had concluded a close alliance, a force estimated at eighty thousand, with a base at Ping Yang. This was faced by a Russian force, slightly smaller, but increased daily by reinforcements which kept arriving in a continuous stream over the Trans-Siberian and Manchurian railways. The Japanese successes appeared well nigh to stupefy Russia, and the demoralisation of the czar's official advisers seemed complete. Beside the loss of General Kuropatkin, who was succeeded as minister of war by General Sakarov, both Count Lamsdorf, minister of foreign affairs, and M. Witte, the finance minister, retired from the cabinet. On April 13th, the Russian battleship *Petropavlovsk* struck a mine or floating torpedo near the entrance to Port Arthur harbour and sank with all on board, including Admiral Makarov and the war artist Verestchagin.

During the succeeding month war operations of importance or interest were confined to the land. By the first of May the principal points in the Japanese military programme had unfolded themselves. The absolute command of the sea and coast, thus assuring ease and safety in the transportation of troops and munitions of war, had been secured, and an efficient and formidable army had been landed on the Asiatic mainland. Korea too had been thoroughly occupied. The Japanese army, in the last days of April, began its forward movement under General Kuroki, the purpose being to cross the Yalu at several points and drive the Russians back into Manchuria.

On May 1st, after a six days fight on the Yalu near Wi-ju, the Japanese won their first land victory, and secured a firm footing on the Manchurian side of the Yalu. During the month of May Kuroki continued his advance into the interior, but his progress was slow owing to the difficulty in maintaining communication with the coast and constant skirmishing with the Cossacks who opposed his advance guard. Kuropatkin meanwhile proceeded to concentrate his forces at Liauyang on the Manchurian Railway south of Harbin, with the apparent intention of leaving Port Arthur to its fate.

It was about the latter place that the activity now centred and against it a second Japanese army under General Oku advanced. On May 25th Oku landed a force of some forty thousand men near Kin-chau on the narrowest point of the Liao-tung peninsula. At this point the Nanshan hills extending from Kin-chau, on the western side of the isthmus toward Dalny on the east afforded the Russians an excellent opportunity for defence and here they had

constructed a strong line of fortifications, mounted a large number of guns and manned them with the flower of the Port Arthur army. After a series of tentative attacks, Oku made a grand assault under cover of fire from warships in the harbour of Kin-chau. In the charge up the heights he lost over 4,000 men, but drove out the Russians, who lost 2,000 men and 78 cannon. Two days later the Japanese occupied Russia's great commercial port, Dalny, finding the docks, piers, and railway yards uninjured. It was thenceforward the Japanese base.

Port Arthur was now left to its fate, save for the single effort of General Stakelberg who was detached with 40,000 men to make a dash southward, but was defeated by Oku at Telissu (Vofangow), eighty miles north of Port Arthur (June 14-16), and by Kuroki. He made his escape, having lost some 10,000 men on his vain foray.

Kuropatkin's tactics were Fabian and his eventual reliance was the reinforcements which the Siberian railway poured in as fast as possible. The Japanese forced the attack. Marshal Oyama was in charge of the armies opposed to Kuropatkin, his subordinates being Nodzu and the brilliant Kuroki. General Oku also joined Oyama, the Port Arthur siege being placed in the command of General Nogi. June 26-27 the Japanese took the well-nigh impregnable position at Fen-shiu-ling pass. Shortly after Kuroki took the important pass of Motien-ling. On July 17 General Count Keller made a desperate effort to recapture it, but was repulsed with heavy loss. July 24 Oku took Tashichiao and forced the Russians back to the walled city of Hai-cheng. July 29 Kuroki took the Yangtse pass, in whose defence General Keller was killed. Oku having turned his right flank, Kuropatkin was forced to evacuate Hai-cheng and retreat to his base at Liauyang. He was also compelled to give up the important city of New-Chwang.

The capture of Liauyang was a great problem. The Japanese were not ready to open battle till August 24, when they began a twelve days' combat which takes a permanent place as one of the largest and fiercest battles in history. The Russians were estimated at 200,000; the Japanese at 240,000. The Japanese confessed a loss of 25,000; the Russian loss was perhaps still greater, as they were defeated and escaped capture or annihilation only by Kuropatkin's ingenuity in retreat.

The Russians retired to Mukden. October 2nd Kuropatkin felt strong enough to take the offensive, and assailed Oyama on the river Shakhe or the Sha-ho. A series of battles followed, lasting till October 18, when the Russians fell back again to Mukden, after a loss of 45,000 men killed and wounded, according to a Russian staff report. Oyama claimed to have found 13,300 Russians dead on the field, and admitted a loss of 15,800 on his own side.

Meanwhile Port Arthur was undergoing one of the most important sieges in history. The siege began on May 26th, when Nan-shan hill was taken and Dalny occupied, though on August 12th the last of the outlying defences was taken and the Japanese sat down before the permanent works. They combined a patient and scientific process of sapping, trenching and tunnelling, with a series of six grand assaults. The collaboration of such skill with such reckless heroism had its inevitable result. The garrison under General Stoessel held out with splendid courage against an army totalling perhaps 100,000, but the gradual exhaustion of ammunition, food, and strength, together with the appearance of scurvy, compelled a surrender. January 3rd, 1905, the Japanese took possession, finding 878 officers, 23,491 men, besides several thousand non-combatants.



[1904-1905 A.D.]

The fleet which had made several efforts to escape had been reduced by loss after loss, and finally, on the capture of 203 Metre Hill, had been subjected to the fire of the land artillery and completely destroyed.

During the leaguer of Port Arthur and the gradual beating back of Kuropatkin, other Russian activities kept diplomacy busy. The seizure of neutral ships in the Red Sea by two vessels that passed the Dardanelles as merchantmen and then equipped as cruisers, provoked such indignation in England and Germany that the seizures were discontinued. The Vladivostok squadron made daring raids upon Japanese and neutral vessels, but after a long pursuit was caught by Admiral Kamimura, who sank the *Rurik* and crippled the other two cruisers.

About the middle of October, after innumerable delays, the powerful Baltic fleet, under command of Admiral Rojestvensky, set out with the avowed purpose of aiding Port Arthur. On the night of the 21st, while in the North Sea off the Dogger Banks, a part of the fleet mistook some English fishing trawlers for Japanese torpedo boats, fired upon them, and sank one boat and killed two fishermen. The indignation of the English people was intense; war for a time seemed imminent; but the matter was ultimately referred to a board of arbitration, which, in the following February, found that the action of the fleet had been unjustifiable. In March, 1905, Russia paid the sum of £65,000 in damages.

#### DISORDERS AT HOME

The internal condition of Russia was rendered critical by the war, and by profound commercial distress. June 15th the Governor-General over Finland, Bobrikov, was assassinated by an opponent of the russification policy. On July 29th the Czar's minister of the interior, Von Plehve, was slain by a bomb thrown at his carriage. Rightly or wrongly, Von Plehve was considered the special author and adviser of the increasing vigour and tyranny of the czar's internal administration. Jews abhorred him as the man responsible for the Kishinev massacres, and the Finns looked upon him as the destroyer of their national institutions. He was succeeded by Prince Peter Sviatopolk-Mirsky, a man of comparatively liberal and progressive views.

This gave some encouragement to the zemstvos, the farthest step toward representative government yet taken in Russia. They date only from the czar's ukase of January, 1864. Each of the districts in which Russia is divided is represented by an assembly, elected by the three estates, communes, municipalities, and land-owners. Each district assembly in a province sends delegates to a general provincial assembly or zemstvo, which body controls the roads, primary schools, etc. Alexander II meant that these zemstvos should acquire large power, but after his death they fell under the sway of provincial governors. November 21st, 1904, the zemstvos lifted their heads again, and their presidents met in a congress which, by a majority of 105 to 3, voted to beg the czar to grant Russia a constitution and a genuine representative government.

The czar, with some asperity of tone, refused a constitution, and while promising certain reforms, rebuked the zemstvos and forbade their further discussion of such unsettling topics. Prince Sviatopolk-Mirsky now resigned, declaring that Russia was on the brink of a great revolution, and that the bureaucracy must be supplanted by "the freely elected representatives of the people." In January, 1905, Sergius de Witte succeeded to the office of

minister of the interior. One of the most prominent European statesmen, a liberal, and an enemy of Von Plehve, his first statements were nevertheless disappointing to believers in radical reforms.

Opposition to the war and hostility to bureaucracy and autocracy, discontent among the working classes, and general disaffection now resulted in an important outbreak. On the 18th of January, the workmen employed at the Putiloff, Neva Shipbuilding, and other works in St. Petersburg went on strike, and at the same time drafted a petition demanding legislation dealing with poverty and the oppression of labour by capital, guarantees of personal security, freedom of speech and worship, compulsory education, equality before the law, responsibility of ministers, a representative assembly, and other reforms. On the 22d a delegation led by an unfrocked priest, Father Gapon, marched towards the Winter Palace in order to present these demands to the czar. Their way was blocked by the military, and upon their persisting in their attempt they were shot down by hundreds. On the 24th General Trepoff, a man much hated because of his harsh methods, was appointed governor-general of the city with plenary powers, and every outbreak was put down in the most merciless manner. Many leading revolutionists, among them Maxim Gorky, the celebrated novelist, were arrested, but some of them were afterwards released. Lesser disturbances also broke out at Moscow, Reval, Riga, Odessa, Warsaw, Lodz, and elsewhere, but were likewise put down. As usual the revolutionists resorted to the use of dynamite and to assassination. On the 17th of February the Grand Duke Sergius, one of the most hated of the supporters of the bureaucracy, was blown to pieces at Moscow by a bomb. On the 3d of March the czar denounced in a manifesto "the evil-minded leaders of the revolutionary movement" for rendering assistance to the enemies of Russia, by attempting to set up a system of government not "suitable for our fatherland." On the evening of the same day, however, he issued a rescript in which he promised "to convene the worthiest men possessing the confidence of the people and elected by them to participate in the elaboration and consideration of legislative measures." This rather vague concession did not allay the public discontent; serious agrarian troubles and peasant riots took place soon after, and during the months of April and May more than one hundred attempts at assassination were made, of which more than forty are said to have succeeded.

#### MUKDEN, THE SEA OF JAPAN, AND THE PEACE OF PORTSMOUTH

Meanwhile events at the seat of war had continued to be extremely disastrous for Russia. Late in January an offensive movement was undertaken by the Russian second army under General Gripenberg against the Japanese left, but the movement was repulsed with great loss, and Gripenberg, claiming that he had not been properly supported by General Kuropatkin, resigned his command. About the same time General Oyama's army was heavily reinforced by General Nogi with the veteran army which had overcome Port Arthur. On the 19th of February the Japanese began a stupendous offensive movement. After more than two weeks of terrible fighting, General Kuropatkin was forced to retreat from Mukden, and to retire beyond Tie Pass, after suffering one of the heaviest losses experienced by any modern army. Soon after this disastrous defeat General Kuropatkin was relieved from command, and General Linevitch undertook the task of reorganising the demoralized army.

[1905 A.D.]

The sole remaining hope of Russia now lay in her navy. On the 8th of April Admiral Rojestvensky with the Baltic fleet passed Singapore, and on May 5th was joined off the coast of French Indo-China by another squadron under Admiral Nebogatoff. After some days spent in refitting, the combined fleet sailed northward to meet the enemy. But the voyage which had been so inauspiciously begun was to have a disastrous ending. On the 27th and 28th of May, in a battle which is more fully described under Japan, the ill-manned Russian fleet was practically annihilated by Admiral Togo.

Nothing now remained but to make peace. By invitation of President Roosevelt, envoys representing the two belligerent powers held a conference at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and there on the 29th of August they arrived at a preliminary agreement, which was later elaborated into a formal treaty. This treaty, the terms of which are given under Japan, was more favourable to Russia than had been generally expected; but nevertheless it marked the complete defeat of the policy which had caused the war.

#### FURTHER ATTEMPTS AT REVOLUTION

In the meantime disorders in Russia had increased rather than diminished. Riots and outbreaks occurred in Poland, the Caucasus, and elsewhere. Towards the end of June, the crews of the *Kniaz Potemkin* and *Georgei Pobiedonosetz* of the Black Sea fleet mutinied, murdered those of their officers who resisted, and proceeded to Odessa, where thousands of strikers and revolutionists made common cause with them. After much loss of life and destruction of property, however, the revolt was put down; the crew of the *Georgei Pobiedonosetz* surrendered and many of them were shot; and the mutineers on the *Kniaz Potemkin* surrendered the vessel on the 9th of July to the authorities of Rumania on condition that they should be allowed to escape.

On the 19th of August, the czar, influenced by these events and by representations and warnings from deputations from the zemstvos and dumas and from the marshals of the nobility, issued a manifesto in which he said: "The time is come to summon elected representatives from the whole of Russia to take a constant and active part in the elaboration of laws, attaching for this purpose to the higher state institutions a special consultative body entrusted with the preliminary elaboration and discussion of measures and with the examination of the state budget." This national assembly, or duma, as it was called, was to meet not later than January, 1906, but the date was subsequently postponed. The concession involved in calling it was much more apparent than real, for no guarantees were made of popular rights and liberties; its powers were to be only consultative; and the middle and lower classes were practically excluded from taking part in choosing its members. The scheme was far from satisfactory to the revolutionists and reformers; and riots and disturbances of various kinds continued, especially in Finland and at Baku, where many hundreds of persons were killed.

On the 25th of September, a congress of about three hundred delegates representing the zemstvos and municipalities of the empire met in Moscow to consider the situation. After a heated debate a resolution was carried to the effect that while the proposed duma would not be a truly representative body, it might "serve as a rallying point and support for the general movement for the attainment of political freedom," and that therefore "Russian citizens, who are united on the political programme formulated by the



zemstvo congresses of the preceding and present years, should seek to enter the duma in as large numbers as possible for the purpose of forming there a united group with the object of obtaining guarantees for personal liberty and equality." The congress further declared that the suffrage should be placed on a national and not a class basis.

#### PROMULGATION OF A CONSTITUTION

On October 21st an organized strike for the furtherance of political objects began on all the railways, and the railway employees were soon joined by workers in other occupations, until probably a million men were engaged in the movement. Moscow and St. Petersburg were cut off from communication with the rest of the empire; famine became imminent in many cities; business everywhere was at a standstill. The whole object of the movement was to force the government to adopt reforms, and in part this object was realized. On the 30th of October the czar signed what has been called by some people the "Magna Charta of Russian Liberties," and on the same day appointed Count Witte, who had gained greatly enhanced prestige by his success as one of the Russian peace envoys, head of a responsible ministry. In substance the manifesto promised to the people inviolability of person, freedom of conscience, speech, and association, further extension of the right to vote for representatives to the duma, the establishment of the principle that no law can be enacted without the approval of the duma. Four days later as a result of the situation in Finland, the czar repealed many harsh ordinances which applied to that country, admitted the responsibility of the secretary of state to the Finnish diet rather than to the monarch, and called a special session of the diet to discuss laws granting freedom of speech, of the press, of public meeting, of association, and for the establishment of a national assembly based on universal suffrage.

But the revolutionists still remained unsatisfied. They demanded "the immediate convocation of a constituent assembly elected by the universal, equal, and direct suffrages of all adult citizens, without distinction of sex, creed, or nationality, and the provision of all guarantees of civic freedom." Anarchy reigned over practically the whole country. At Odessa more than five thousand persons are reported to have been killed or wounded, while terrible riots occurred at Kazan, Warsaw, Tiflis, and elsewhere. At Kieff, Kishineff, Kherson, Rostoff, and other towns, horrible massacres of Jews took place; these massacres were practically unchecked by the governmental authorities, and were perhaps even instigated by them for reactionary purposes. On the 9th of November, a mutiny broke out among the sailors at Kronstadt, and a few days later another among both soldiers and sailors at Vladivostok, but both were ultimately suppressed. Disturbances created by the independence party in Poland led to the proclamation, on the 13th, of martial law in that country. As a protest against the government's action at Kronstadt and in Poland a new general strike was called, but on the 20th it was ended by order of the Central Labour Committee. The workmen were, however, at the same time urged to further the revolutionary propaganda, and to prepare themselves for "the last general encounter of all Russia with bloody monarchy now living in its last days." On the 23d a zemstvo congress which was sitting at Moscow passed a resolution demanding universal direct suffrage and the calling of a constituent assembly. The congress also passed resolutions which are tantamount to a vote of no confidence in the government.

[1905-1906 A.D.]

## THE GOVERNMENT REGAINS CONTROL

The revolt now entered upon its most acute phase. On the 24th of November a combined strike and mutiny broke out at Sevastopol. The revolutionists captured the city, wounded Admiral Pisarevsky, and for several days controlled affairs almost completely. The government, however, dispatched overwhelming forces to the seat of the trouble: the rebel trenches were stormed; the ships were retaken; and many of the rebels were executed. Less important outbreaks occurred at Kronstadt, Vladivostok, and other places. In December, Lithuania and other regions around the Baltic were in open revolt; uprisings occurred in the Caucasus, at Irkutsk, and elsewhere; a new general strike began on the 21st; assassinations and attempted assassinations were everywhere common; the peasants were rising against their lords; the whole Russian state seemed to be falling to pieces. One of the bloodiest struggles took place in Moscow, the old capital. For several days the rebels controlled a large part of the city; but the troops generally remained loyal; and after frightful street fighting in which hundreds of men, women, and children lost their lives, order was again restored. Elsewhere, also, the government gradually regained its authority. The most violent part of the storm of revolution was past.

With the triumph of the government it was freely prophesied that a policy of thoroughgoing reaction would set in, and that, temporarily at least, the concessions already given would be ignored. But on the 26th of December a more liberal electoral law was issued, which granted the suffrage to many classes which had hitherto been excluded, while it was announced that the ultimate decision upon the subject of universal suffrage would be left to the duma. Early in January registration for the election of this body began. Charges were made that the minister of the interior, Durnovo, was seeking to control the election in the interests of reaction by arresting popular leaders; for this and other reasons the revolutionary socialists refused to register, but later changed their attitude. To allow a full registration, the time originally granted for this purpose was extended. On the 26th of February, a ukase officially fixed May 10th as the date for the meeting of the duma. On March 5th it was announced that no law would hereafter be valid without the consent of the duma and of the council of the empire. This latter body was to consist of an equal number of appointed and elected members taken from the clergy, nobility, zemstvos, academy of science, universities, trade, and industry. The annual sessions were to be convoked and closed by imperial ukase, and the sittings were to be public. Either house was to have the power to interpellate ministers and to initiate legislation; but neither was to be allowed to meddle with "the fundamental laws of the empire."

## THE FIRST DUMA

For a considerable time it seemed as if the duma would never be convened. But at last, on May 10, 1906, the first Russian parliament was opened in solemn pomp by Czar Nicholas II in the Tavrida Palace. There the so-called "best men" of Russia, the Seythian and the Celt, the Lithuanian and the Pole, the Catholic priest and the Jewish rabbi, had come together to deliberate upon the country's welfare. Professor Muromtsev was unanimously elected president. But the first Russian parliament was a frail infant destined to a premature end. War, famine, economic distress, had assisted at its birth, and opposition, secret

or open hostility, was watching over its infancy. It could not thrive under such circumstances.

But, although a speedy dissolution of the first *duma* as soon as it had been opened by Czar Nicholas in solemn state had been predicted, the ukase dissolving the first Russian parliament came somewhat as a surprise to the European world. And yet this issue was the only logical one. The government of the czar soon perceived the impossibility of working with a *duma* whose members were speaking only for the gallery of the country. A decisive step had to be taken in order to avoid a disgraceful compromise on the part of the government. At this juncture, whilst the Premier Goremykin, who had succeeded Count Witte early in May, was officially representing the government, the Star Chamber was busily engaged in finding a solution of the perplexing problem. Three parties, representing three distinct currents of opinion, were formed at court, and each endeavoured to persuade Nicholas II to adopt and carry out the plan it had worked out for the welfare of the nation.

The three parties were headed respectively by Trepov, by Count Ignatev, and by Goutshkov and Stolypin. Strange and almost incredible as it will sound, Trepov advised liberal concessions. The man who had arranged pogroms, the *policier* who had knouted, sent to mines and to Siberia, who had incarcerated in the prison cells of Sts. Peter and Paul and in the fortress of Schlusselfurg thousands of revolutionaries, advised the czar to hold out the olive branch to the cadets.

Trepov was neither more nor less than a faithful Yanitshar, a faithful bull-dog, whose qualities we cannot praise, but whose fidelity may perhaps elicit some admiration. When he found out that it became of paramount importance to the interests of his imperial master to grant concessions, all the arguments of the reactionary party became as nought with him, and the implacable enemy of revolutionaries, the stage manager of pogroms and of riots, the terror of nihilists and of students, suddenly appeared as liberal as the cadets themselves, without in the least having changed his views. It was for this reason, too, that shortly before death put an end to his zeal, Trepov was not a *persona grata* in court circles. His programme had been as follows: "The cadets," he said, "are strong, influential, and above all, ambitious. They are thirsting for power. The view of portfolios and ministerial benches is dazzling them. Let us stretch out a hand to the cadets, let us grant them concessions, and, with united effort, build the bridge over the gulf which is dividing new and old Russia."

Trepov advised the czar to form a mixed cabinet, consisting of himself, perhaps, as minister of war, of liberal bureaucrats like Yermolov, former minister of agriculture, and of three or four prominent members from among the cadets. He thus hoped to satisfy the ambition of the latter, and, by granting them concessions, at the same time persuade them to abandon at least the idea of the compulsory expropriation of landowners, which he considered too dangerous a measure. But two other parties claimed the attention of the czar, and both equally strongly condemned the Trepov programme. Count Ignatev—who has since been assassinated—urged the czar to crush the hydra-head of opposition. Ignatev represented that powerful class, the rich landowners, which is the mainstay of autocracy. He could see no possibility of concession. There was no necessity either, for Ignatev disbelieved in the danger of the revolution. It was only a bluff, he said, of Count Witte, whose ambition it was to be the president of the first Russian republic. The *ancien régime* must maintain its prerogatives; prisons, exile, and Siberia would soon



[1906 A.D.]

teach the few unwise dreamers that autocracy was as firm as ever, and meant to remain so for the future. The famous framer of the May laws advised a policy of oppression,—openly and unhesitatingly.

*The Programme of Stolypin and the Dissolution of the Duma*

Standing between these two programmes, the liberal of Trepov and the reactionary of Ignatev, was that of Stolypin and Goutshkov, which ultimately gained favour with the czar. Goutshkov's programme was briefly this: To dissolve the duma, to promise the nation to convene another duma within a few months, and in the meantime to take the necessary steps so as to be sure of a government majority in the next assembly. Goutshkov maintained that he had carefully studied the causes of revolutions in western Europe and the course they had taken. He had arrived at the conclusion that revolution was a malady, a fever which will occasionally break out in the normal social body, but was not dangerous in itself, if properly attended to. The best remedies for this disease were patience and perseverance. Had the western European governments at various periods and in various countries been armed with a sufficient dose of these antidotes, had they not lost courage, and in a frenzy of despair either made concessions or adopted extreme measures, but simply tried to gain time, the revolutionary fever would gradually have abated, and the social pulse regained its normal state. Russia should now be wise and try to benefit by the experience gained from the study of western Europe. No extreme measures, but also no concessions. The programme, therefore, which Goutshkov, in conjunction with Stolypin, elaborated, was as follows: The duma must be dissolved by an imperial ukase; at the same time, however, hope must be held out to the country in the shape of a promise to convene a new assembly within a few months. In the meantime a strong endeavour should be made to organise all the conservative forces, who would rally round the party of the Octobrists and form the government party in the new duma.

Nicholas II, as might have been expected from a man of his undecided character, listened neither to the liberal plan of his friend Trepov, nor to the advice of the reactionary Ignatev, but adopted the programme elaborated by Goutshkov and Stolypin. He decided to dissolve the duma and to issue a ukase convening a new one in a few months, in which care should be taken that the government and conservative elements should form the preponderating majority. And thus the struggle between the three parties in the Star Chamber ended in the victory of Goutshkov-Stolypin, and the result was the ukase of July 21, 1906, dissolving the duma—a ukase which startled Europe at the very moment when the English premier was welcoming the delegates of the Inter-parliamentary Conference in London. The cadets and the labour party assembled at Viborg and drafted a manifesto to the nation. It was, however, of no avail. Although the cadets were not arrested, the nation was too frightened to respond to their appeal for support against the government.

*Autocracy Triumphs*

And thus Nicholas II, in uttering his famous words, "My autocracy is as famous as ever," sent home the representatives of the nation, some of them to prison and death. Many fell as glorious martyrs in the battle for liberty. A shot fired at Terioki, by an assassin hired by the reactionaries, caused the

untimely death of one of the most intelligent and useful ex-members of the дума, M. J. Herzenstein.

And although Trepov had in the meantime died, his spirit was still hovering round the imperial palaces of Peterhof and Tsarskoe Selo. There began a period of oppression. Inspired undoubtedly by the example of the *tribunaux révolutionnaires* of 1789, the Russian courts of justice were replaced by courts-martial. In the course of a few weeks more than 150 persons were either hanged or shot. Thousands were sent at the expense of the government to the mines or to the Siberian snowfields, where they could find leisure to cool their burning revolutionary brows.

Even the optimists had to admit that things looked grave. M. Milyoukov, the eminent leader, urged at the Congress of Helsingfors the necessity of abandoning the idea of a passive resistance and of refusing to furnish recruits and to pay taxes. The idea of a general strike had to be abandoned, the armed local revolts were speedily suppressed, the much talked-of agrarian rising came to nothing. The struggle for liberty was gradually being crushed. Thousands of brave men were court-martialled, piteously murdered, slaughtered, tortured and imprisoned, sent to fortresses and to mines. Autocracy triumphed.

Events which followed the dissolution of the дума thus tended to prove the soundness and the advantage of the Goutshkov-Stolypin programme. The revolutionary fever, as Goutshkov had called it, broke out; the crisis was reached, but it did not turn out to be fatal. The country did not rise. The plans of revolutionaries to get into their power the whole district round Tsarskoe Selo and to arrest the czar were frustrated. The mutinies of Svyborg and Kronstadt were premature, remained unsupported, and were easily and speedily crushed. The great peasant mass remained passive. A new дума had been promised and the country decided to wait. The cadets, on the other hand, committed a blunder with the Viborg manifesto, and thus furnished the government with a pretext to prosecute them as revolutionaries; the party suffered considerably; its clubs were closed, its pamphlets confiscated, and its organs suspended.

## THE SECOND DUMA

In the meantime preparations for the election of members for the new дума were carried on. Goutshkov proceeded to work out his plans in arranging the electoral campaign. Neither money nor trouble was spared in the endeavour to secure a government majority for the new дума. Dozens of journals were started by the Octobrists in the provinces, hundreds of orators were sent out to enlighten the people, millions of proclamations were distributed among the peasants, fighting bands were organised and provided with sticks for the purpose of beating Jews, students, and the wives and children of the intellectuals. A great number of guns and revolvers from the arsenals were distributed among the Black-hundreds. Clergymen were commanded by their ecclesiastical superiors to preach from their pulpits in the interest of the government, and to brand the first дума as a *Jewish Kahal*. All the parties that were ever so little more radical than that of the Octobrists were accused of being revolutionary and their existence declared to be illegal; their bureaux were closed, their newspapers suspended, and their books and pamphlets confiscated and burned. Many suspected of radicalism were arrested, taken away from their families and sent to prison or to Siberia. In order to frighten the Jews a pogrom was arranged in Sedlice. The government

[1907 A.D.]

further found the senate a willing instrument in its hands for the business of interpreting the electoral laws. In order to eliminate the radical elements and to invalidate them as electors, the senate interpreted the election laws in such a manner as to suit the government.

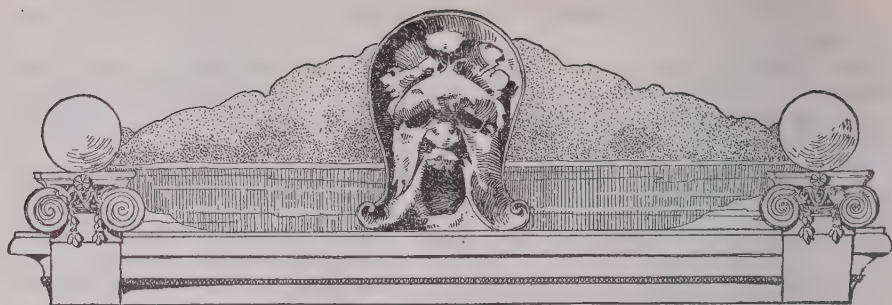
In spite, however, of all the endeavours made by the government—in spite of terrorism, hoodliganism, police and clergy—the opposition was clearly in a majority in the new duma. It held its first session on March 5th. Feodor Golovin, a Constitutional Democrat, was elected president. On March 18th M. Stolypin, in reading the ministerial declaration, announced that the "country must be transformed into a constitutional state" and laid before the body bills for determining the civic status of the inhabitants, for ameliorating the condition of the peasants, for securing liberty of conscience and inviolability of person, for improving the system of education, etc. He announced, however, that in legislating upon the subject of toleration the government was determined to lay down the principle of a Christian state in which the orthodox religion should be privileged. Later he opposed a bill for making field courts-martial illegal. Either from inclination or from policy, the new duma showed itself more moderate than its predecessor and endeavoured to avoid giving a pretext for its dissolution; but late in May it rejected resolutions condemning terrorism and on June 8th began to discuss the reform of rural justice. At a secret sitting on June 14th the premier presented charges of treason against practically all the members of the Social Democratic party and demanded the immediate arrest of sixteen and authority for the indictment of fifty-five members. By an overwhelming majority the subject was referred to a committee. On June 16th the Czar issued a ukase dissolving the duma and fixing November 14th as the date for the meeting of a new one. At the same time, in direct defiance of one of the essential guaranties of the constitution, he promulgated a new election law, reducing the peasant electorate, diminishing by half the number of deputies from Siberia, Poland and the Caucasus, and instituting in the larger cities direct elections with a higher property test, thereby placing four-fifths of the electoral power in the hands of about 130,000 landowners, the majority of whom are reactionary.

### THE THIRD DUMA

The country received this *coup d'état* quietly, and the new elections, which took place in the fall, attracted comparatively little interest. The result, as was natural, was a strong conservative majority. The first session was held on November 14th.

In August a convention with Japan stipulating for the territorial integrity of the Chinese Empire and for the principle of the "open door" was published. On September 23rd a convention with Great Britain for the purpose of settling by mutual consent the various questions affecting their interests in Asia was ratified.<sup>a</sup>





## APPENDIX

### DOCUMENTS RELATING TO RUSSIAN HISTORY

#### I

#### TREATY OF PARIS

GENERAL TREATY BETWEEN THE QUEEN OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT  
BRITAIN AND IRELAND, THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA, THE EMPEROR OF  
THE FRENCH, THE KING OF PRUSSIA, THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA, THE  
KING OF SARDINIA, AND THE SULTAN

*Signed at Paris, March 30th, 1856. Ratifications exchanged at Paris, April 27th*

Art. 1. From the day of the exchange of the ratifications of the present treaty there shall be peace and friendship between her majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, his majesty the Emperor of the French, his majesty the King of Sardinia, his imperial majesty the Sultan, on the one part, and his majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, on the other part, as well as between their heirs and successors, their respective dominions and subjects in perpetuity.

Art. 2. Peace being happily re-established between their said majesties, the territories conquered or occupied by their armies during the war shall be reciprocally evacuated.

Special arrangements shall regulate the mode of the evacuation, which shall be as prompt as possible.

Art. 3. His majesty the Emperor of all the Russias engages to restore to his majesty the Sultan the town and citadel of Kars, as well as the other parts of the Ottoman territory of which the Russian troops are in possession.

Art. 4. Their majesties the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Emperor of the French, the King of Sardinia, and the Sultan, engage to restore to his majesty the Emperor of all the Russias the towns and ports of Sebastopol, Balaklava, Kamiesch, Eupatoria, Kertch, Yenikale, Kinburn, as well as all other territories occupied by the allied troops.

Art. 5. Their majesties the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Emperor of the French, the Emperor of all the Russias, the King of Sardinia, and the Sultan, grant a full and entire amnesty to those of their subjects who may have been compromised by any participation whatsoever in the events of the war in favour of the cause of the enemy.

It is expressly understood that such amnesty shall extend to the subjects of each of the belligerent parties who may have continued during the war to be employed in the service of one of the other belligerents.

Art. 6. Prisoners of war shall be immediately given up on either side.

Art. 7. Her majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, his majesty the Emperor of Austria, his majesty the Emperor of the French, his majesty the King of Prussia, his majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, and his majesty the King of Sardinia, declare the Sublime Porte admitted to participate in the advantages of the public law and system (*concert*) of Europe. Their majesties engage, each on his part, to respect the independence and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman empire; guarantee in common the strict observance of that engagement; and will, in consequence, consider any act tending to its violation as a question of general interest.

Art. 8. If there should arise between the Sublime Porte and one or more of the other signing powers any misunderstanding which might endanger the maintenance of their relations, the Sublime Porte and each of such powers, before having recourse to the use of force, shall afford the other contracting parties the opportunity of preventing such an extremity by means of their mediation.

Art. 9. His imperial majesty the Sultan having, in his constant solicitude for the welfare of his subjects, issued a *firman* which, while ameliorating their condition without distinction of religion or of race, records his generous intentions towards the Christian population of his empire, and wishing to give a further proof of his sentiments in that respect, has resolved to communicate to the contracting parties the said firman, emanating spontaneously from his sovereign will.

The contracting powers recognise the high value of this communication. It is clearly understood that it cannot, in any case, give to the said powers the right to interfere, either collectively or separately, in the relations of his majesty the Sultan with his subjects, nor in the internal administration of his empire.

Art. 10. The convention of the 13th of July, 1841, which maintains the ancient rule of the Ottoman empire relative to the closing of the straits of the Bosphorus and of the Dardanelles, has been revised by common consent.

The act concluded for that purpose, and in conformity with that principle, between the high contracting parties, is and remains annexed to the present treaty, and shall have the same force and validity as if it formed an integral part thereof.

Art. 11. The Black Sea is neutralised; its waters and its ports, thrown open to the mercantile marine of every nation, are formally and in perpetuity interdicted to the flag of war, either of the powers possessing its coasts or of any other power, with the exceptions mentioned in Articles 14 and 19 of the present treaty.

Art. 12. Free from any impediment, the commerce in the ports and waters of the Black Sea shall be subject only to regulations of health, customs, and police, framed in a spirit favourable to the development of commercial transactions.

In order to afford to the commercial and maritime interests of every nation the security which is desired, Russia and the Sublime Porte will admit consuls into their ports situated upon the coast of the Black Sea, in conformity with the principles of international law.

Art. 13. The Black Sea being neutralised according to the terms of Art.

11, the maintenance or establishment upon its coast of military-maritime arsenals becomes alike unnecessary and purposeless; in consequence, his majesty the Emperor of all the Russias and his imperial majesty the Sultan engage not to establish or to maintain upon that coast any military-maritime arsenal.

Art. 14. Their majesties the Emperor of all the Russias and the Sultan having concluded a convention for the purpose of settling the force and the number of light vessels necessary for the service of their coasts, which they reserve to themselves to maintain in the Black Sea, that convention is annexed to the present treaty, and shall have the same force and validity, as if it formed an integral part thereof. It cannot be either annulled or modified without the assent of the powers signing the present treaty.

Art. 15. The act of the Congress of Vienna having established the principles intended to regulate the navigation of rivers which separate or traverse different states, the contracting powers stipulate among themselves that those principles shall in future be equally applied to the Danube and its mouths. They declare that this arrangement henceforth forms a part of the public law of Europe, and take it under their guarantee.

The navigation of the Danube cannot be subjected to any impediment or charge not expressly provided for by the stipulations contained in the following articles; in consequence, there shall not be levied any toll founded solely upon the fact of the navigation of the river, nor any duty upon the goods which may be on board of vessels. The regulations of police and of quarantine to be established for the safety of the states separated or traversed by that river shall be so framed as to facilitate, as much as possible, the passage of vessels. With the exception of such regulations, no obstacle whatever shall be opposed to free navigation.

Art. 16. Establishing a temporary international commission for the control of navigation on the Danube.

Arts. 17-19. Establishing a permanent commission for the improvement and control of navigation on the Danube.

Art. 20. In exchange for the towns, ports, and territories enumerated in Art. 4 of the present treaty, and in order more fully to secure the freedom of the navigation of the Danube, his majesty the Emperor of all the Russias consents to the rectification of his frontier in Bessarabia.

Art. 21. The territory ceded by Russia shall be annexed to the principality of Moldavia under the suzerainty of the Sublime Porte. The inhabitants of that territory shall enjoy the rights and privileges secured to the principalities; and during the space of three years they shall be permitted to transfer their domicile elsewhere, disposing freely of their property.

Art. 22. The principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia shall continue to enjoy, under the suzerainty of the Porte and under the guarantee of the contracting powers, the privileges and immunities of which they are in possession. No exclusive protection shall be exercised over them by any of the guaranteeing powers. There shall be no separate right of interference in their internal affairs.

Arts. 23-27. Concerning the government, administration, preservation of order in, and defence of the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia.

Art. 28. The principality of Servia shall continue to hold the Sublime Porte, in conformity with the imperial *hats* which fix and determine its rights and immunities, placed henceforward under the collective guarantee of the contracting powers. In consequence the said principality shall preserve its independent and national administration, as well as full liberty of worship, of legislation, of commerce, and of navigation.



Art. 29. The right of garrison of the Sublime Porte, as stipulated by anterior regulations, is maintained. No armed intervention can take place in Servia without previous agreement between the high contracting powers.

Art. 30. His majesty the Emperor of all the Russias and his majesty the Sultan maintain in its integrity the state of their possessions in Asia, such as it legally existed before the rupture. A mixed commission for the verification or rectification of the frontiers is provided for.

Art. 31. The territories occupied during the war by the troops of their majesties the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor of the French, and the King of Sardinia, according to the terms of the conventions signed at Constantinople on the 12th of March, 1854, between Great Britain, France, and the Sublime Porte; on the 14th of June, of the same year, between Austria and the Sublime Porte; and on the 15th of March, 1855, between Sardinia and the Sublime Porte, shall be evacuated as soon as possible after the exchange of the ratifications of the present treaty. The periods and the means of execution shall form the object of an arrangement between the Sublime Porte and the powers whose troops have occupied its territory.

Art. 32. Until the treaties or conventions which existed before the war between the belligerent powers have been either renewed or replaced by new acts, commerce of importation or of exportation shall take place reciprocally on the footing of the regulations in force before the war; and in all other matters their subjects shall be respectively treated upon the footing of the most favoured nation.

Art. 33. The convention concluded this day between their majesties the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Emperor of the French, on the one part, and his majesty the Emperor of all the Russias on the other part respecting the Åland Islands, is and remains annexed to the present treaty, and shall have the same force and validity as if it formed a part thereof.

#### CONVENTIONS ANNEXED TO THE PRECEDING TREATY

1. *Convention between the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor of the French, the King of Prussia, the Emperor of Russia, and the King of Sardinia, on the one part, and the Sultan on the other part, respecting the Straits of the Dardanelles and of the Bosphorus.*

Art. 1. His majesty the Sultan, on the one part, declares that he is firmly resolved to maintain for the future the principle invariably established as the ancient rule of his empire, and in virtue of which it has at all times been prohibited for the ships of war of foreign powers to enter the Straits of the Dardanelles and of the Bosphorus, and that, so long as the Porte is at peace, his majesty will admit no foreign ship of war into the said Straits.

And their majesties the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Emperor of Austria, the Emperor of the French, the King of Prussia, the Emperor of all the Russias, and the King of Sardinia, on the other part, engage to respect this determination of the Sultan's, and to conform themselves to the principle above declared.

Art. 2. The Sultan reserves to himself, as in past times, to deliver firmans of passage for light vessels under flag of war, which shall be employed, as is usual, in the service of the missions of foreign powers.

Art. 3. The same exception applies to the light vessels under flag of war, which each of the contracting powers is authorised to station at the mouths of the Danube, in order to secure the execution of the regulations relative to the liberty of that river, and the number of which is not to exceed two for each power.

2. *Convention between the Emperor of Russia and the Sultan, limiting their naval force in the Black Sea.*

Art. 1. The high contracting parties mutually engage not to have in the Black Sea any other vessels of war than those of which the number, the force, and the dimensions are hereinafter stipulated.

Art. 2. The high contracting parties reserve to themselves each to maintain in that sea six steam-vessels of fifty metres in length at the line of floatation, of a tonnage of 800 tons at the *maximum*, and four light steam or sailing vessels, of a tonnage which shall not exceed 200 tons each.

3. *Convention between her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, the Emperor of the French, and the Emperor of Russia, respecting the Åland Islands.*

Art. 1. His majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, in order to respond to the desire which has been expressed to him by their majesties the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and the Emperor of the French, declares that the Åland Islands shall not be fortified, and that no military or naval establishment shall be maintained or created there.

*Declaration respecting maritime law, signed by the plenipotentiaries of Great Britain, Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, Sardinia, and Turkey, assembled in congress at Paris, April 16th, 1856.*

The plenipotentiaries who signed the treaty of Paris, of the 30th of March, 1856, being duly authorised, and having come to an agreement, have adopted the following solemn declaration:—

1. Privateering is, and remains, abolished.
2. The neutral flag covers enemy's goods, with the exception of contraband of war.
3. Neutral goods, with the exception of contraband of war, are not liable to capture under enemy's flag.

4. Blockades, in order to be binding, must be effective — that is to say maintained by force sufficient really to prevent access to the coast of the enemy.

The governments of the undersigned plenipotentiaries engage to bring the present declaration to the knowledge of the states which have taken part in the congress of Paris, and to invite them to accede to it.

Convinced that the maxims which they now proclaim cannot but be received with gratitude by the whole world, the under-signed plenipotentiaries doubt not that the efforts of their governments to obtain the general adoption thereof will be crowned with full success.

The present declaration is not and shall not be binding, except between those powers who have acceded, or shall accede, to it.

Done at Paris, the 16th of April, 1856.

[Here follow the names of the plenipotentiaries of the signatory powers.]

## II

## TREATY OF BERLIN, 1878

Her Majesty the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Empress of India, His Majesty the Emperor of Germany, King of Prussia, His Majesty the Emperor of Austria, King of Bohemia, etc., and King Apostolic of Hungary, the President of the French Republic, His Majesty the King of Italy, His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias and His Majesty the Emperor of the Ottomans, being desirous to regulate with a view to European order, conformably to the stipulations of the Treaty of Paris of 30th March, 1856, the questions raised in the East by the events of late years and by the war terminated by the Preliminary Treaty of San Stefano, have been unanimously of opinion that the meeting of a Congress would offer the best means of facilitating an understanding.

[Here follow the names of the ambassadors.]

Who, in accordance with the proposal of the Court of Austria-Hungary, and on the invitation of the Court of Germany, have met at Berlin furnished with full powers, which have been found in good and due form.

An understanding having been happily established between them, they have agreed to the following stipulations:

Art. 1. Bulgaria is constituted an autonomous and tributary Principality under the suzerainty of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan; it will have a Christian government and a national militia.

Art. 2. The Principality of Bulgaria will include the following territories: [Here follows a detailed account of boundaries. These having mainly a technical interest are omitted here and in other articles of the treaty of the same nature. Those articles likewise whose importance is purely local are given in abbreviated form.]

This delimitation shall be fixed on the spot by the European Commission, on which the Signatory Powers shall be represented. It is understood: 1. That this Commission will take into consideration the necessity for His Imperial Majesty the Sultan to be able to defend the Balkan frontier of Eastern Rumelia. 2. That no fortifications may be erected within a radius of 10 kilometres from Samakov.

Art. 3. The Prince of Bulgaria shall be freely elected by the population and confirmed by the Sublime Porte, with the assent of the Powers. No member of the Reigning Dynasties of the Great European Powers may be elected Prince of Bulgaria. In case of a vacancy in the princely dignity the election of a new Prince shall take place under the same conditions and with the same forms.

Art. 4. An Assembly of Notables of Bulgaria convoked at Tirnovo, shall, before the election of the Prince, draw up the Organic Law of the Principality. In the districts where Bulgarians are intermixed with Turkish, Rumanian, Greek or other populations, the rights and intents of these populations shall be taken into consideration as regards the elections and the drawing up of the Organic Law.

Art. 5. Differences of religious creed not to be a bar to office holding in Bulgaria. Complete freedom of worship assured.

Art. 6. The provisional administration of Bulgaria.

Art. 7. The provisional *régime* shall not be prolonged beyond a period of nine months from the exchange of the ratifications of the present



Treaty When the Organic Law is completed the election of the Prince of Bulgaria shall be proceeded with immediately. As soon as the Prince shall have been installed, the new organisation shall be put into force, and the Principality shall enter into the full enjoyment of its autonomy.

Art. 8. The treaties of commerce and navigation as well as all conventions and arrangements concluded between Foreign Powers and the Porte, and now in force are maintained in the Principality of Bulgaria, and no change shall be made in them with regard to any Power without its previous consent. No transit duties shall be levied in Bulgaria on goods passing through that principality. The subjects and citizens of commerce of all the powers shall be treated in the principality on a footing of strict equality. The immunities and privileges of foreigners, as well as the rights of consular jurisdiction and protection as established by the capitulations and usages, shall remain in full force so long as they shall not have been modified with the consent of the parties concerned.

Art. 9. Tribute to be paid by Bulgaria to suzerain court, etc.

Art. 10. Railway questions in Bulgaria.

Art. 11. Evacuation and demolition of Bulgarian fortresses.

Art. 12. Land rights of non-resident Moslems and others. Commission to settle questions of state property. Bulgarians travelling in Turkey subject to Ottoman laws.

Art. 13. A province is formed south of the Balkans which will take the name of "Eastern Rumelia," and will remain under the direct political and military authority of His Imperial Majesty, the Sultan, under conditions of administrative autonomy. It shall have a Christian Governor-General.

Art. 14. Boundaries of Eastern Rumelia.

Art. 15. His Majesty, the Sultan, shall have the right of providing for the defence of the land and sea frontiers of the province by erecting fortifications on those frontiers and maintaining troops there. Internal order is maintained in Eastern Rumelia by a native gendarmerie assisted by a local militia. In forming these corps, the officers of which are nominated by the Sultan, regard shall be paid in the different localities to the religion of the inhabitants.

His Imperial Majesty, the Sultan, undertakes not to employ irregular troops, such as Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians, in the garrisons of the frontiers. The regular troops detailed for this service must not in any case be billeted on the inhabitants. When they pass through the province they shall not make a stay there.

Art. 16. The governor-general shall have the right of summoning the Ottoman troops in the event of the internal or external security of the province being threatened. In such an eventuality the Sublime Porte shall inform the representatives of the Powers at Constantinople of such a decision, as well as of the exigencies which justify it.

Art. 17. The governor-general of Eastern Rumelia shall be nominated by the Sublime Porte, with the assent of the Powers for a term of five years.

Arts. 18 and 19. Creating a European commission for the organisation of Eastern Rumelia.

Arts. 20 and 21. Concerning foreign relations, religious liberty and railway administration of Eastern Rumelia.

Art. 22. Regulations concerning Russian occupation of Bulgaria and Eastern Rumelia. Evacuation of Rumania.

Art. 23. The Sublime Porte undertakes scrupulously to apply, in the Island of Crete the Organic Law of 1868 with such modifications as may be considered equitable. Similar laws adapted to local requirements, ex-

cepting as regards the exemption from taxation granted to Crete shall also be introduced into the other parts of Turkey in Europe, for which no such organisation has been provided by the present Treaty. The Sublime Porte shall depute special Commissions, in which the native element shall be largely represented, to settle the details of the new laws in each province. The schemes of organisation resulting from these labours shall be submitted for examination to the Sublime Porte; which, before promulgating the Acts for putting them into force, shall consult the European Commission instituted for Eastern Rumelia.

Art. 24. In the event of the Sublime Porte and Greece being unable to agree upon the rectification of frontiers suggested in the 13th protocol of the Congress of Berlin, Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, Great Britain, Italy, and Russia reserve to themselves to offer their mediation to the two parties to facilitate negotiations.

Art. 25. The provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall be occupied and administered by Austria-Hungary. The government of Austria-Hungary, not desiring to undertake the administration of the Sandjak of Novibazar, which extends between Servia and Montenegro in a south-easterly direction to the other side of Mitrovitz, the Ottoman administration shall continue to exercise its functions there. Nevertheless, in order to assure the maintenance of the new political state of affairs, as well as the freedom and security of communications, Austria-Hungary reserves the right of keeping garrisons and having military and commercial roads in the whole of this part of the ancient Vilayet of Bosnia.

Arts. 26-33. Recognition of the independence of Montenegro and regulations as to its boundaries, freedom of worship, debt, commerce and defence.

Art. 34. The High Contracting Parties recognise the independence of Servia, subject to the conditions set forth in the following Article.

Art. 35. Differences of religious creed to be no bar to officeholding in Servia; freedom of worship assured.

Art. 36. Boundaries of Servia.

Arts. 37-42. Concerning commercial relations and consular jurisdiction in Servia; railway administration and property rights.

Art. 43. The High Contracting Parties recognise the independence of Rumania, subject to the conditions set forth in the two following Articles.

Art. 44. Differences in religious creed to be no bar to officeholding in Rumania: freedom of worship assured.

Arts. 45-46. Concerning the cession of Bessarabian territory by Rumania to Russia and the addition of the Danubian Delta, etc., to Rumania.

Arts. 47-49. Concerning fisheries, transit dues and rights of foreign consuls in Rumania.

Art. 50. Reciprocity of consular rights between Turkey and Rumania. Transfer of public works in ceded territory.

Art. 52. In order to increase the guarantees which assure the freedom of navigation on the Danube, which is recognised as of European interest, the High Contracting Parties determine that all the fortresses and fortifications existing on the course of the river from the Iron Gates to its mouths shall be rased, and no new ones erected. No vessel of war shall navigate the Danube, below the Iron Gates, with the exception of vessels of light tonnage in the service of the river police and customs. The "stationnaires" of the Powers at the mouths of the Danube may, however, ascend the river as far as Galatz.

Arts. 53-56. Concerning the rights and duties of the European Commission of the Danube.

Art. 57. Rights of Austria-Hungary on the Danube.

Art. 58. The Sublime Porte cedes to the Russian Empire in Asia, the territories of Ardahan, Kars, and Batum, together with the latter port, as well as all the territories comprised between the former Russo-Turkish frontier and the following line:

[Here follows new boundary line between Russia and Turkey.]

Art. 59. His Majesty the Emperor of Russia declares that it is his intention to constitute Batum a free port, essentially commercial.

Art. 60. Restoration of Alaschkerd to Turkey: cession of Khotour to Persia.

Art. 61. The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and Kurds.

Art. 62. Pledge of Turkey to maintain the principle of religious liberty.

Art. 63. The Treaty of Paris, of March 30th, 1856, as well as the Treaty of London, of March 13th, 1871, are maintained in all such of their provisions as are not abrogated or modified by the preceding stipulations.

Art. 64. The present treaty shall be ratified, and the ratifications exchanged at Berlin, within three weeks, or sooner if possible.

In faith whereof the respective Plenipotentiaries have signed it, and affixed to it the seal of their arms. Done at Berlin, the thirteenth day of the month of July, one thousand eight hundred and seventy-eight.

[Signatures.]

### III

#### THE FIRST HAGUE PEACE CONFERENCE

[An international conference of representatives of the principal powers of the world assembled at The Hague, May 18th, 1899, in response to a call issued by the Czar of Russia with a view to concerted action in regard to an amelioration of the hardships of war, the furtherance of the principle of the arbitration of international disputes, the maintenance of a general peace and the possible reduction of the world's military and naval armaments. The states represented were Germany, Austria-Hungary, Belgium, China, Japan, France, Mexico, the United States, Great Britain, Sweden and Norway, Denmark, Russia, Spain, Italy, Servia, Siam, the Netherlands, Rumania, Turkey, Bulgaria, Greece, Switzerland, Luxembourg, Persia and Portugal. Sessions continued 'until July 29th, when the delegates embodied the conclusions reached in a final act for submission to the several states represented. This final act consisted of three conventions, three formal declarations and a series of six resolutions. The resolutions embodied an expression of the desire that certain unsettled points in regard to neutrals, contraband and so forth might be passed upon by an international tribunal at an early date. The conventions were (1) For the pacific settlement of international conflicts; (2) Regarding the laws and customs of war by land; (3) For the adaptation to maritime warfare of the principles of the Geneva Convention, August 22nd, 1864. The declarations had to do with (1) The prohibition of launching explosives and projectiles from balloons; (2) The prohibition of the use of projectiles diffusing poisonous gases; (3) The prohibition of the use of expanding or flattening bullets. The Conventions were signed at once by 16 powers, Germany, Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, Japan, Italy, and several minor powers, withholding their assent temporarily but finally accepting them.]



## A. CONVENTION FOR THE PACIFIC SETTLEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL DISPUTES

*Title I—On the Maintenance of the General Peace*

Art. 1. Agreement of powers to use best efforts to ensure peaceful settlement of international disputes.

*Title II—On Good Offices and Mediation*

Arts. 2-4. Recommendation of the principle of mediation, the exercise of which is never to be considered an unfriendly act.

Art. 5. The functions of the mediator are at an end when once it is declared, either by one of the parties to the dispute, or by the mediator himself, that the means of reconciliation proposed by him are not accepted.

Art. 6. Good offices and mediation, either at the request of the parties at variance, or on the initiative of powers strangers to the dispute, have exclusively the character of advice, and never have binding force.

Art. 7. The acceptance of mediation not to hinder preparations for, or interfere with the prosecution of war.

Art. 8. Concerning special mediation.

*Title III—On International Commissions of Inquiry*

Arts. 9-13. Appointment and procedure of the Commissions of Inquiry.

Art. 14. The report of the International Commission of Inquiry is limited to a statement of facts, and is in no way the character of an arbitral award.

*Title IV—On International Arbitration*

## CHAPTER I—ON THE SYSTEM OF ARBITRATION

Arts. 15-19. Recognition of the efficacy of arbitration conventions, and the implied engagement of loyal submission to the award.

## CHAPTER II—ON THE PERMANENT COURT OF ARBITRATION

Art. 20. Undertaking of the signatory powers to organise a permanent court.

Art. 21. The permanent court shall be competent for all arbitration cases, unless the parties agree to institute a special tribunal.

Art. 22. An international bureau, established at The Hague, serves as record office for the court, and the channel for communications relative to the meetings of the court. It has the custody of the archives and conducts all the administrative business.

Art. 23. Selection of members of the court.

Art. 24. Arbitrators are to be chosen from the general list of members of the court. Alternative provisions in case of failure of direct agreement.

Art. 25. Seat of the tribunal to be ordinarily at The Hague.

Art. 26. The jurisdiction of the permanent court may within the conditions laid down in the regulations, be extended to disputes between non-

signatory powers, or between signatory powers and non-signatory powers if the parties are agreed on recourse to this tribunal.

Art. 27. Reminding powers of the existence of the court not to be considered an unfriendly act.

Art. 28. Institution and duties of a permanent administrative council to be composed of the diplomatic representatives of the signatory powers accredited to The Hague and of the Netherland minister for foreign affairs, who will act as president.

Art. 29. The expenses of the bureau.

### CHAPTER III—ON ARBITRAL PROCEDURE

Arts. 30-31. Regarding agreement to submit to arbitration.

Art. 32. Failing the constitution of the tribunal by direct agreement between the parties, the following course shall be pursued: Each party appoints two arbitrators and these latter together choose an umpire. In case of equal voting the choice of the umpire is entrusted to a third power, selected by the parties by common accord. If no agreement is arrived at on this subject, each party selects a different power, and the choice of the umpire is made in concert by the powers thus selected.

Arts. 33-38. Concerning umpires, seat of tribunal, counsel, and language.

Art. 39. As a general rule the arbitral procedure comprises two distinct phases; preliminary examination of documents, manuscripts and briefs and oral discussion of the agreements of the parties.

Arts. 40-51. Concerning procedure as to documents and arguments.

Art. 52. The award, given by a majority of votes, is accompanied by a statement of reasons. It is drawn up in writing and signed by each member of the tribunal. Those members who are in the minority may record their dissent when signing.

Art. 53. Publication of the award.

Art. 54. The award puts an end to the dispute definitively, and without appeal.

Art. 55. Concerning demand for a revision of the award on account of the discovery of new evidence.

Art. 56. The award binding only on parties who submitted to arbitration. Right to intervene of other nations parties to a convention interpreted.

Art. 57. Parties to arbitration to share expenses equally.

### GENERAL PROVISIONS

Arts. 58-60. Ratification and notification of ratification and the adherence of non-signatory powers.

Art. 61. In the event of one of the high contracting parties denouncing the present Convention, this denunciation would not take effect until a year after its notification made in writing to the Netherland government, and by it communicated at once to all the other contracting powers. This denunciation shall only affect the notifying power.

### B. CONVENTION WITH RESPECT TO THE LAWS AND CUSTOMS OF WAR ON LAND

[Here follow the names of the signatory powers and a statement of the reasons for and the necessities which have led to the following convention.]

Art 1. Contracting powers to accept "Regulations" adopted by the present conference.

Art. 2. Regulations to be binding only in case of war between two contracting powers, and cease to be binding when a non-contracting power joins one of the belligerents.

Arts. 3-5. Concerning ratification by contracting powers, the adherence of non-contracting powers, and denunciation by a contracting power.

#### ANNEX TO THE CONVENTION

##### Regulations Respecting the Laws and Customs of War on Land.

##### *Section I—On Belligerents*

#### CHAPTER I—ON THE QUALIFICATIONS OF BELLIGERENTS

Art. 1. The laws, rights, and duties of war apply not only to the armies, but also to militia and volunteer corps, fulfilling the following conditions: I. To be commanded by a person responsible for his subordinates; II. To have a fixed distinctive emblem recognisable at a distance; III. To carry arms openly; and IV. To conduct their operations in accordance with the laws and customs of war. In countries where militia or volunteer corps constitute the "army," or form part of it, they are included under the term.

Art. 2. The population of a territory which has not been occupied who, on the enemy's approach, spontaneously take up arms to resist the invading troops without having time to organise themselves in accordance with Article I, shall be regarded a belligerent, if they respect the laws and customs of war.

Art. 3. The armed forces of the belligerent parties may consist of combatants and non-combatants. In case of capture by the enemy both have a right to be treated as prisoners of war.

#### CHAPTER II—ON PRISONERS OF WAR

Arts. 4-12. Prisoners of war; their personal property, their imprisonment, utilisation of their labor, maintenance, recapture of escaped prisoners and parole.

Art. 13. Individuals who follow an army without directly belonging to it, such as newspaper correspondents and reporters, sutlers, contractors, who fall into the enemy's hands, and whom the latter think fit to detain, have a right to be treated as prisoners of war, provided they can produce a certificate from the military authorities of the army they were accompanying.

Art. 14. A bureau for information relative to prisoners of war to be instituted, on the commencement of hostilities, in each of the belligerent states, to answer all inquiries about prisoners of war, to keep an individual return for each prisoner of war.

Arts. 15-16. Concerning rights and privileges of relief societies and information bureaus.

Art. 17. Officers taken prisoners may receive, if necessary, the full pay allowed them in this position by their country's regulations, the amount to be repaid by their government.

Arts. 18-20. Right of prisoners to freedom of worship; wills; repatriation.



## CHAPTER III—ON THE SICK AND WOUNDED

Art. 21. The obligations of belligerents with regard to the sick and wounded are governed by the Geneva Convention of the 22nd of August, 1864, subject to any modifications which may be introduced into it.

*Section II—On Hostilities*

## CHAPTER 1—ON MEANS OF INJURING THE ENEMY, SIEGES, AND BOMBARDMENTS

Art. 22. The right of belligerents to adopt means of injuring the enemy is not unlimited.

Art. 23. Besides the prohibitions provided by special conventions, it is especially prohibited: (a) To employ poison or poisoned arms; (b) To kill or wound treacherously individuals belonging to the hostile nation or army; (c) To kill or wound an enemy who, having laid down arms, or having no longer means of defence, has surrendered at discretion; (d) To declare that no quarter will be given; (e) To employ arms, projectiles, or material of a nature to cause superfluous injury; (f) To make improper use of a flag of truce, the national flag, or military ensigns and the enemy's uniform, as well as the distinctive badges of the Geneva Convention; (g) To destroy or seize the enemy's property, unless such destruction or seizure be imperatively demanded by the necessities of war.

Art. 24. Ruses of war and the employment of methods necessary to obtain information about the enemy and the country, are considered allowable.

Art. 25. Attack or bombardment of undefended towns prohibited.

Art. 26. Providing for warning before bombardment.

Art. 27. In sieges and bombardments all necessary steps should be taken to spare as far as possible edifices devoted to religion, art, science, and charity, hospitals and places where the sick and wounded are collected, provided they are not used at the same time for military purposes. The besieged should indicate these buildings or places by some particular and visible signs, which should previously be notified to the assailants.

Art. 28. Pillage of a town even when taken by assault prohibited.

[Chapters II–V, containing Arts. 29–41, are concerned with Spies, Flags of Truce, Capitulations, and Armistices.]

*Section III—On Military Authority over Hostile Territory*

Art. 42. Territory is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army. The occupation applies only to the territory where such authority is established, and in a position to assert itself.

Art. 43. The authority of the legitimate power having actually passed into the hands of the occupant, the latter shall take all steps in her power to re-establish and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while representing, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country.

Arts. 44–45. Any compulsion of the population of occupied territory to take part in military operations against its own country or oath to the hostile powers is prohibited.

Art. 46. Family honours and rights, individual lives and private property,

as well as religious convictions and liberty, must be respected. Private property cannot be confiscated.

Art. 47. Pillage is formally prohibited.

Arts. 48-49. Right of hostile power to levy taxes, dues, and tolls in occupied territory for the administration of such territory.

Art. 50. No general penalty, pecuniary or otherwise, can be inflicted on the population on account of the acts of individuals for which it cannot be regarded as collectively responsible.

Art. 51. No tax shall be collected except under a written order on the responsibility of a commander-in-chief. For every payment a receipt shall be given to the taxpayer.

Art. 52. Neither requisitions in kind, nor services can be demanded from communes or inhabitants except for the necessities of the army of occupation. They must be in proportion to the resources of the country, and of such a nature as not to involve the population in the obligation of taking part in military operations against their country. These requisitions and services shall only be demanded on the authority of the commander in the locality occupied. The contributions in kind shall as far as possible, be paid for in ready money; if not, their receipt shall be acknowledged.

Art. 53. An army of occupation can only take possession of the cash, funds, and property liable to requisition belonging strictly to the state, depots of arms, means of transport, stores and supplies, and generally all movable property of the state which may be used for military operations. Railway plants, land telegraphs, telephones, steamers, and other ships, apart from cases governed by maritime law, as well as depots of arms and, generally, all kinds of war material, even though belonging to companies or to private persons, are likewise material which may serve for military operations, but they must be restored at the conclusion of peace, and indemnities paid.

Art. 54. The plant of railways coming from neutral states whether the property of those states, or of companies or of private persons, shall be sent back to them as soon as possible.

Art. 55. The occupying state shall only be regarded as administrator and usufructuary of the public buildings, real property, forests, and agricultural works belonging to the hostile state, and situated in the occupied country.

Art. 56. The property of the communes, that of religious, charitable, and educational institutions, and those of arts and science, even when state property, shall be treated as private property. All seizure of, and destruction, or intentional damage done to such institutions, to historical monuments, works of art or science, is prohibited.

#### *Section IV—On the Internment of Belligerents and the Care of the Wounded in Neutral Countries.*

Arts. 57-60. Concerning the internment, detention and maintenance of belligerents, and of the sick and wounded of a belligerent in a neutral country. Application of the Geneva Convention.

#### DECLARATIONS

(I) The contracting powers agree to prohibit, for a term of five years, the launching of projectiles and explosives from balloons, or by other new methods of a similar nature.

(II) The contracting parties agree to abstain from the use of bullets which expand or flatten easily in the human body, such as bullets with a hard envelope which does not entirely cover the core, or is pierced with incisions.

(III) The contracting powers agree to abstain from the use of projectiles the object of which is the diffusion of asphyxiating or deleterious gases.

The above declarations are only binding on the contracting powers in the case of a war between two or more of them. They shall cease to be binding from the time when in a war between the contracting powers, one of the belligerents shall be joined by a non-contracting power.

The non-signatory powers can adhere to the above declarations.

In the event of one of the high contracting parties denouncing the declarations, such denunciation shall not take effect until a year after the notification made in writing to the government of the Netherlands, and forthwith communicated by it to all the other contracting powers. This denunciation shall only affect the notifying power.

#### D. CONVENTION FOR THE ADAPTATION TO MARITIME WARFARE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF THE GENEVA CONVENTION OF AUGUST 22ND, 1864

Arts. 1-5. Military hospital-ships owned either by a state or a private individual or society not to be considered belligerent.

Art. 6. Neutral merchantmen, yachts, or vessels, having or taking on board, sick, wounded, or the shipwrecked of the belligerents, cannot be captured for so doing, but they are liable to capture, for any violation of neutrality.

Art. 7. Concerning the inviolability of the religious, medical, or hospital staff of any captured ship.

Art. 8. Sailors and soldiers who are taken on board when sick or wounded, to whatever nation they belong, shall be protected by the captors.

Art. 9. The shipwrecked, wounded, or sick of one of the belligerents who fall into the hands of the other, are prisoners of war.

Art. 10. Concerning the treatment of the shipwrecked, wounded, or sick, landed at a neutral port with the consent of the local authorities.

Art. 11. Concerning limitation, ratification, acceptance by a non-signatory power and denunciation of the above articles.



## BRIEF REFERENCE-LIST OF AUTHORITIES BY CHAPTERS

[The letter *a* is reserved for Editorial Matter.]

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**Bantysh-Kamenski** was born in Moscow in 1788. Between 1825 and 1828 he was governor of Tobolsk, and from 1836 to 1838, governor of Vilna. After that he was engaged in the ministry of the interior. He died at St. Petersburg in 1850. Besides his "History of Little Russia," which is to this day the only complete history in this department, he also wrote a biographical dictionary and the lives of a number of Russian statesmen and commanders.

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**Konstantin Nikolaevitch Bestuzhev-Riumin** was born in 1829. From 1865 to 1892 he was a professor at the university of St. Petersburg. Besides the History, he has been the author of a number of monographs. His method is thorough, painstaking, and minute. He insists on a many-sided study of the national life, and of the exclusion of all philosophical or general theories, and devotes much more space to internal than to external history, paying special attention to forms of family life, political organisation, law, religion, and literature. The introductory chapters give a valuable account of the source and authorities of Russian history. At his death, in 1897, he left his History a torso. It was translated into German by Dr. Schiemann (Mitau, 1873-1875).

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**Alexander Brueckner** was born August 5, 1834, at St. Petersburg. After engaging for six years in business, he turned his attention to the study of history, which he pursued at Heidelberg, Jena, and Berlin. After returning to St. Petersburg he became professor of history at the Imperial School of law, in 1867 professor at the university of Odessa, and in 1872 at Dorpat. Owing to his German origin, he was removed in 1891 from Dorpat and transferred to the university of Kazan, but at his request he was permitted to settle at Jena. Brueckner is, like Schiemann and Eckhardt, a German-Russian, and as such has a special qualification for the presentation of Russian history to a West-European audience. He has written numerous works both in Russian and in German, and takes rank with the foremost historians of Russia.

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*Julius von Eckardt* was born August 1, 1836, at Wolmar in Livonia. From 1860 to 1867 he was the secretary of the Evangelical-Lutheran Consistory at Riga, one of the editors of the *Riga Zeitung*, and an active member of the Liberal-German party in the Baltic provinces of Russia. After the leaders of this party had been removed from their offices on account of their Germanising tendencies, Eckardt emigrated to Germany, where he was active first as a journalist, then as secretary of the Hamburg senate, and finally as German consul at Tunis, Marseilles and Stockholm. Eckardt was the author of numerous works and pamphlets, many of which were published anonymously, on Russian, Baltic, and German affairs. He was less an historian than a publicist and politician; but he had an intimate knowledge of the Russia of his own day, the Russia of Alexander II and Alexander III, and his works are indispensable for an understanding of Russian parties and the vacillations of Russian public opinion. His own point of view is that of a conservative liberal.

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**Baron August von Haxthausen** was born on his father's estate near Paderborn in Westphalia, February 3, 1792. He studied in a mining school and took part in the War of Liberation, 1813-1815. His life was mainly devoted to the study of agrarian conditions in eastern Prussia and in Russia. His researches in the latter country were undertaken at the request of Nicholas I, and he is generally regarded as the discoverer of the *mir* or Russian village community. He died at Hanover, January 1, 1867.

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**Nikolai Mikhailovitch Karamzin** was born December 12, 1765, at the village of Mikhailovka, in the government of Orenburg, and died June 3, 1826, at Tsarskoi Selo. His first literary efforts consisted of translations of essays and poems from foreign languages. In 1789 he undertook a journey to Germany, France, Switzerland and England, the literary result of which was his *Letters of a Russian Traveller*, elegant, poetical and sentimental. These letters were first published in the *Moscow Journal*, of which he was the founder, and which he edited in 1791-1792. In the same periodical also appeared some of his original stories, one of which treats of the fall of Novgorod. From 1794 to 1799 he published a number of miscellanies, *Aglaia*, *The Anides*, and the *Pantheon*, containing original as well as translated matter. In



1802-1803 Karamzin edited the *European Messenger*, destined to become one of the most important Russian reviews, and of which he was the founder. He then turned to the work of his life, the great *History of the Russian Empire*, which was to occupy him till his death. In this last enterprise he was aided and encouraged by the emperor Alexander I, who contributed 60,000 rubles to the cost of publication. The history terminates at the accession of Michael Romanov in 1613. Karamzin's work is the first great Russian history. Its style is elegant and flowing, its erudition large and solid, and it abounds in curious information. It is owing to these qualities that the book still maintains its place, although much of it has by this time become obsolete. The book is especially strong in description of battles and analysis of character. Its spirit is frankly reactionary. The barbarism of early Russia is glossed over by a glittering veil of romanticism, the material, intellectual and moral condition of the Russian people is almost entirely ignored, and the book has been styled the "epic of despotism." A French translation appeared at Paris in 1819-1820, and a German one at Leipzig in 1820-1833.

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Nikolai Ivanovich Kostomarov was born May 4th, 1817, at Ostrogosh, in the government of Voronezh. In 1846 he was appointed to a professorship of history in the university of Kiev. Owing to his activity for the reviving of Little Russian literature he was accused of harbouring separatist tendencies, arrested, imprisoned for a whole year, and then banished to Saratov and forbidden to teach or publish his writings. On the accession of Alexander II he was pardoned, and in 1859 he was appointed professor of history at the university of St. Petersburg. But in 1862, when the university was closed in consequence of students' disorders, he resigned his post, and henceforth devoted himself exclusively to writing. He died at St. Petersburg, April 19th, 1885. His poetical works, which were written in the Little Russian dialect under the *nom de plume* of Jeremiah Halka, were published collectively at Odessa, 1875. Some of them have been translated into German. As an historian Kostomarov occupies a very high place in Russian literature. His work has assumed the form of monographs, owing to his idea that Russian history cannot be understood without an exhaustive study of the numerous ethnological elements and the separate territorial divisions of which the Russian empire is composed. In his own words, "the Russian empire represents an integration of parts that once led an independent existence, and for a considerable time after unification the life of the parts expressed itself in separate tendencies within the general political structure. To discover and disclose these peculiarities of national life in the divisions that make up the Russian empire, was the problem I set before myself in my historical labours." The justification of this view lies in the comparative recency of the Russian empire, its weakness in the assumption that the national or provincial character is unchangeable and immobile. Kostomarov had at his command a vigorous, dramatic style and a lively imagination, and his books contributed greatly toward the popularisation of historical studies in Russia; but he was also possessed in a high degree of the critical faculty, and more than one historical legend has been demolished in his pages. His "Russian History in Biographies" was translated into German and published at Leipzig, 1886-1889.

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Maxim Kovalevski was born at Kharkov in 1851, of a rich and noble family that is remarkable for the number of men—and one woman—of science it has given to Russia. He studied at Berlin, Paris, and London, and in 1877-1887 he was professor of comparative law at

the university of Moscow. Owing to his liberal views he was compelled to give up his position. Since then he has settled at Paris, where he has collected a valuable library, and lectured at various seats of learning in Europe and America—Stockholm, Oxford, Brussels, Chicago. He has written numerous and important works on the history of Russia, France, England, the Caucasus, etc., and is a recognised authority in the departments of pre-history, public and private law, and economic history.

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**Alesei Nikolaievitch Kuropatkin** was born March 29, 1848. In 1866 he joined the army of Turkestan as a lieutenant, served with distinction in the expedition of General Kaufman in 1867-1868, was sent at the head of a diplomatic-military mission to the emir of Kashgar, and studied in 1872-1874 at the academy of the general staff. He joined the French army in Algeria as a volunteer, was active on his return in Turkestan, and then became chief of the Asiatic section of the general staff. In 1877-1878 he was chief of General Skobelev's staff, under whom he also served in the campaign against the Akhal-Tekke Turkomans, 1880-1881. In 1890 he became a lieutenant-general and governor of the Transcaspiian territory, and later minister of war.

He is the author of two important works on the last Russo-Turkish War, which have been translated into French and German, and of a book of travels on Kashgar.

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**Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu** was born in 1842 at Lisieux. Since 1881 he has been professor of modern history at the *école libre de sciences politiques* in Paris. His chief work, "*L'empire des Tsars et les Russes*," is one of the most important works on Russia ever published in western Europe. The first two volumes treat of the geography, ethnology, and the economic and political institutions, while the third is devoted to a study of the Russian church and the sects.

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**Milukov** was born in 1859. From 1886 to 1895 he taught at the university of Moscow. But like so many other Russian professors of history and social science, he came in conflict with the government, and accepted a professorship at the university of Sofia, Bulgaria. He is one of the ablest of the younger generation of Russian historians, his method being the realistic or economic. During several years he was a regular contributor of reviews on Russian literature to the London *Athenæum*.

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**Dmitri Alekseiévitch Milutin** was born July 10, 1816, at Moscow. In 1833 he entered the army as lieutenant, then served in the army of the Caucasus, in which he advanced in 1843 to the post of chief of the commissariat department, and in 1856 to that of chief of the general staff. In 1860 he became first adjutant to the war minister, and in 1862 war minister. In this capacity he devoted himself toward reorganising the army on a modern basis, and in 1874 he introduced universal military service. The campaigns of 1877-1878 showed the shortcomings as well as the improvements of the army under his administration. In 1878 the title of count was conferred on him. In 1881 he was dismissed by Alexander III owing to his expressed dissatisfaction with the reactionary, strictly absolutist manifesto of May 11 of that year. He was the author of a number of works on military history and science, and his history of Souvorov's campaign in Italy appeared in a German translation, at Munich, 1856-1858.

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*Alfred Nicolas Rambaud* was born July 21st, 1842 at Besançon. Appointed in 1864 a teacher at the lyceum of Nancy, he advanced steadily until his appointment to a professorship in the university of Paris in 1882. In 1896 he was minister of education in the Méline cabinet. He is the author of many works on the history of France, and in conjunction with Lavisse he is editing the "*Histoire générale du IV<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu'à nos jours*." His "*History of Russia*" is regarded as the best of its kind that has ever been written by a West-European.

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*Sergei Mikhailovich Soloviov* was born May 17th, 1820. In 1850 he became a professor at the university of Moscow. In 1877 he came into conflict with the reactionary policy of the government toward the universities, and demanded and obtained his dismissal. He died October 16th, 1879. Besides his monumental *History of Russia* he was the author of numerous monographs. *The Relations Between the Russian Princes of the House of Rurik* was of epoch-making importance in Russian historical literature. His *History of the Fall of Poland* has become the standard work on the subject and was translated into German (Gotha, 1865). But all his other works are cast into the shade by his stupendous *History of Russia from the Earliest Times*, in which he proposed to himself a task exceeding, perhaps, the power of any single human being—the presentation of the entire history of his country, based exclusively on original research. The result has, therefore, been not wholly successful, and the later volumes present the appearance of a mere aggregation of materials hastily arranged. But the material is of the finest quality and will serve as a rich quarry for all future historians. Soloviov's method of presentation is calm and dispassionate, his style tranquil and somewhat dry, but admirably clear. From Karamzin to Soloviov the gulf is wide indeed, and perhaps it will be well to present a few of the latter's ideas in order to show the indebtedness that all modern historians of Russia owe to him. Russian society, like all primitive society, was in its origin tribal and based on kinship. The introduction of Varangian rule represents the beginnings of the dissolution of that society and the introduction of political society, based on territory. But society was still in a transitional stage. The warlike followers of the princes were free to renounce their allegiance to one master and to choose another in his stead, and the principle of kinship was still dominant within the house of Rurik itself, thus counteracting the separatist tendencies of the appanages. It was the colonisation of the north and east and the removal of the center of Russian life to the Volga, that first makes possible, as well as necessary, the centralisation of power for the colonists settle on land that belongs to the prince and in cities founded by him, while the colonists themselves come from different parts of Russia and are unconnected by the bond of kinship. In the struggle that follows between the prince and the refractory, unsubmissive elements—whether of the common people or of the noble followers—the prince is victorious and the irreconcilables flee to the forests of the north or to the steppes of the south. Thus we have the origin of the robber bands, and of the Cossacks—another name for the same thing. But the removal of the centre to the Volga also implies the estrangement of Russia from European influences, and the Tatar rule plays in this only a subordinate and external part. The grand princes of Moscow in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are thus seen to be the continuators of the policy of the grand princes of Suzdal in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, while the episode of the period of confusion represents an abortive attempt at the establishment of a milder rule by the Cossacks. Ivan III and Ivan IV, in their struggle with the foreigner, begin to appreciate the superior potency of European civilisation, and are the precursors of Peter the Great. But the new tendencies work with unceasing force during the intervening period, and those who resist the new tendencies become the nonconformists or Raskolniki (Old Ritualists). This tendency finds its parallel in Western Europe, where the task had been accomplished two centuries earlier; but not so the effort to reach the sea, which is a peculiar Russian phenomenon. Soloviov's work reaches down to 1774.

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*Stepniak*, whose real name was Sergius Mikhailovitch Kravtchinski, was born in South Russia, in 1852, of a noble family. When he left school he became an officer in the artillery, but his sympathy with the peasants soon led him into the revolutionary agitation, and he became identified with the terrorist party. In 1880 he was obliged to leave Russia, and after a few years' stay in Switzerland and Italy he came to London, where he lived until 1895, when he was killed by a railway engine at a level crossing at Bedford Park, Chiswick. He was the author of numerous works on contemporary Russia, dealing chiefly with the revolutionary agitation and the condition of the peasantry.

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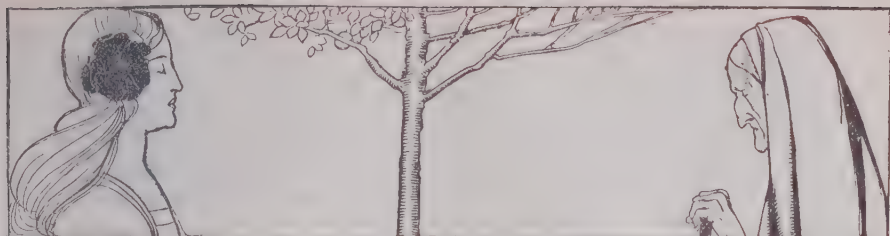
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*Donald Mackenzie Wallace* was born November 11th, 1841. Studied at the universities of Edinburgh, Berlin, Heidelberg, and the École de Droit of Paris. Resided and travelled in various foreign countries, chiefly in France, Germany, Russia, and Turkey, during the years 1863-1884. From 1884 to 1889 he was private secretary to Lords Dufferin and Lansdowne while they were viceroys of India, and during 1890-1891 he accompanied the czarevitch during his tour in India and Ceylon. In 1883 he published a work on "Egypt and the Egyptian Question." His work on "Russia" is universally regarded as the best book on that country that has ever been issued from the pen of an Englishman.

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## A CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY OF RUSSIA

- 862 The Varangian chieftains **Rurik**, Sineus, and Truvor settle at Ladoga, Bielo-ozero and Izborsk. This date is purely conventional.
- 865 Askold and Dir, two Varangian chieftains who had settled at Kiev, lead an unsuccessful expedition against Constantinople.
- 879 Rurik dies, leaving the regency of the principality and the guardianship of his son **Igor to Oleg**.
- 882 Oleg takes possession of Kiev after killing Askold and Dir, and makes that city his capital.
- 907 Oleg leads an expedition consisting of eighty thousand men and two thousand boats against Constantinople. A treaty of peace and commerce is concluded.
- 911 Oleg renews the treaty with the emperor of Constantinople securing valuable trading privileges for the Russians.
- 913 Oleg dies, and is succeeded by **Igor**.
- 941 Igor leads an expedition against Constantinople. His ships are destroyed by the Greek fire, and with great difficulty he brings his troops back to Kiev.
- 944 Igor leads a second expedition against Constantinople. The Byzantines rid themselves of the barbarians by renewing the treaty that had been made with Oleg and also paying a ransom. The treaty is given in full by Nestor. Of the fifty names attached to it three are Slavonic and the rest Norse, which shows that the two races, the conquerors and the conquered, are beginning to be fused.
- 945 Igor is killed by the Drevlians, a Slavonic tribe. His wife Olga assumes the regency during the minority of his son Sviatoslav.
- 955 Olga embraces Greek Christianity. Her subjects, however, remain on the whole pagans.
- 964 **Sviatoslav** assumes the rule. He is the first of the Varangians to bear a Slavonic name.
- 968 Sviatoslav, in the pay of the Byzantine emperor Nicephoros, leads an army of 60,000 men against the Bulgarians of the Danube.
- 970 Sviatoslav, after dividing the country among his three sons, again marches to Bulgaria, this time on his own account.
- 972 Sviatoslav is defeated at Silistria and compelled to evacuate the Balkan peninsula.
- 973 On his retreat, Sviatoslav is surprised and killed by the Petchenegs of the Dnieper.
- 977 Rout of Oleg by Iaropolk and his death.
- 980 **Vladimir**, after killing Iaropolk, becomes sole ruler.
- 988 Vladimir is baptized and makes Greek Christianity the state religion. On the day of his baptism he marries a daughter of the Byzantine emperor Romanos II.
- 1015 Vladimir dies and the country is divided among his eight sons and a nephew.
- 1019 **Iaroslav**, prince of Novgorod and the youngest son of Vladimir, finally becomes grand prince, and removes his capital to Kiev.
- 1054 Iaroslav dies. The country is divided among his five sons, one of whom, Iziaslav, is recognised as grand prince of Kiev. The custom, first introduced by Sviatoslav of breaking up the country into appanages, has now reached its full fruition. Russia has become an extremely loose federation of principalities. The central

authority has been reduced to a nullity, and the period is filled with wars among the petty princes. This, of course, weakened the power of Russia for resisting foreign invaders, and made it an easy prey to the eastern nomadic tribes, from the Polovtsi to the Tatars. The chief events during this period are the foundation of Moscow (1147), the rise of Suzdal in Vladimir, and the pillaging of Kiev (1169) by Prince Andrew Bogoliubski of Suzdal. The hegemony of Kiev comes to an end for all time. The principal figures during this period are those of Vladimir II, surnamed Monomakh (1113-1125), and of Andrew Bogoliubski (1157-1175), who strove to re-establish some sort of unity and was assassinated by his nobles.

1068 The people of Kiev liberate Vseslav and make him grand prince.

1069 Iziaslav is restored by Boleslaw the Bold of Poland.

1073 Iziaslav is again expelled from Kiev by his brothers Sviatoslav and Vsevolod. **Sviatoslav** becomes grand prince.

1076 Death of Sviatoslav. He is succeeded by Vsevolod.

1077 Iziaslav is again restored to the grand principedom.

1078 Iziaslav dies and is succeeded by **Vsevolod**.

1084 Failure of Vsevolod's attempt to conquer Tmoutorakan (Tmutarakan).

1093 Death of Vsevolod and accession of **Sviatopolk**, the second son of Iziaslav. The Polovtsi defeat the Russians in the battle of Tripole.

1097 The congress of princes at Lubetz.

1100 The congress of princes at Uvetitchi.

1111 Defeat of the Polovtsi on the Sula.

1113 Death of Sviatopolk and accession of **Vladimir Monomakh**.

1125 Death of Monomakh.

1147 Legendary date for the foundation of Moscow.

1157 Andrew Bogoliubski becomes prince of Suzdal.

1169 Kiev is captured and plundered by Andrew Bogoliubski.

1175 Andrew Bogoliubski is assassinated.

1221 Nijni-Novgorod is founded by Iuri, grand prince of Suzdal.

1223 First invasion of Russia by the Mongols under Jenghiz Khan. The Russians are defeated on the banks of the Kalka, near where it flows into the Sea of Azov and adjoining the present site of the town of Mariupol.

1237-38 The Mongols, under Jenghiz Khan's grandson, Batu, invade northern Russia, burn Moscow, defeat twice the army of Suzdal (at Kolomna on the Oku and on the Sit), and plunder Riazan, Suzdal, Iaroslavl, and Tver. But Novgorod is spared.

1239-40 The Mongols ravage southern Russia, burn Tchernigov and Kiev, and extend their conquests as far west as Volhinia and Galicia. All Russia is now under the yoke of the Mongols, except the territory of Novgorod.

1240 Alexander, prince of Novgorod, defeats the Swedes on the Neva; whence his surname Nevski.

1242 Batu establishes the Golden Horde of Kiptchak, with Sarai, on one of the mouths of the Volga, as its capital. It constituted one of the five divisions of the great empire of Jenghiz Khan.

1245 Alexander Nevski defeats the German Sword-bearing Knights on Lake Peipus, in the "battle of the ice."

1260 Novgorod submits to the Mongols and consents to pay tribute.

1263 Death of Alexander Nevski.

1303 Death of **Daniel Alexandrovitch**, founder of the Moscow dynasty.

1320 Prince Michael of Tver is executed by order of the khan.

1321 Vladimir in Volhinia is conquered by the Lithuanians. Kiev and all west Russia soon become Lithuanian.

1404 Smolensk is annexed to Lithuania. A son of Alexander Nevski, named Daniel, was the founder of the principality of Moscow, to which he added the cities of Kolomna and Pereiaslavl. He was succeeded by his son **Iuri Danilovitch** (1303-1325), who annexed Mozhaïsk. In 1313 he marries a sister of Usbek Khan. In 1320 he is appointed grand prince in place of his murdered rival, Michael of Tver. Iuri is the initiator of the Muscovite policy to dominate Russia with the aid of the Tatars, for whom the Muscovite princes henceforth act as tax collectors. In 1325 he was assassinated by Dmitri, son of Michael of Tver, and **Alexander**, Michael's second son is appointed grand prince. But the grand principedom soon reverts to Moscow, and Alexander is executed in 1329. Iuri is succeeded by his brother **Ivan Kalita** (1328-1340), who receives from Usbek Khan Vladimir and Novgorod together with the grand principedom, and who also adds Tver to his dominions. He assures the pre-eminence of Moscow in the Russian church by inducing the metropolitan to reside there, thereby also securing the alliance of the all-powerful church in the realisation of his political schemes. **Simeon the Prond**, son of Kalita (1340-1353), **Ivan II**, (1353-1359), brother of Simeon, and **Dmitri Donskoi** (1359-1389), son of Ivan II, continue the policy of dominating Russia with the aid of the Tatars,

whom they conciliate with Russian gold, while they gain the support of the nobles by enhancing their power at the expense of the princes of appanages. Towards the end of his reign Dmitri feels himself strong enough to resist the Tatars, whom he defeats in the battle of Kulikovo (1380); but two years later the Mongol general, Toktamish, invades Russia, burns Moscow and puts to death a great number of the inhabitants. Dmitri was succeeded by his son **Vasili** (1389-1425). On the death of the latter, first his brother, and then his brother's son, laid claim to the succession; but the direct lineal succession triumphed twice in the person of Vasili's son, known as **Vasili the Blind** (1425-1462).

## THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

- 1407 The river Ugra is made the boundary between Moscow and Lithuania.
- 1408 Invasion of Moscow by the Tatars, who burn many towns and villages, but fail to capture the Kremlin.
- 1412 Vasili Dmitrievitch goes to the Horde, pays tribute, and the khan confirms to him the grand principedom.
- 1435 Vasili Vasilievitch blinds his cousin Vasili Kossoi.
- 1446 Vasili Vasilievitch is blinded by Dmitri Shemiaka of Galicia.
- 1448 The archbishop Jonas is elected metropolitan by an assembly of the Russian bishops, without regard to the patriarch of Constantinople.
- 1453 Dmitri Shemiaka is poisoned.
- 1462 **Ivan III**, son of Vasili ascends the throne. He assumes the title *gossudar* (lord, autocrat), and is regarded as the founder of autocracy.
- 1463 The princes of Iaroslav cede their domain to Moscow.
- 1464 Ivan gives the hand of his sister to Vasili, prince of Riazan, thus making sure of the approximate annexation of that appanage.
- 1469 The khanate of Kazan becomes a dependency of Moscow.
- 1472 Ivan conquers Perm. Marries the Byzantine princess Sophia, niece of the last emperor of Constantinople, Constantine Palæologus. Assumes the title of czar and adopts the two-headed eagle as the symbol of his authority. In consequence of this marriage many Greeks come to Moscow, bringing with them Byzantine culture.
- 1474 The princes of Rostov sell their domain to Moscow.
- 1478 The republic of Novgorod is annexed. The principal citizens are brought prisoners to Moscow, their property is confiscated, the possessions of the clergy serve to endow the boyar followers of Ivan. Ahmed, khan of the Golden Horde, sends ambassadors demanding homage. Ivan puts the envoys to death, except one, who was to take back the news to his master. The reply of Ahmed to this outrage is a declaration of war.
- 1479 Ivan issues Sudebnik, or Books of Laws, second Russian code after the Russkaia Pravda of Iaroslav. A comparison of two codes shows how much the Russian character was lowered by Mongol domination; it is in the reign of Ivan that we first hear of the use of the knout.
- 1480 The Mongols invade Russia. The two armies meet on the banks of the Oka and flee from each other in mutual fear. On his retreat Ahmed is killed and his army is annihilated by the Nogai Tatars.
- 1482 Cannon is used for first time at the siege of Fellin in Livonia. It was founded by the architect and engineer Aristotle Fioraventi of Bologna, the builder of the Kremlin.
- 1485 The principality of Tver is annexed to Moscow.
- 1485 The last prince of Vereya leaves his domains by will to Ivan.
- 1489 Viatka, a daughter of the city of Novgorod and Pskov, and like them a republic, is annexed.
- 1489 Poppel comes to Moscow as the first German ambassador.
- 1491 Mines of Petchora discovered. For first time silver and copper money is coined at Moscow from produce of Russian mines.
- 1492-1503 A large part of Little Russia is reconquered from Lithuanians.
- 1494 Alexander of Lithuania marries Ivan's daughter Helen.
- 1495 Ivan, considering himself to have been insulted by a Hanseatic city, orders all merchants of all the cities of that union at Novgorod to be put in chains and their property confiscated. This marks the end of Novgorod's commercial greatness.
- 1499 The princes of Tchernigov and Novgorod-Seversk come over to Moscow.



## THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY

- 1501 Russians routed in the battle of the Siritza, near Izborsk, by the grand-master of the Teutonic order, Hermann von Plettenberg.
- 1503 A treaty is concluded with Lithuania. Moscow retains all her conquests, and Ivan is granted the title of sovereign of all Russia.
- 1505 Death of Ivan. **Vasili**, second son of Ivan, succeeds him.
- 1508 The Russian army is defeated by the revolted people of Kazan. The victors unite with the Tatars of the Crimea, invade Russia and carry their ravages up to the gates of Moscow. Vasili pays a large ransom for the safety of his capital, and signs a treaty by which he engages to become tributary to the khan. Thirty thousand prisoners are carried off by the invaders, and sold at Kaffa to the Turks.
- 1510 Pskov, last Slavonic republic, annexed.
- 1514 Smolensk is taken from the Lithuanians after being held by them for 110 years. But in the same year the Lithuanians defeat the Russian force at Orsha, on left bank of the Dnieper. Thirty thousand Russians are said to have fallen in battle.
- 1521 Riazan and Novgorod-Seversk, the last independent principalities, are annexed. Crimean Tatars devastate the country.
- 1523 A second expedition against Kazan, consisting of 150,000 men, fails of its object; one of its two divisions is almost annihilated.
- 1530 Third expedition against Kazan. The city is surprised by night and 60,000 inhabitants are massacred. But the Russian commander, bribed, it is said, by the remaining Kazanians, enters into a treaty of peace with them.
- 1533 Vasili dies. Regency of his wife, Helena Glinska, 1533-37. Supremacy of the Shuiski, 1537-43. Ivan is under the influence of the Glinski till 1547, when they were torn in pieces by the infuriated Moscow populace. Such was the youth of Ivan the Terrible.
- 1547 **Ivan** is crowned and takes the title of Czar.
- 1550 The Sudebnik of his grandfather Ivan III is revised.
- 1551 The Stoglav, or Book of the Hundred Chapters, by which the affairs of the church were regulated, is issued.
- 1552 Kazan, which had freed itself during his father's reign, is annexed.
- 1553 Chancellor arrives at Archangel and proceeds to Moscow. The English secure great trading privileges and establish factories in the country.
- 1556 Astrakhan is annexed. The power of the Mongols is now almost completely broken.
- 1558 Treaty with Elizabeth of England. A Russian army invades Livonia and takes several towns. The Teutonic Order thereupon makes an alliance with Poland.
- 1564 Ivan, with a few personal friends, retires to Alexandrovskoe, near Moscow, and does not return until after repeated supplications by his nobles. A printing press established at Moscow.
- 1571 The Mongols of Crimea invade Russia, burn Moscow, drag 100,000 Russians into slavery. Next year they make another raid, but are defeated.
- 1580 Conquest of Siberia by the Cossack Iermak as far as the Irtysh river.
- 1581 Ivan kills his eldest son in a fit of fury.
- 1582 Peace of Sapolye. Ivan is forced to surrender to Stephen Bathori (Battori) king of Poland all his conquests in Livonia. The attempt to open for Russia a passage in the Baltic fails for the present.
- 1584 Death of Ivan. **Feodor**, his weak-minded son, succeeds Ivan. Boris Godunov, Feodor's brother-in-law, is the real ruler.
- 1587 A company of Parisian merchants obtains trading privileges.
- 1590 War with Sweden.
- 1591 Dmitri, the younger brother of Feodor (Ivan's son by his seventh wife), and the only obstacle to Godunov's ambition, dies at Uglitch. The khan of Crimea makes one of his periodical raids against Moscow, but is repulsed with great slaughter.
- 1592 Godunov issues a ukase (edict) binding the peasant to the soil, thus reducing him to unmitigated serfdom. As a result, peasants emigrate in large numbers to the Cossacks in order to preserve their freedom.
- 1597 An edict is issued prescribing the most vigorous measures for the recovery of fugitive serfs.
- 1598 Death of Feodor, last of the Ruriks. **Boris Godunov** is elected to succeed him, first by the Council of Boyars (douma) and then by a General Assembly (Sobór).

## THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

- 1601 A terrible famine, accompanied by pestilence, devastates Russia. Boris causes immense quantities of provisions to be distributed in Moscow, whither multitudes

flock from all the provinces. Five hundred thousand are said to have perished in Moscow alone, which had become a city of cannibals.

1604 Dmitri the Impostor invades Russia and is victorious on the Desna.

1605 Dmitri is defeated on the plain of Dobrinitehi, not far from Ord. Godunov dies. His son **Feodor** is proclaimed his successor. Basmanov, commander of the army, proclaims Dmitri. Feodor and his mother are strangled and Dmitri enters Moscow.

1606 A rebellion breaks out under Vasilii Shuiski. Dmitri is killed. **Shuiski** is proclaimed emperor.

1608 A second false Dmitri defeats Shuiski's army near Volkhov, but fails in an attack on the Troitsa monastery, near Moscow. He is murdered by one of his followers in 1610.

1609 The Poles invade Russia and lay siege to Smolensk.

1610 Shuiski is defeated at Klushino and **Wladislaw**, son of the Polish king, is crowned czar.

1611 Revolt of the patriots led by Minin and Prince Pojarski.

1612 The Poles are driven out of Moscow.

1613 **Michael Romanov** is chosen czar.

1617 Wladislaw appears with an army under the walls of Moscow, but is repulsed. The Treaty of Stolbovna is brought about by the mediation of England and Holland: the Russians give up Kexholm, Karelia and Ingria to Sweden, and receive in return Novgorod, which was lost during the Troublous Period.

1618 Wladislaw consents to abandon his claim to the Russian throne, the czar gives up his claims to Livonia, Tchernigov and Smolensk, and an armistice is concluded for fourteen years.

1619 Philarete, the father of Czar Michael, comes back from the Polish captivity, is elected patriarch, and becomes his son's associate in the government of the country.

1627 The Cossacks of the Don conquer Azov, which they offer to the czar. After convoking a sobor, which shows little enthusiasm for the enterprise, the czar orders the Cossacks to evacuate it.

1633 War with Lithuania.

1634 Peace of Polianovka: the czar surrenders all claims to Livonia and all the country that once belonged to the Order, as well as to Smolensk, Tchernigov and Seversk. The Polish king abandons his claim to the Russian throne.

1645 Death of Michael. He is succeeded by **Alexis**.

1648 Revolt at Moscow against misgovernment of the czar's favorites, particularly Morosov, and depreciation of the coinage. This revolt led to a new codification of the laws (the Ulozhenie), which was based on the preceding codes of Ivan III and IV, and was sanctioned by a sobor convoked at Moscow. A new police institution, the "chamber of secret affairs," is created for the prevention and suppression of popular uprisings. The Cossacks of the Ukraine revolt from Poland under the leadership of Bogdan Chmielnicki.

1649-50 Khabarov occupies the course of the Amur.

1654 The Ukraine becomes a Russian protectorate. War with Poland.

1655 Outbreak of war between Sweden and Poland. The Russians occupy Vilna and join the Swedes in their march upon Warsaw.

1656 Truce with Poland. The Russian arms are turned against Sweden. At first they were successful, and Narva, Dorpat and other places in Esthonia were taken, Livonia was conquered, but Riga was besieged in vain, and after many losses all the conquests are restored.

1655-56 The patriarch Nikon calls two councils of the church for the purpose of revising the Bible and service-books. In consequence of this change a great schism takes place in the Russian church. The adherents of the old books are known as Ras-kolniki, and are to this day subjects of persecution.

1667 Peace of Andrussov with Poland: Little Russia east of the Dnieper, including Smolensk, Kiev, Seversk, Vitebsk, and Polotsk, is acquired by Russia. Thus the territory which had been taken by the Lithuanians and annexed to Poland by Treaty of Lublin (1569) became Russian again.

1670 Rebellion of Stenka Razdin. He takes Tzaritzin, Astrakhan, Saratov, Samara, Nijni-Novgorod, Tambov, and Penza.

1671 Stenka Razdin is defeated near Simbirsk and executed at Moscow.

1676 Death of Alexis. He is succeeded by his eldest son, **Feodor**. During his reign the books of pedigrees (*razviadnie Knigi*), which determines the rank of each family and the office to which it was entitled (*mestnichestvo*), were destroyed.

1682 Death of Feodor. After a sanguinary outbreak of the Strelitz, which lasted three days, **Ivan** and **Peter** were declared joint sovereigns, and their sister Sophia was to act as regent during their minority.

1689 Treaty of Nerchinsk: the fertile region of the Amur, conquered by a handful of Cossacks, is restored to the Chinese, and the fortress Albazin is rased.

- 1696 Peter takes from the Turks the fort of Azov, situated at the mouth of the Don, and converts it into a naval port. In its vicinity he commences the building of the new town of Taganrog.
- 1697-98 Peter makes his first journey through Europe.
- 1698 The Strelitz break out into open revolt, which is suppressed with great bloodshed. Their corps is dissolved.
- 1699 Peter forms a coalition with Poland and Denmark against Sweden.
- 1700 Beginning of the Northern War. The Russian forces sustain a severe defeat at Narva. The beginning of the new Russian year is changed from the first of September to the first of January.

## THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

- 1703 Peter begins the building of St. Petersburg.
- 1706 The Cossacks of the Don revolt.
- 1707 The secret marriage of Peter with Catherine takes place.
- 1709 Mazeppa, hetman of the Little-Russian Cossacks, revolts. Battle of Pultowa.
- 1710 Turkey declares war against Russia.
- 1711 The old supreme council of boyars (*douma*) is replaced by the senate, into which merit and service might obtain admission independently of noble origin. By the terms of the Treaty of the Pruth Peter surrenders to the Turks his artillery, gives back Azov, and undertakes to rase Taganrog.
- 1714 The Russians gain over the Swedes the important naval victory of Åland or Hankül. Peter becomes master of Finland.
- 1717 Peter makes a second tour through Europe. A general police, modelled on that of France, is instituted.
- 1718 Peter's eldest son, Alexis, is executed. The old prikaz is replaced by colleges for foreign affairs, finance, justice, and commerce.
- 1719 The Russians ravage Sweden almost up to the gates of Stockholm.
- 1720 The Russians renew their devastation of Sweden, notwithstanding the presence of an English fleet.
- 1721 Treaty of Nystad with Sweden: Peter is left master of Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, and the districts of Viborg and Kexholm in Finland. Peter promulgates an ukase (afterwards abrogated by Paul) that the sovereign has the right of naming his successor. The Patriarchate is abolished and its income united to the public revenue. In its place the holy synod is established for the supreme direction of church affairs.
- 1722 The *tehin* is established: whoever enters the service of that state becomes a gentleman. The exporting of merchandise through Archangel is prohibited in favour of St. Petersburg.
- 1722-24 War with Persia. The provinces of Ghilan, Mazandaran, and Astrabad (Astarabath) are annexed to Russia.
- 1725 Death of Peter. He is succeeded by his second wife, **Catherine**.
- 1726-27 The St. Petersburg Academy of Science founded.
- 1727 Death of Catherine. She is succeeded by **Peter II**, son of Alexis. Menshikov, who was the real ruler of Russia under Catherine, is banished to Siberia.
- 1730 Death of Peter II. **Anna**, daughter of Ivan, the brother of Peter the Great, is chosen his successor after submitting to the terms dictated by the great nobles—terms intended to convert the government into an oligarchy.
- 1733-35 War of the Polish Succession: Russia intervenes on behalf of the elector of Saxony, Augustine III, and defeats the French attempt to replace Stanislaus Leszczyński on the throne of Poland.
- 1735 Russia surrenders her Persian possessions in return for extensive trading privileges to Russian merchants.
- 1735-39 War with Turkey, in conjunction with Austria. The Russians conquer Otechakov at the mouth of the Dnieper and the important fortress of Khotin on the same river. But at the peace of Belgrade, hastily concluded by the Austrians, they retain only Azov.
- 1740 Death of Anna. **Ivan VI**, her grand-nephew, succeeds her, with Biron, duke of Courland, as regent during his minority.
- 1741 A coup d'état, led by Field-marshal Münich, deposed Biron and raises Princess Anna, mother of Ivan, to the regency. But Münich is the real ruler. A palace revolution deposes Ivan, sends Münich to Siberia, and raises to the throne **Elizabeth**, a daughter of Peter the Great by Catherine. Sweden, urged on by France, declares war. The Swedes are defeated at Vilmansstrand.
- 1742 Seventeen thousand Swedes surrender at Helsingfors. The Armenian churches in both capitals are suppressed by order of the holy synod.



- 1743 Treaty of Åbo with Sweden: Russia acquires the southern part of Finland as far as the river Kymmene.
- 1753 The custom-houses of the interior, as well as many toll duties, are suppressed.
- 1755 The first Russian university is founded at Moscow.
- 1756 The first Russian public theatre is established at St. Petersburg. Three years later another theatre is established at Moscow.
- 1757 The Russians under Apraxin defeat at Jägerndorf the Prussians under Lewald.
- 1758 The Russians under Fermor are defeated by Frederick the Great at Zorndorf. The Academy of Fine Arts is established at St. Petersburg.
- 1759 Saltikov defeats Frederick at Kunersdorf.
- 1760 The Russians plunder Berlin.
- 1762 Death of Elizabeth. She is succeeded by her nephew, **Peter III**, son of her sister Anna. He makes peace with Frederick, restores to him east Prussia, which was entirely in the hands of the Russians, and orders his army to aid Frederick against the Austrians. Peter issues an ukase freeing the nobility from the obligation of entering upon some state employment; is assassinated and is succeeded by his wife, **Catherine**. Catherine recalls the Russian armies from Prussia.
- 1764 Assassination of Prince Ivan. Resumption of the ecclesiastical lands with their one million serfs by the state.
- 1766-68 A great *sobor* is convened, first at Moscow and then at St. Petersburg, for the compilation of a new code. It fails of its object.
- 1767 An ukase forbids serfs to bring complaints against their masters, who were authorized to send them at will to Siberia or to force them into the army.
- 1767-74 War with Turkey.
- 1768 Massacre of Jews at Uman, in the Government of Kiev, under the leadership of the Cossack Gonta.
- 1769 The Russians under Galitzin take Khotin.
- 1770 Rumiantzev is victorious over the Tatars on the banks of the Larga and over the grand vizir at Kagul. Three hundred thousand Kalmucks, with their wives and children, their cattle and their tents, flee from Russia to China.
- 1771 Conquest of the Crimea by Dolgoruki. Annihilation of the Turkish fleet at Tchesme.
- 1772 The Congress of Fokshani fails to bring about peace and the war is renewed. First division of Poland. Russia acquires White Russia, including Polotsk, Vitebsk, Orsha, Mohilev, Mstislavl, Gmel.
- 1773-74 Pugatchev's revolt.
- 1774 Peace of Kutchuk-Kainardji: the sultan acknowledges the independence of the Tatars of the Crimea, the Bug and the Kuban, and cedes to Russia Azov on the Don, Kinburn at the mouth of the Dnieper, and all the fortified places of the Crimea.
- 1775 The Zaparog military republic of the Cossacks is dissolved. The empire is reorganized. Instead of fifteen provinces there are created fifty governments subdivided into districts.
- 1783 Formal annexation of the Crimea and the country of the Kuban.
- 1787-92 Second war with Turkey in conjunction with Austria.
- 1788-89 War with Sweden. The Peace of Værela restores the *status quo ante bellum*.
- 1788 The storming of Otchakov by Potemkin, accompanied by an indiscriminate massacre.
- 1789 Suvarov wins the battles of Fokshani and Rimnik. Potemkin takes Bender.
- 1790 Suvarov takes Ismail. The Austrians sign the Peace of Sistova, but the Russians continue the war. Repnin defeats the grand vizir at Matchin.
- 1792 Treaty of Jassy. The Russians retain only Otchakov and the seaboard between the Bug and the Dniester.
- 1793 Second division of Poland. Russia obtains an enormous extension of territory in Lithuania and absorbs the rest of Volhina, Podolia, and Ukraine.
- 1794 Kosciuszko is defeated by Fersen at Maciejowice and Suvarov storms Praga, a suburb of Warsaw.
- 1795 Third division of Poland. Russia obtains the rest of Lithuania, besides other territories which at one time had been Russian, while Poland proper is divided between Austria and Prussia. The former power also obtains Galicia or Red Russia. Courland is annexed by Russia. Its last duke, Peter Biron, voluntarily renounces it in return for a yearly revenue.
- 1796 Death of Catherine. Accession of her son **Paul**.
- 1798 Paul promulgates the line of succession according to primogeniture, with precedence in the male line. Russia joins the second coalition against France, with England, Austria, Naples and Turkey.
- 1799 Suvarov defeats Moreau on the Adda, Macdonald on the Trebbia, and Joubert at Novi. Korsakov is defeated by Massena at Zurich, and Suvarov is forced to make his memorable retreat across the Alps.
- 1800 Reconciliation with France, chiefly owing to the English occupation of Malta.

## THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

- 1801 Assassination of Paul. His son **Alexander** succeeds him. The new emperor concludes treaties of peace with England, France, and Spain. Georgia, or Grusia, is formally annexed, and a war with Persia follows in consequence.
- 1802 Eight ministries are established in place of the colleges founded by Peter the Great.
- 1804 The Persians are defeated at Etchmiadzin.
- 1805 Alexander joins the third coalition with Austria and England. Battle of Austerlitz.
- 1806 Conquest of the Persian province of Shirvan, and the taking of Derbent.
- 1806 War with Turkey. Alexander joins fourth coalition, of which Prussia is also a member. Battles of Pultusk and Golymin.
- 1807 Battles of Eylau and Friedland. Peace of Tilsit. Russia acquires Bielostok, a part of Prussian Poland.
- 1808 War with Sweden. Finland is overrun by a Russian army.
- 1809 By the Treaty of Fredrikshamn Sweden surrenders Finland. The Finns are allowed complete autonomy, the czar being its grand duke. War with Turkey. The Russians are defeated at Silistria.
- 1810 The Russians are victorious over the Turks at Batyen on the Danube.
- 1811 The Russians are victorious at Rustchuk. Twenty thousand Turks surrender at Gurgevo.
- 1812 By the Treaty of Bukharest Russia acquires Bessarabia and a large part of Moldavia, with the fortresses of Khotin and Bender. The Pruth becomes its boundary. The district of Viborg, which was acquired from Sweden in 1744, is added to Finland. Count Speranski, leader of the liberal party, is dismissed. Later he was exiled to Peru. Invasion of Russia by Napoleon. Battles of Smolensk and Borodino. Firing of Moscow. Napoleon orders a retreat (October 18). Battle of Malojaroslavetz compels Napoleon to retreat by his old route. The Beresina crossed (November 26th-29th).
- 1813 By the Treaty of Kalish Alexander engages not to lay down his arms until Prussia had recovered all its lost territories. The Russians and Prussians are defeated at Lützen and Bautzen. The allies are repulsed before Dresden. Battle of Leipsic. Peace of Gulistan with Persia. Russia obtains Baku and the western shore of the Caspian.
- 1814 The Russians invade France together with the allies. At the congress of Vienna Alexander insists on the creation of a kingdom of Poland under his rule.
- 1815 By the Treaty of Vienna Alexander obtains all of Poland, except Galicia, Cracow, and Posen. Conclusion of the Holy Alliance.
- 1816 Abolition of serfdom in Esthonia.
- 1817 Abolition of serfdom in Courland.
- 1818 Abolition of serfdom in Livonia. In all Baltic provinces the emancipated peasants receive no portion of the land, which remains in possession of the nobles. A constitution and separate administration are granted to the Polish kingdom.
- 1819 Establishment of military colonies in the border provinces of the north, west and south.
- 1825 Death of Alexander. His brother **Nicholas I** succeeds him. Revolt of the Dekabrist.
- 1826 War with Persia.
- 1827 War with Turkey. The Turkish fleet is destroyed at Navarino by the combined fleets of England, France, and Russia.
- 1828 Peace of Turkmanchai. Persia cedes the provinces of Erivan and Nakhitchevan, pays a war indemnity, and grants important trading privileges. The Russians invade the Danubian principalities and take Varna. Paskievitch takes Kars.
- 1829 Diebitsch defeats the Turks at Kluvetchi, takes Silistria, crosses the Balkans, and takes Adrianople. Peace of Adrianople. Russia gets control of the mouths of the Danube, of a portion of Armenia including Erzerum, and receives a war indemnity.
- 1830 The new code, a complete collection of the laws of the Russian Empire, is promulgated. Polish insurrection. The Russians are compelled to evacuate the country.
- 1831 Paskievitch takes Warsaw. The building of new Roman Catholic churches in Poland is prohibited.
- 1832 Poland is incorporated with Russia. The constitution granted by Alexander is annulled, and Poland is divided into five governments.
- 1833 By the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi Russia obtains additional rights to meddle in the internal affairs of Turkey.
- 1839 A Russian expedition to the khanate of Khiva is compelled to return.
- 1849 A Russian army is sent into Hungary. Capitulation of Görgei at Villagos.
- 1853 The Crimean War. The Russians occupy the Danubian principalities. Destruction of the Turkish fleet at Sinope.

- 1854 France and England join Turkey. Battle of the Alma. Siege of Sebastopol. Fall of Bomarsund.
- 1855 Sardinia joins the allies. Battles of Balaklava, Inkerman, and Tchernaiia. Fall of Sebastopol. Bombardment of Sveaborg. The Russians take Kars. Nicholas I dies. His son **Alexander II** succeeds him.
- 1856 Treaty of Paris. Russia relinquishes the mouths of the Danube and a portion of Bessarabia, restores Kars, gives up the protectorate over the Oriental Christians and the Danubian principalities, and agrees to have no war vessels in the Black Sea.
- 1858 General Muraviev signs the treaty of Aigun with the Chinese, by which Russia acquires the entire left bank of the Amur.
- 1859 Capture of Schamyl.
- 1861 Emancipation of the serfs.
- 1863 Polish insurrection.
- 1864 Final pacification of the Caucasus. Reforms in judicial administration. Institution of representative assemblies (zemstvos) for governments and districts. By ukase, Polish peasants are given in fee-simple the lands which they had cultivated as tenants-at-will.
- 1865 Tashkend taken from the emir of Bokhara; organisation of the province of Turkestan.
- 1866 Karakozov fires at the emperor at St. Petersburg.
- 1867 Governor-generalship of Turkestan created. Sale of Alaska to the United States. A Slavophil congress is held at Moscow. The prince of Mingrelia relinquishes his sovereign rights for one million rubles. Russian is substituted for German as the official language of Livonia, Esthonia, and Courland. Peasants are given the ownership of the lands which they occupied as tenants.
- 1868 Samarkand taken from Bokhara.
- 1870 Khiva is stormed by General Kauffman.
- 1871 The Pontus Conference, held at London, abolishes paragraph 11 of the Paris treaty delimiting Russian fortifications and naval forces on the Black Sea.
- 1873 The right bank of the Amu Daria (Jaxartes) is annexed and the rest of Khiva becomes a vassal state.
- 1874 Universal compulsory military service is introduced. The vice-royalty of Poland is abolished, and its administrative fusion with Russia becomes complete.
- 1875 Russia cedes to Japan the Kurile islands. Japan gives up its claims to the southern part of Sakhalin.
- 1876 The khanate of Khokand is absorbed and transformed into the province of Ferghana.
- 1877 War with Turkey. The Russian advance is beaten back in Europe and in Asia. The Shipka pass alone remains in Russian hands. Three defeats before Plevna, which is besieged and forced to capitulate with 40,000 men. Kars is taken.
- 1878 The Russians cross the Balkans. The Shipka army is captured, Adrianople taken, the last Turkish army is almost annihilated, and the Russians reach the Sea of Marmora. Treaty of San Stefano; Treaty of Berlin. Assassination of General Trepov at St. Petersburg, and acquittal of Vera Zassulitch. Assassination of General Mezentsev, chief of gendarmerie.
- 1879 Soloviev fires six shots at the emperor. An attempt is made to wreck the train by which the czar was travelling from Moscow to St. Petersburg.
- 1880 An attempt is made to blow up the Winter Palace. Loris-Melikov is placed at the head of a commission with dictatorial powers.
- 1881 Assassination of the emperor. The Tekke-Turkomans are subjected by Skobelev. Anti-Jewish riots in southern Russia.
- 1882 The "May laws" of Ignatiev issued against the Jews. Agrarian disturbances in the Baltic provinces give the government a welcome pretext for additional measures of russification.
- 1883 **Alexander III** is crowned at Moscow.
- 1884 The Turkomans of the Merv oasis make submission to Russia. The emperors of Russia, Germany and Austria meet at Skierniewice, where they form the Three Emperors' League for the term of three years.
- 1885 The Afghans are defeated by General Komarov at Penjdeh. The Trans-Caspian railway is begun.
- 1886 Contrary to Article 59 of the Treaty of Berlin, Batum is transformed into a fortified naval port.
- 1887 A convention between England and Russia is signed for the delimitation of the Russo-Afghan frontier. The Russian advance in the direction of Herat is stopped.
- 1888 An army officer named Timoviev makes an attempt on the czar's life. The Trans-Caspian railway is completed. Samarkand is linked with the Caspian. The imperial train is derailed at Borki. The czar and his family escape injury.



- 1890 Three commissions are appointed to prepare plans for assimilating the Finnish postal, monetary, and fiscal systems with those of the empire.
- 1891 A French squadron under Admiral Gervais visits Kronstadt. A succession of famines begins. An ukase is issued directing the construction of a railway line which should connect the European system with the Pacific coast. Work is commenced on seven sections simultaneously.
- 1893 A Russian squadron under Admiral Avelan visits Toulon.
- 1894 A military convention, arranged by the military authorities of Russia and France, is ratified. Death of Alexander III and accession of **Nicholas II.**
- 1895 An Anglo-Russian convention is signed settling the disputes as to the Pamirs. Russia, in conjunction with Germany and France, forces Japan to revise the terms of the Treaty of Shimonoseki by giving up the Liao-tung peninsula. Russia obtains the right to carry the Siberian railway across Chinese territory from Stretensk to Vladivostok, thus avoiding a long detour, besides getting control of North Manchuria.
- 1896 Coronation of the czar at Moscow. Catastrophe on the Khodinski plain. The emperor visits Germany, Austria, England, and France.
- 1897 President Faure makes an official visit to St. Petersburg, and the term "alliance" is for the first time used in the complimentary speeches. Specie payment is established.
- 1898 Russia leases Port Arthur and Talienwan, and obtains leave to carry a branch of the Trans-Siberian line through Manchuria to the sea. An imperial decree declares that the powers of the Finnish diet are to be limited to matters of strictly local, not imperial, concern. General Bobrikov is appointed Governor-general of Finland.
- 1899 During the Boxer uprising the Chinese authorities in Manchuria declare war against Russia. The Russian authorities retaliate with the massacre of Blagovestchensk. Russia assumes the civil and military administration of Manchuria. Peace Conference held at the Hague.
- 1900 The Bank of Persian Loans is founded by the Russian government.

#### THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

- 1901 The state monopoly in the manufacture and sale of spirits is extended to the whole empire.
- 1903 Vice-Admiral Alexiev appointed as first Russian viceroy of the Far East.
- 1904 Outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war.
- 1906 Revolt put down. First дума opened by Czar. Dissolved in July by Imperial Ukase. Political crisis. Дума meets in Finland. Revolutionary movements and disorders throughout the Empire.
- 1907 Second дума opened in March; dissolved in June; socialist deputies arrested. Revolutionary movements continue. Treaties with Great Britain and Japan. Third дума opened in November.



# RUSSIAN EMPIRE

## Howing the Accessions since Peter the Great

SCALE OF MILES



**The Empire at Accession of Peter the Great**

Additions by Peter the Great

Additions by Anna, Elisabeth, Katherine and Paul, 1730-1801

Additions by Alexander II

Additions by Nicholas and Alexander I

Additions by Alexander III





THE HISTORIANS'  
HISTORY  
OF THE WORLD









KING ARTHUR AND HIS KNIGHTS

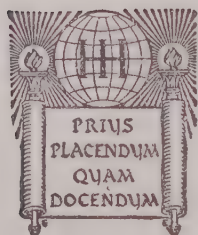
*Painted especially for "The Historians' History of the World" by W. A. Martin*

# THE HISTORIANS' HISTORY OF THE WORLD

A Comprehensive Narrative  
of the Rise and Development  
of Nations from the Earliest  
Times as recorded by over  
Two Thousand of the Great  
Writers of All Ages. Edited  
with the Assistance of a Dis-  
tinguished Board of Advisers  
and Contributors

BY

HENRY SMITH WILLIAMS, LL.D.



IN TWENTY-SEVEN VOLUMES

VOLUME XVIII—ENGLAND TO 1485

LONDON: THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA CO., LTD.  
NEW YORK: ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA, INC.

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*The Historians' History of the World*

First Edition 1904

Second Edition 1907

Third Edition 1909

Fourth Edition 1915

Fifth Edition 1926



VOLUME XVIII  
ENGLAND TO 1485



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[596-597 A.D.]

the wrath of God they are to be delivered). And when, on asking the name of their king, he was told it was Ælla, or Alla, he added, that *Allelujah*—praise ye the Lord—ought to be sung in his dominions. This conversation was destined to produce the most important effects. The state of Britain having been introduced to the notice of Gregory, he brooded over the thought, and determined to proceed thither in the character of a missionary. Impediments arose, which prevented him from carrying this design into effect, but the impression continued firm in his mind; and when he became pope of Rome he despatched Augustine to fulfil the task, the accomplishment of which he had so earnestly desired (596-601 A.D.).<sup>d</sup>

Æthelberht could not have been unacquainted with the Christian religion. It was probably the belief of the majority of the British slaves in his dominions: it was certainly professed by his queen, Bertha, the daughter of Charibert, king of Paris. The Saxon prince received the missionaries under an oak, in an open field, at the suggestion of his priests, who had told him that in such a situation the spells of the foreign magicians would lose their influence. At the appointed time, Augustine was introduced to the king. Before him were borne a silver cross, and a banner representing the Redeemer: behind him his companions walked in procession; and the air resounded with the anthems which they sang in alternate choirs. As soon as the interpreter had explained the object and motives of their mission, Æthelberht replied that he had no inclination to abandon the gods of his fathers for a new and uncertain worship: but as the intention of the strangers was benevolent, and their promises were inviting, they might preach without molestation, and should be supported at his expense. This favourable answer filled them with joy; and they proceeded to Canterbury. The care of the queen had already prepared a residence for the new apostles. They were lodged in the ancient church of St. Martin, which had originally belonged to the Britons, and had lately been repaired for the use of Liudhard, a Christian prelate who accompanied Bertha from Gaul. Curiosity led the Saxons to visit the strangers: they admired the ceremonies of their worship, compared their lives with those of the pagan priests, and learned to approve a religion which could inspire so much piety, austerity, and disinterestedness. With secret pleasure Æthelberht viewed the alteration in the sentiments of his subjects: on the feast of Pentecost, in the year 597 A.D., he professed himself a Christian, and received the sacrament of baptism; and on the following Christmas ten thousand of his subjects followed the example of their sovereign. As each canton embraced the new doctrine, the heathen temple was converted into a Christian church; and, in order to wean the proselytes from their idolatrous practices, they were permitted, instead of the feasts which they had formerly celebrated around the altars of their gods, to assemble upon the more solemn festivals in the neighbourhood of the church, and to partake of a sober repast. The kingdom of Essex was, at this period, governed by Sæberht, the son of its founder, and the nephew of Æthelberht. The influence of the uncle introduced a missionary, the abbot Mellitus, to the notice of Sæberht, who soon consented to receive the sacrament of baptism.<sup>b</sup>

## THE RELIGION OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS

The heathendom which Gregory ardently desired to overthrow had taken a very deep root in the country before the arrival of the Christian missionaries. Woden was the Mercury of the Saxons. William of Malmesbury,<sup>p</sup> speaking

## PART XXII

# THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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# BOOK I

## ENGLAND TO 1485

### CHAPTER I

#### PRE-HISTORIC AND ROMAN BRITAIN

[TO 449 A.D.]

Skulls are harder than consonants, and races lurk when languages  
slink away.—RHYS.<sup>o</sup>

#### THE PRE-CELTIC INHABITANTS

THE history of Great Britain may be said to begin with the landing of Cæsar's legions on the southern shore of England, but the researches of modern scholars have enabled us to obtain reasonably certain information about the peoples who inhabited the islands prior to the coming of the Romans. Ages ago, when England and Ireland were not islands but were attached to the European continent, they were inhabited by a race of stunted savages, whom we know as the Palæolithic men of the river-drift. These men who lived in caves, who did not cultivate the soil, and who used stone implements of the rudest construction, had no continuity, as far as can be traced, with any people or tribe now extant. Ages passed, the climate of the country became milder, and the land which constitutes the present kingdom of Great Britain took on its existing insular form. With this change in the configuration of the region appeared a new race, the Neolithic men. They, like the Palæolithic men, used stone implements, but of a much more perfect make. They possessed flocks of domestic animals, and wore garments made from cloth which they wove from thread of their own spinning. They were probably the builders of the great mounds and cromlechs found in England to-day, and as we know from their scattered tombs must have occupied the greater part of Britain. They were short but well-built men, with black hair and dark complexions. From the striking similarity in physical characteristics they are commonly supposed to have an affinity with the Iberian race which at one time occupied a greater part of western Europe. In many of the less settled regions of Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, are still found short, black-haired people whose origin was undoubtedly non-Aryan and pre-Celtic, and who are thought to be the descendants of the Neolithic inhabitants of the

islands. The evidence of the burial-mounds seems to prove that Neolithic England was later—just how much later no one knows—invaded and partially subdued by a race of tall, round-headed men of the fair, Finnish type. They probably intermarried and settled peaceably with the Neolithic tribes in many parts of England, and when overwhelmed and absorbed by the first wave of the Celtic invaders, had apparently obtained a considerable degree of civilisation. No less an authority than Professor Huxley,<sup>d</sup> however, declares his disbelief in the infusion of this latter Finn-like element into Britain, and is satisfied that before the coming of the Celts the only race in the islands was that resembling the dark Iberians of the south.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE COMING OF THE CELTS

Rhys<sup>e</sup> has investigated the obscure subject of the Celtic invasion, and gives us perhaps as clear a picture of it as present knowledge suffices to present. He points out that the Celtic invasion must not be understood as the matter of a year or a century. Doubtless it extended over many generations, being rather in the nature of an immigration than a hostile invasion. Moreover, there would seem to have been two quite distinct periods, separated perhaps by centuries, during which different branches of the Celtic race made their way to England. The ethnic divisions of the Celtic family are held to be only two in number, each having characteristic linguistic features, traces of which have been preserved in the speech of their descendants. The first Celtic invaders of Britain were the ancestors of the people who now speak Gaelic in Ireland, the Isle of Man, and the Highlands of the north; they were to be traced also in Wales and Devon as late as the sixth century, possibly later. The Celts of this first group are believed always to have applied to themselves the name Goidhel, which modern English usage has corrupted into Gael, but which was formerly written Goidel. Rhys, to avoid ambiguity, prefers to speak of this group as Goidels.

The second group of invading Celts, who, as has just been pointed out, probably came much later than their Goidelic cousins, have their present-day representatives, both ethnically and as to speech, in the people of Wales and the Bretons; “formerly,” says Rhys,<sup>e</sup> “one might have added the Welsh of Cumbria, and till the last century some of those of Cornwall.” These later invaders bore the familiar name of Briton, which Rhys prefers to retain in its Welsh form *Brython* for purposes of exact reference. It is held that in the time of the Roman conquest the language of these later Gauls who remained south of the Forth differed but little from that of the Gauls of the Continent. Gradually, of course, the language of this isolated group changed,—human speech being here, as always, the most mobile and flexible of mediums,—and there was also on the north and west a mingling of the two Celtic families, with resulting compounds both of words and of ethnic types. Rhys thinks that the Brythons may virtually be regarded as Gauls come to settle in Britain. He declares that “every Celt of the United Kingdom is, so far as language is concerned, either a Goidel or a Brython.”

Attempts to reconstruct the history of this early period must give but very vague and doubtful results; yet it seems clear, on the testimony of language and of archaeological remains, that the Goidelic branch of Celts came long before their cousins, their branch coming prominently into contact with the aboriginal inhabitants of Britain, and that its members were profoundly altered, both as to ethnic qualities and as to language and customs, by such contact. On the other hand, by the time the Brythons came the aboriginal

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race had been blended with the earlier Celts, and the new-comers were thus placed in contact with a people having a civilisation more closely comparable to their own. The changes, therefore, must have been relatively great in the case of the Goidels, while the Brythons remained to a large extent unmodified by external ethnic influences. In this supposed fact Rhys finds an explanation of much of the difference of speech between the Welsh and the Irish. But it must be understood that there is much that is merely conjectural in such inferences as these. Anthropologists are agreed, however, that study of the remains of skulls and of the physique and complexion of the existing inhabitants of the United Kingdom demonstrates a mingling of races; and it is held that the non-Aryan race or races who were here before the coming of the Celts impressed their physical traits so potently that they may be traced in certain individuals of our own day.<sup>a</sup>

#### BRITAIN BEFORE THE ROMAN CONQUEST

The population of the whole island of Britain comprised at the time of Cæsar's invasions above forty tribes. The long tract of land to the south of the Severn and the Thames was unequally portioned among ten nations, of which the principal were the Cantii, or men of Kent; the Belgæ, or inhabitants of the present counties of Hampshire and Wilts; and the Damnonii, who, from the river Exe, had gradually extended themselves to the western promontory. Across the arm of the sea, now called the Bristol Channel, the most powerful was the tribe of the Silures. From the banks of the Wye, their original seat, they had carried their arms to the Dee and the ocean; and their authority was acknowledged by the Ordovices and the Dimetæ, the inhabitants of the northern mountains, and of the western district of Wales. On the eastern coast of the island, between the Thames and the Stour, lay the Trinobantes, whose capital was London; and from the Stour to the Humber stretched the two kindred nations of the Iceni, called Cenimagni and Coitanni. The Duboni and Catuvellauni, confederate tribes under the rule of Cassivellaunus, extended along the left bank of the Thames, from the Severn to the Trinobantes; and above them dwelt the Cornavii and several clans of minor consequence. The Brigantes were the most powerful of all the British nations. They were bounded by the Humber on the south, and by the Tyne on the north; and had subdued the Volantii and Sistantii of the western coast. To the north of the Brigantes were five tribes, known by the general appellation of Mærtæ: and beyond these wandered amid the lakes and mountains various clans, among the most warlike of which were the Caledonians.<sup>b</sup>

#### *Manners and Customs of the Britons*

We do not get a very high idea of the manners and customs of Celtic Britain from the writings of Cæsar,<sup>c</sup> and it is very likely that in many cases his information and inferences were erroneous. The domestic life of the Britains was primitive. Their dwellings were mere circular wigwams, generally without foundations. Both sexes tattooed their bodies with woad. The weight of recent evidence seems to incline to the belief that polyandry, in parts of the island at least, was a common practice, but Cæsar's picture of brothers, or fathers and sons possessing their wives in common seems to have little authority. The joint family, under the general rule or direction of an elective head, probably in most cases the oldest male member of the house,



was apparently the social and political unit. By the family, which often was large enough to take on the character of a petty tribe, the fields were cultivated in common. Between the various family groups existed a definite and generally recognised system of fines as compensation for injuries, but there was no central authority to compel their acceptance, and redress in the last resort was to force of arms. Various influences, of which military conquest was probably the principal one, had gradually brought about a general union of the families and smaller tribes, into larger but loosely organised political bodies. These larger tribes were continually torn by internal feuds and by almost constant warfare with their neighbours. Between them there seemed to be an entire absence of race feeling. The insular position which had secured them from the constant outside pressure to which the continental peoples were subject had also removed the most powerful influence which might have made for unity of action against a common foe. "There is not," says Tacitus,<sup>h</sup> "a more fortunate circumstance than that these powerful nations make not one common cause. They fight separately and unsupported; and each in its turn is compelled to bow beneath the Roman yoke."

Each tribe was ruled by a chieftain or king, who appears to have been partly elective and partly hereditary. There were grades and ranks of kings apparently, but the actual authority of even the greatest was small, and deposition of rulers was common. Kingship seems not to have been based on dynastic succession, but to have belonged rather to some dominant or powerful family. Among the members of each tribe there were minute social grades and distinctions, differing materially in different parts of the island, and we hear of free tenants, of bond tenants, and of dependants who were probably little above the grade of slaves. Exactly what the system of land-holding among them was it is impossible to determine, but while cultivation in common was the rule, some lands were very likely owned by individuals and not by families.

The civil bond among the Britons as among the continental Celts was not strong, and the tribal meeting had through neglect come to have little political importance. Of this tendency Merivale<sup>y</sup> says: "To the retention or loss of this essential element of an automatus tribe-community the difference of the fortunes of the Celtic and Teutonic races is mainly referable." With this entire absence of a legislative body, we find also the lack of a system of judicature and of any power corresponding to that of police. It is to the institution of Druidism that we must look for the agency which supplied so many of the organs or instruments of government which the Britons apparently lacked.<sup>a</sup>

#### DRUIDISM

The religion of the Britons was that of the druids, whether it had been brought by them from Gaul, as is the more natural supposition, or, as Caesar asserts, had been invented in the island [is still a matter of controversy]. The druids worshipped, under different appellations, the same gods as the Greeks and Romans.

[The ancient writers tell us very little about the deities and religious beliefs of the Britons, but they probably did not differ in any great particular from those of the Gauls, of which we possess considerable knowledge.] To the superior gods, they added, like other polytheists, a multitude of local deities, the genii of the woods, rivers, and mountains. Some writers have held that they rejected the use of temples through a sublime notion of the Divine immensity: perhaps the absence of such structures may, with more prob-

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ability, be referred to their want of architectural skill. On the oak they looked with peculiar reverence. This monarch of the forest, from its strength and durability, was considered as the most appropriate emblem of the Divinity. The tree and its productions were deemed holy: to its trunk was bound the victim destined for slaughter; and of its leaves were formed the chaplets worn at the time of sacrifice. If it chanced to produce the mistletoe, the whole tribe was summoned: two white heifers were immolated under its branches; the principal druid cut the sacred plant with a knife of gold; and a religious feast terminated the ceremonies of the day.

The druids were accustomed to dwell at a distance from the profane, in huts or caverns, amid the silence and gloom of the forest. There, at the hours of noon or midnight, when the Deity was supposed to honour the sacred spot with his presence, the trembling votary was admitted within a circle of lofty oaks, to prefer his prayer, and listen to the responses of the minister. In peace they offered the fruits of the earth: in war they devoted to the god of battles the spoils of the enemy. The cattle were slaughtered in his honour, and a pile formed of the rest of the booty was consecrated as a monument of his powerful assistance. But in the hour of danger or distress human sacrifices were deemed the most efficacious. Impelled by a superstition, which steeled all the feelings of humanity, the officiating priest plunged his dagger into the breast of his victim, whether captive or malefactor; and from the rapidity with which the blood issued from the wound, and the convulsions in which the sufferer expired, announced the future happiness or calamity of his country.

To the veneration which the British druids derived from their sacerdotal character, must be added the respect which the reputation of knowledge never fails to extort from the ignorant. They professed to be the depositaries of a mysterious science, far above the comprehension of the vulgar: and their schools were opened to none but the sons of illustrious families. Such was their fame, that the druids of Gaul, to attain the perfection of the institute [crossed to Britain] to study under their British brethren. With them, as with similar orders of priests among the ancients, a long course of preparatory discipline was required: and we are told that many had the patience to spend no less than twenty years in this state of probation. The initiated were bound to the most inviolable secrecy; and, that the profane might be kept in ignorance of their doctrines, the use of letters was prohibited, and each precept was delivered in verse by the teacher, and committed to memory by the disciple.



AN ARCH DRUID IN HIS JUDICIAL HABIT

Of tenets thus anxiously concealed, it is not to be expected that much should be distinctly known: the following particulars have been collected from the few notices contained in the ancient historians, compared with the doctrines peculiar to the bards. The druids professed to be acquainted with the nature, the power, and the providence of the Divinity; with the figure, size, formation, and final destruction of the earth; with the stars, their position and motions, and their supposed influence over human affairs. They practised the art of divination. Three of their ancient astrologers were able, it is said, to foretell whatever should happen before the day of doom; and their skill in magic was so great, that, according to Pliny,<sup>a</sup> the Persians themselves might be thought to be their disciples. To medicine also they had pretensions: but their knowledge was principally confined to the use of the mistletoe, vervain, savin, and trefoil; and even the efficacy of these simples was attributed not to the nature of the plants, but to the influence of prayers and incantations. The great objects of the order were, according to themselves, "to reform morals, to secure peace, and to encourage goodness:" and the following lesson, which they inculcated to the people, was certainly conducive to those ends: "The three first principles of wisdom are, obedience to the laws of God, concern for the good of man, and fortitude under the accidents of life." They also taught the immortality of the human soul; but to this dogma they added the absurd fiction of metempsychosis. It was to this doctrine that the Romans attributed that contempt of death which was so conspicuous in the Celtic nations. The druids acquired and exercised the most absolute dominion over the minds of their countrymen. In public and private deliberations of any moment, their opinion was always asked, and was generally obeyed. By their authority peace was preserved; in their presence passion and revenge were silenced: and at their mandate contending armies consented to sheath their swords. Civil controversies were submitted to their decision; and the punishment of crimes was reserved to their justice. Religion supplied them with the power of enforcing submission. Disobedience was followed by excommunication: and from that instant the culprit was banished from their sacrifices, cut off from the protection of the laws, and stigmatised as a disgrace to his family and country. As the druids delivered their instructions in verse, they must have had some notion of poetry, and we find among them a particular class distinguished by the title of bards. The bard was a musician as well as a poet: and he constantly accompanied his voice with his harp. Every chieftain retained one or more of them in his service, who attended him in his hall; eulogised his bounty and his valour; and sang the praises and the history of their country. He accompanied the chief and his clan to the field of battle; to the sound of his harp they marched against the enemy; and in the heat of the contest animated themselves with the hope that their actions would be renowned in song, and transmitted to the admiration of their posterity.<sup>b</sup>

#### EARLY VISITORS TO BRITAIN

It is not until about the middle of the fourth century before Christ—in the age of Alexander the Great—that the Greek world acquired its first actual knowledge of the existence of the islands of Britain and Ireland. Adventurous Carthaginian mariners had long before this passed out through the Pillars of Hercules and established a trade in tin not only with Spain and Gaul, but with the Cassiterides,<sup>1</sup> the islands off the northwestern coast of the

[<sup>a</sup> There has been considerable discussion in regard to the identification of the Cassiterides, but the view here expressed is now the generally accepted one. Elton and Rhys, two of



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Spanish peninsula, which Herodotus,<sup>8</sup> writing in the fifth century B.C., already knew as "the tin islands from whence our tin comes." It is quite likely that some of these southern adventurers visited Britain, but we have no authentic record of such voyages, and the belief of some later Roman writers that the Carthaginians worked tin mines in Britain must be considered unfounded. It was some time in the fourth century that one of the Scipios of Rome visited the Greek colonies of Marseilles (Massilia) and Narbonne (Narbo Martius) to see if trade could not be established with the region beyond southern Gaul in order to compete with the Carthaginians. Nothing was apparently done to start such an undertaking at that time. The idea, however, had evidently taken hold of the merchants of Marseilles, whether it was suggested by the Roman or not, and some time about the middle of the same century—we do not know the exact date—an expedition was fitted out in that city, and placed in command of Pytheas, a Greek mathematician and astronomer of eminence, whose travels and discoveries have won for him the title of "the Humboldt of Antiquity."

Pytheas and his fellow-discoverers, taking ship at Marseilles, sailed around Spain and thence up the Gallic coast to Brittany. Crossing to the Kentish shore he skirted the southern and eastern shore of Britain as far as the Thames. From there he crossed the North Sea to the mouth of the Rhine, rounded Jutland and proceeded as far apparently as the mouth of the Vistula. Thence coasting the shores of Norway to the Arctic Circle, he recrossed the North Sea to the Shetlands and northern Scotland, again traversed the British coast to Brittany, and leaving his ship at the mouth of the Garonne travelled overland across Gaul to Marseilles. The fragmentary character of the writings of Pytheas which have come down to us have thrown some doubt on his voyage from Britain to the East, but his relation of what he saw in Britain was so circumstantially correct as to lead to its general acceptance by recent writers. It is not probable that he visited Ireland, the very existence of which was apparently unknown to him.

Pytheas reached Britain in the early summer and noted the luxurious wheat-fields. It interested him to see that the farmers gathered the sheaves into great barns for threshing. The cloudy, foggy weather of Britain made it impossible to thresh on roofless threshing floors, such as were used in the sunny Mediterranean countries. He told also of a drink made of wheat and honey—the mead or metheglin of modern times—and he is probably also the earliest authority for a description of British beer—the *cúirm* of the Irish, and *cwrw* of the Welsh. In the fragments of his writings which remain we find no mention of an established tin trade with the Continent, nor, indeed, any mention of tin at all. But Elton, who has devoted the most careful research to this point, thinks that he undoubtedly learned something about the production of tin, which was apparently the chief object of the voyage. "He was probably," concludes Elton,<sup>9</sup> "the originator of that commerce in the metal which was established soon after this time on the route between Marseilles and the Straits of Dover." Most of the ancient British coins, the earliest of which are supposed to date from about 200 B.C., are modelled on Greek money current in Marseilles in the lifetime of Pytheas. This would seem to point to the fact that by that date (*circa* 200 B.C.), at any rate, a

the foremost authorities on the early history of Britain, agree in this conclusion. Ramsay<sup>k</sup> says: "They have sometimes, on the authority of Festus Avienus,<sup>l</sup> a writer of the fourth century of our era, been identified with the Scilly Islands on the Cornish coast. But the older authorities—Posidonius (born *circa* 135 B.C.), as quoted by Strabo,<sup>q</sup> Diodorus Siculus<sup>r</sup> (*flourit* 50 B.C.), and Pliny<sup>u</sup> (died 79 A.D.)—distinctly connect the tin islands with the coast of the Iberian peninsula."<sup>j</sup>

regular trade had become well established and the commercial ideas and methods of Southern Europe generally adopted.

Pytheas returned to Marseilles, and there published an account of his voyages. It was probably in the form of a diary recording his observations and progress as he journeyed from place to place. The work itself has been lost, and all we possess of it consists of passages quoted by later writers. Upon his discoveries were subsequently based so many romances and volumes of imaginary travel, with which his narrative became confused in the public mind, that he was for some time discredited, but the real value of his contributions to the history of civilisation has been duly recognised in modern times.

Pytheas, we have said, apparently knew nothing of the existence of Ireland, nor indeed have we any knowledge of the identity of the first voyager to see its shores, yet it could not have remained long unknown once communication with Britain was established. The earliest mention of it, however, is found in an anonymous Greek treatise known as the *Book of the World*,<sup>x</sup> long erroneously attributed to Aristotle, but now generally supposed to have been written as late as 250 B.C.—seventy years or more after his death. Here, too, we find the form of the later names “Britain” and “Albion.” “In the Ocean,” reads the passage, “are two islands of great size, Albion and Ierne, called the Bretannic Isles, lying beyond the Celti.”

About two centuries after the visit of Pytheas, another distinguished Greek, the geographer Posidonius the Stoic, under whom Cicero studied at Rhodes, journeyed extensively throughout northern and north-western Europe, and crossed the English Channel to Cornwall, which he called “Belorion” or “Belerium.” His writings, like those of Pytheas, have been lost in the original, but several passages of length have been preserved in the works of Diodorus Siculus,<sup>r</sup> who wrote in the second half of the first century before Christ. In these extracts Posidonius gives us an interesting picture of Celtic Britain, whose inhabitants from frequent intercourse with Gallic merchants, he tells us, had obtained a considerable degree of civilisation. He describes the methods employed in mining and smelting the tin, which was not found on the surface, but had to be dug from the rocky earth. Like Pytheas, Posidonius tells us his observations of the harvesting of the Britons, which from the greater primitiveness of the methods employed would seem to have applied to an inland region more remote from the Kentish coast of which his predecessor evidently wrote.



EARLY BRITON MERCHANT

Intercourse with the nations to the southward, at any rate, taught the Britons many of the arts of civilisation. Their mines were worked to greater advantage, and the tin export became large. The natives cast their tin

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into square blocks and conveyed it to some common place of deposit on the southern coast, erroneously supposed by many early writers to have been the Isle of Wight. Thence it was carried by Gallic traders to the mouths of the Seine, the Loire or the Garonne, and by river-routes and pack-horses to Narbonne or Marseilles. Strabo<sup>q</sup> is authority for the statement that from the Mediterranean ports it was conveyed by traders to India and the far East.<sup>a</sup> In return for this metal, so highly prized by the ancient nations, the Britons received articles of inferior value to the importers, but of high estimation to an uncivilised people; salt for the preservation of provisions, earthenware for domestic use, and brass for the manufacture of arms and ornaments.

The enterprise of the foreigners quickened the industry of the natives. Tin had originally formed the sole article of their commerce; to the exportation of tin was soon added that of hides, which were procured in immense numbers from the tribes in the interior; lead was next extracted from veins open to the day; and then followed a most valuable acquisition, the discovery and use of iron. But report had exaggerated the productions of the country far beyond their real value: and at the time of the invasion, the Romans flattered themselves with the hope of conquering an island of which the shores abounded with pearls, and the soil with ores of the more precious metals. Their avarice was, however, defeated. Of gold or silver not the smallest trace was discovered; nor were the British pearls of a size or colour which could reward the labour of the collector. Yet the invasion produced one advantage to the natives. They sought and at last discovered ores of the very metals after which Roman avarice had so anxiously but fruitlessly inquired: and the British exports, at the commencement of the Christian era, comprised, if we may credit Tacitus, corn and cattle, gold and silver, tin, lead and iron, skins, slaves, and dogs.

#### CÆSAR'S INVASIONS OF BRITAIN

It is to the pen of a Roman general that we are indebted for our first acquaintance with the history of Britain. Julius Cæsar, in the short space of three years, had conducted his victorious legions from the foot of the Alps to the mouth of the Rhine. From the coast of the Morini he could descry the white cliffs of the neighbouring island: and the conqueror of Gaul aspired to the glory of adding Britain to the dominions of Rome. The inability or refusal of the Gallic mariners to acquaint him with the number of the inhabitants, their manner of warfare, and their political institutions; and the prudence or timidity of Volusenus, who had been sent to procure information, but returned without venturing to communicate with the natives, served only to irritate his curiosity and to inflame his ambition. The Britons, by lending aid to his enemies, the Veneti, supplied him with a decent pretext for hostilities; and on the 26th of August, in the fifty-fifth year before the Christian era, Cæsar sailed from Calais, with the infantry of two legions. To cross the strait was only the work of a few hours: but, when he saw the opposite heights crowned with multitudes of armed men, he altered his course, and steering along the shore, cast anchor before the spot which is now occupied by the town of Deal. The natives carefully followed the motions of the fleet, urging their horses into the waves, and, by their gestures and shouts, bidding defiance to the invaders. The appearance of the naked barbarians, and a superstitious fear of offending the gods of this unknown world, spread a temporary alarm



among the Romans; but after a short pause, the standard-bearer of the tenth legion, calling on his comrades to follow him, leaped with his eagle into the sea; detachments instantly poured from the nearest boats; the beach, after a short struggle, was gained; and the untaught valour of the natives yielded to the arms and the discipline of their enemies.

If the Romans were pre-eminent in the art of war, they were greatly deficient in nautical science. On the fourth night after their arrival, the violence of the wind augmented the usual swell of the waves at a spring-tide; the ships that had been hauled on shore were filled with water, those which rode at anchor were driven out to sea; and a squadron, employed to bring the cavalry from Gaul, was entirely dispersed. The British chieftains, who had come to the camp to solicit peace, observed the consternation excited by these untoward events; and, having retired separately under different pretexts, concealed themselves, with their forces, in the neighbouring woods. Cæsar was not aware of their design, till he heard that the seventh legion, which had been sent out to forage, was surrounded and overwhelmed by a hostile multitude. The timely arrival of the rest of the army rescued the survivors from utter destruction; but the Britons, steady in their plan, despatched messengers to the neighbouring tribes, to represent the small number of the invaders, and inculcate the necessity of intimidating future adventurers by exterminating the present. A general assault was soon made on the Roman camp; and, although it proved unsuccessful, it taught Cæsar to reflect on the evident danger of his situation, if the inclemency of the weather should interrupt his communication with Gaul, and confine him, during the winter, to a foreign shore, without supplies of provisions. To save his reputation, he gladly accepted an illusory promise of submission from a few of the natives, and hastened back with his army to Gaul, after a short absence of three weeks. It is manifest that he had little reason to boast of the success of this expedition; and on that account he affects in his *Commentaries* to represent it as undertaken for the sole purpose of discovery. But at Rome it was hailed as the forerunner of the most splendid victories; the mere invasion of Britain was magnified into the conquest of a new world; and a thanksgiving of twenty days was decreed by the senate to the immortal gods.

The ensuing winter was spent by each party in the most active preparations. In spring the Roman army, consisting of five legions and two thousand cavalry, sailed from the coast of Gaul in a fleet of more than eight hundred ships. At the sight of this immense armament stretching across the channel, the Britons retired with precipitation to the woods; and the invaders landed without opposition on the very same spot which they had occupied the preceding year. Cæsar immediately marched in pursuit of the natives, but was recalled the next day by news of the disaster which had befallen his fleet. A storm had risen in the night, in which forty vessels were totally lost, and many others driven on shore. To guard against similar accidents, he ordered the remainder to be dragged above the reach of the tide, and to be surrounded with a fortification of earth. In this laborious task ten days were employed, after which the invaders resumed their march towards the interior of the country. Each day was marked by some partial rencounter, in which the natives appear to have frequently obtained the advantage. It was their policy to shun a general engagement. Divided into small bodies, but stationed within hail of each other, they watched the march of the enemy, cut off the stragglers, and diligently improved every opportunity of annoyance. Their principal warriors, who fought from chariots, extorted by their skill and intrepidity the applause of the Romans. On the most rapid descent, or the very brink

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of a precipice, they guided their vehicles with as much safety as on the level plain. No danger appalled them. They drove fearlessly along the Roman line, espied every opportunity of breaking the ranks of the enemy, and during the heat of the action would run along the pole, leap on the ground, or regain their seats, as the events of the moment seemed to demand. If they despaired of success, they retired with rapidity; if they were pursued, they abandoned their chariots, and with their pikes resisted on foot the charge of the cavalry. It required all the art of Cæsar to inflict any serious injury on so active a foe. At length three of the legions with all the cavalry were sent out to forage, and their apparent disorder invited the Britons to attack them with their whole force. Descending from the hills, they poured through every opening, and penetrated as far as the eagles: but the veterans received them with coolness; the cavalry pursued them in their flight, and few were able to regain the mountains and woods. Dispirited by this check, many of the confederate tribes retired to their homes; and Cassivellaunus (Cassibelan), king of the Catuvellauni (Cassi), the chief of the allies, was left to support the whole pressure of the war.

By repeated victories over his neighbours, Cassivellaunus had acquired high renown among the natives. The tribes on the right bank of the Thames had invited him to place himself at their head; and his conduct during the war seems to have justified the selection. Deserted by his confederates, he retreated into his own territories, that he might place the Thames between himself and his pursuers. At the only ford he ordered sharp stakes to be fixed in the bed of the river; lined the left bank with palisades; and stationed behind these the principal part of his army. But the advance of the Romans was not to be retarded by artificial difficulties. The cavalry, without hesitation, plunged into the river; the infantry followed, though the water reached to their shoulders; and the Britons, intimidated by the intrepid aspect of the invaders, fled to the woods. Such is the account of this transaction which has been given by Cæsar: but Polyænus<sup>2</sup> attributes his success to the panic caused by the sight of an elephant. At the approach of this unknown animal of enormous magnitude, covered with scales of polished steel, and carrying on his back a turret filled with armed men, the Britons abandoned their defences, and sought for safety by a precipitate flight.

The king of the Catuvellauni was not, however, discouraged. To impede the progress of the enemy, he laid waste his own territories. By his orders the habitations were burnt, the cattle driven away, and the provisions destroyed, and, as the Romans marched through this desert, Cassivellaunus himself, with four thousand chariots, carefully watched all their motions. But the unfortunate chieftain had to contend, not only with the foreign enemy, but also with the jealousy and resentment of his own countrymen. He had formerly subdued the Trinobantes, a contiguous nation. In the contest, their king Immanuentius had been slain; and his son Mandubratius was now an exile, serving in the army of the invaders. The Trinobantes offered to submit to the Romans, on condition that they should be governed by the son of Immanuentius; and several tribes, which bore with impatience the yoke of the Catuvellauni, following their example, solicited the protection of Cæsar. By these he was conducted to the capital or principal fortress of Cassivellaunus, situated on the spot where afterwards Verulam was built, and near to the present town of St. Albans. It was surrounded with a rampart and ditch, and covered on every side by extensive marshes and forests. Even Cæsar admired the judgment with which the position had been selected, and the art with which it was fortified. Its defences, however, were easily

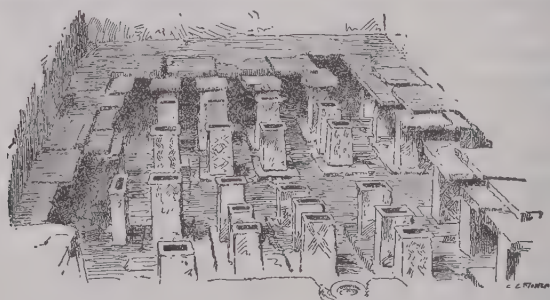
forced by the Romans; and the cattle of Cassivellaunus, his principal treasure, became the prey of the conquerors.

The British king still waited the issue of his plans in another quarter. He had instructed the four chieftains of Kent to assemble their forces, assault the Roman camp, and set fire to the ships. If this attempt had succeeded, the Romans would have been involved in inextricable difficulties. But the men of Kent were defeated; and Cassivellaunus condescended to sue for peace. Cæsar, who feared the approach of the equinox, willingly prescribed the following conditions: that he should give hostages, should live in amity with the Trinobantes, and should furnish his share to the annual tribute which was to be imposed on Britain. The Romans immediately marched back to the coast; the fleet had already been refitted, and Cæsar returned to Gaul in the month of September.

Such were the petty results of this mighty expedition. The citizens of Rome celebrated with joy the victories of their favourite general: but the conqueror of Britain was not master of one foot of British ground.

#### THE CONQUESTS OF CLAUDIUS AND HIS SUCCESSORS

From the time of Cæsar to the reign of Claudius, during the lapse of ninety-seven years, the Britons retained their independence. During the civil wars, the attention of the Romans was too actively employed at home to think of foreign conquest. Augustus thrice announced his intention of annexing



HYPOCAUST OF A ROMAN VILLA, DARENTH, KENT

Britain to the empire: but the danger was averted, on one occasion by a submissive embassy from the natives, on the others by the intervention of more important concerns. Instead of exacting the tribute imposed by Cæsar, he contented himself with levying duties on the trade between Gaul and Britain, a measure which brought a larger sum into the imperial treasury, and was borne without murmuring by the inhabitants. Yet this financial experiment has been magnified, by the flattery of the poet Horace, into the conquest of the whole island.

Tiberius pretended that the empire was already too extensive; and sought to justify his own indolence by the policy of Augustus. His nephew and successor, Caligula, exhibited to the world a farce, worthy of the childish prince by whom it was planned. Cunobelin (Cymbeline), the most powerful of the successors of Cassivellaunus, had banished his son, Adminius. The exile repaired to the emperor, and, as if Britain had been his patrimony, made a surrender of the island into the hands of Caligula. The glorious in-



[41-50 A.D.]

telligence was immediately transmitted to the senate: and the army, raised for the war against the Germans, was ordered to assemble on the coast of Boulogne (Gesoriacum). As soon as the emperor arrived, he arrayed the legions on the shore, rowed out to sea in the imperial galley, returned precipitately, and gave the signal of battle. The soldiers, in suspense and astonishment, inquired for the enemy, but Caligula informed them that they had that day conquered the ocean, and commanded them to collect its spoils, the shells on the beach, as a proof of their victory. To perpetuate the memory of his folly, he laid the foundation of a lofty beacon, and returned to Rome to give himself the honours of a triumph.<sup>1</sup>

But the empty pageantry of Caligula was soon succeeded by the real horrors of invasion. Instigated by Borec, a British chieftain, whom domestic feuds had expelled from his native country, the emperor Claudius commanded Aulus Plautius to transport four legions with their auxiliaries into Britain. The Britons, under the command of Caractacus (Caradoc) and Togidumnus, the two sons of Cunobelin, adopted the policy of their ancestors, and endeavoured to harass, rather than to repel, the invaders. But the German auxiliaries, better fitted for such warfare than the legionary soldiers, followed them across rivers and morasses: and though the natives made a gallant resistance, drove them, with the loss of Togidumnus, to the northern bank of the Thames. The emperor himself now took the command, penetrated to Colchester (Camalodunum), and received the submission of the Britons in the vicinity. At his departure he divided the Roman forces between the legate Plautius, and Vespasian, an officer whose merit afterwards invested him with the purple. To the care of Plautius was assigned the left, to that of Vespasian the right, bank of the Thames. Both experienced from the natives the most determined resistance. Vespasian fought no less than thirty battles before he could subdue the Belgæ and the natives of the Isle of Wight; Plautius, during the five remaining years of his government, was opposed by Caractacus at the head of the Catuvellauni and Silures, who, though frequently beaten, as often renewed the contest.

Ostorius Scapula was the successor of Plautius. To repress the inroads of the unsubdued Britons he erected two chains of forts, one in the north along the river Avon, the other in the west along the left bank of the Severn. The reduced tribes were gradually moulded into the form of a Roman province: and, when the Iceni dared to revolt, their rebellion was severely punished, and a colony of veterans was planted at Camalodunum to insure their obedience. The enthusiastic attachment of the Silures to their independence and their hatred of the Roman name has been envenomed by an incautious expression of Ostorius, that their existence as a people was incompatible with his projects. In Shropshire, at the confluence of the Coln and Teme, stands a lofty hill called *Caer-Caradoc*. There Caractacus and the Silures determined to defend the liberty of their country. The bank of the river was lined with troops, and the ascent of the hill was fortified with ramparts of loose stones. At the approach of the Romans, the Britons bound themselves by an oath to conquer or die. Ostorius himself hesitated, but at the demand of the legions, the signal of battle was given, the passage of the river was forced, and the Romans, under showers of darts, mounted the hill, burst over the ramparts, and drove the Silures from the summit. The wife and daughter

[<sup>1</sup> Thiers *in* his *Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire*, Book XX, tells of a festival arranged by Napoleon in August, 1804, on the seashore near Boulogne, where he had gathered an army for his proposed conquest of England. The story is interesting to read in connection with that of Caligula.]

of Caractacus fell into the hands of the victors, his brothers soon after surrendered, and the king himself was delivered in chains to Ostorius by his step-mother, Cartismandua, queen of the Brigantes, under whose protection he had hoped to elude the vigilance of his pursuers.

The fame of Caractacus had already crossed the seas; and the natives of Italy were anxious to behold the man who had braved for nine years the power of Rome. As he passed through the imperial city, he expressed his surprise that men who possessed such palaces at home should deem it worth their while to fight for the wretched hovels of Britain. Claudius, to his own honour, received him graciously, restored him to liberty, and, if we may credit Tacitus, invested him with princely authority over a portion of conquered Britain. The event was celebrated at Rome with extraordinary joy.

The Silures, taught by experience that uninstructed valour was not a match for the discipline and defensive armour of the legions, adopted a more desultory but sanguinary mode of warfare, and contented themselves with harassing the Romans in their quarters, interrupting their communications, and surprising their detachments. If they sometimes received, they often inflicted, considerable injury, and Ostorius was so exhausted by labour and vexation, that his death was attributed to his chagrin. His successor, Aulus Didius, found himself involved in a new war. Venusius, a chieftain of the Jugantes, had married Cartismandua. Both had been faithful allies to the Romans; but the queen, after a short interval, separated from her husband, and took to her bed a Briton named Vellocatus. Hostilities were the immediate consequence. Cartismandua, for her ancient services, claimed the aid of the Romans: the Brigantes, through hatred of the adulteress, fought for Venusius. After several battles, the queen was compelled to leave the throne to her husband, and to lead a degraded life under the protection of her allies.

To Didius succeeded Veranius, whose early death made way for Suetonius Paulinus, a general of skill and reputation. The isle of Anglesea (Mona), the nursery and principal residence of the druids, had hitherto offered a secure retreat to those priests to whose influence and invectives was attributed the obstinate resistance of the Britons. To reduce it, Suetonius ordered his cavalry to swim across the strait, while the infantry should pass over in boats. On their approach to the sacred isle, they beheld the shore lined not only with warriors, but with bands of male and female druids. The former, with their arms outstretched to heaven, devoted the invaders to the god of war; the latter, in habits of mourning, with their hair floating in the wind, and lighted torches in their hands, ran in all directions along the beach. The Romans were seized with a superstitious horror. For a moment they refused to advance: shame and the reproaches of their leader urged them to the attack. The victory was easy and bloodless. The power of the druids received a shock from which it never recovered. Their altars were overturned, their sacred groves fell beneath the axe of the legionaries, and their priests and priestesses were consumed in the flames which they had kindled for the destruction of their captives.

### *The Revolt of Boadicea*

But the absence of Suetonius in Anglesea was the signal for a most formidable insurrection. Prasutagus, king of the Iceni, long the faithful ally of Rome, had made the emperor joint heir with his own daughters. The whole property was immediately seized by Catus, the imperial procurator. Boadicea, the widow of the late king, who ventured to remonstrate, was scourged

[62 A.D.]

as a slave, and the chastity of her daughter was violated by the Roman officers. The unhappy princess grasped the first opportunity of revenge. The history of her wrongs reminded each individual of his own sufferings; and in a few days almost all the conquered tribes were in arms. Colchester was the first to experience their fury. Within the walls of the colony had been erected a temple to the divinity of Claudius, the subjugator of Britain, and the natives were eager to demolish this monument of their servitude. At the first assault the town was reduced to ashes: the walls of the temple protracted the fate of the garrison only two days. Petilius Cerealis marched with the ninth legion to their assistance. It was trodden under foot by the multitude of the insurgents.

By this time Suetonius had returned to London, already a populous and opulent mart. Unable to protect the town, he retired, taking with him such of the inhabitants as were willing to share his fortunes. London was soon consumed by the flames; and shortly afterwards the municipal town of St. Albans (Verulam) experienced the same fate. The fury of the Britons treated as enemies all who had not joined in the insurrection. The reported slaughter of seventy thousand victims, without distinction of sex or age, of rank or country, attests both the violence of their revenge and the extent of country through which they followed the Romans.

Suetonius was at last compelled to turn his face to the enemy. Though fear had prevented the second legion from joining in his retreat, he had collected from the different garrisons ten thousand men, and had chosen a position in which he could be attacked only in front. The Britons were collected in masses around their different chieftains; their wives and children occupied a long line of carriages in the rear; and the air resounded with their cries and imprecations. The Romans, motionless and silent, permitted them to approach; and then, rushing forward in the form of a wedge, overturned everything within their reach. The battle, however, was long and fiercely maintained. Numbers on the part of the natives supplied the want of discipline; and a succession of conflicts almost exhausted the patience of the legionaries. Victorious at last, the Romans took a severe revenge. They granted no quarter: and the women and children were involved in the same carnage with the combatants. Were success to be estimated by the multitude of the slain, Tacitus<sup>h</sup> was justified in comparing this with the most glorious victories of ancient Rome. He estimates the loss of the Britons at eighty thousand men.<sup>1</sup> The fugitives, however, who escaped, offered to try again the fortune of war; but Boadicea, who had led them to the field and shared the dangers of the day, refused to survive this defeat, and terminated her misfortunes by a voluntary death.

If this splendid action preserved the ascendancy of the Roman arms it did not put an end to the war. A notion prevailed in the imperial court that the obstinacy of the Britons arose from the dread which the severity of Suetonius had inspired. He was recalled; and under the milder administration of his three successors, Turpilianus, Trebellius, and Bolanus, the natives within the Roman pale were gradually inured to the yoke. But the task of tranquillising the province, the mutinous spirit of the army, and the rival claims of competitors for the empire, prevented these governors from making any attempts against the independent portion of Britain. As soon as Vespasian had assumed the purple, a new era commenced. Petilius Cerealis was ordered to reduce the Brigantes, and in the space of five years that pow-

[<sup>1</sup> This figure, of course, like all the figures given by Tacitus and other classic and mediæval writers in their accounts of military events, is absurdly exaggerated.]



erful tribe was added to the subjects of the empire. Julius Frontinus was his successor, and during the three years of his government he nearly subdued the warlike nation of the Silures.

#### THE GOVERNORSHIP OF AGRICOLA

But the reputation of preceding governors was obscured by the more splendid and more lasting fame of Cneius Julius Agricola. When that commander arrived (78 A.D.), the army had been dismissed into winter quarters. He immediately summoned it again to the field, marched into the territory of the Ordovices, who had surprised a squadron of Roman horse; and put to the sword the greater part of that nation. Preceded by the terror of his name, he crossed over to Anglesea. The natives offered no resistance, and the sacred isle was a second time added to the empire. In the two next campaigns he gradually extended the limits of his government to the Tay. Tribe after tribe was compelled to submit, garrisons were stationed in every commanding situation, and with the prospect of success was removed the principal incentive to rebellion. The fourth summer was employed in securing a strong frontier to the Roman conquests; and a line of forts from the Firth of Forth to that of Clyde bade defiance to the inroads of the more northern Britons.

Agricola, sensible of the errors of his predecessors, reformed the civil administration in all its branches, established a more equitable system of taxation, listened with kindness to the complaints of the natives, and severely punished the tyranny of inferior officers. The Britons were charmed with the mildness and justice of his government.

The next year, having received the submission of the tribes in the neighbourhood of the Forth, Agricola pushed his advances along the eastern shore. The operations of the army on land were combined with those of a numerous fleet at sea, but the campaign seems to have conferred little honour on the imperial arms.

Resolved to distinguish the eighth and last year (84 A.D.) of his government, Agricola assembled all his forces and added to their number several cohorts of Britons raised among the tribes of the south. The Caledonians were apprised of their danger: and thirty thousand warriors under the command of Galgacus undertook to defend the passage of the Grampian Mountains.<sup>1</sup> They were discovered, divided into clans, posted one below the other on the declivity of a hill. The plain at its foot was covered with horsemen and armed chariots. Agricola drew up his army in two lines, in the first of which he placed the auxiliaries, in the other the legions. As long as they fought with missile weapons, the Caledonians, from their numbers, retained the advantage; but their unwieldy and unpointed swords were of little use in close action, and they were gradually driven up the hill by the steady pressure of the auxiliaries. An attempt to surprise the rear of the Romans was defeated by the vigilance of the general, who charged in return the flank of the Caledonians, and threw them into disorder. The courage or despair of a few detached bodies protracted the conflict till night. The next morning presented a very different scene. A vast and dreary solitude had succeeded to the noise and turmoil of the preceding day: and columns of smoke rising on the verge of the horizon proved that the Caledonians had burned their cottages in their flight. Ten thousand Caledonians, and about four hundred Romans are said by Tacitus<sup>b</sup> to have fallen in the battle.

[<sup>1</sup> Tacitus<sup>b</sup> appears to have written this "Mons Groupius." His editors transformed the "Groupius" into "Grampius," but there is no authority whatever for the latter name.]

[78-84 A.D.]

After this victory the army returned to winter quarters: the fleet pursued its voyage, and sailing around the island, arrived at the port of Sandwich, from which it had commenced the expedition.<sup>1</sup> By the jealousy of the Emperor Domitian, the ornaments, but not the parade, of a triumph were granted to Agricola, who, having surrendered the command to his successor, Lucullus, returned to Rome, waited on his imperial master, and sank into obscurity.

The Roman power was now firmly established in the island. The tribes which had submitted made no attempt to recover their independence: and the Caledonians, humbled by their last defeat, were content to roam without molestation in their native forests. The successors of Agricola, instead of conducting the legions in the field, were employed in settling the details of the provincial government, and in assimilating the state of Britain to that of the other countries which had been incorporated in the empire.<sup>h2</sup>

A picture is drawn of this great soldier and statesman, Agricola, by his son-in-law, the historian Tacitus,<sup>h</sup> in which, amid all the flattery of affection, and



ROMAN LIGHTHOUSE, CHURCH AND TRENCHES, DOVER CASTLE

the satire which the portrait of a good and generous man was intended to be upon a generation in which goodness and generosity were unknown, it is easy to trace the true lineaments of a just and sagacious leader. In seven campaigns, from the year 78 to 84 A.D., the benefits of a strong hand and benevolent will were shown throughout the island. The more intelligent of the natives began to perceive something far more valuable in the regulated freedom of their Roman conquerors than the wild absence of law and order which they called liberty. They clustered around the *castra*, where justice was administered in the grand language which Cicero had ennobled in pleading the cause of dethroned kings and oppressed populations—where they saw the wonders of Grecian art ornamenting the walls and floors of the *proprator's* dwelling—where the majestic toga of the civil officer had greater respect paid to it than the military cloak of the tribune; and lost in surprise, or fired with emulation at all these things, they despised the mental poverty of their former state; and we learn that

[<sup>1</sup> Ramsay<sup>k</sup> says: "The achievements of the year were wound up by the circumnavigation of Britain by the fleet, which, sailing northwards from the Forth of Tay, doubled the Northern capes and then rounding the Western and Southern coasts, completed the circuit by returning to its winter station, apparently in the Humber." The Orkneys are thought to have been discovered on the same trip.]

[<sup>2</sup> In connection with the Roman occupation and rule in Britain the spurious treatise entitled *de Situ Britannia* and attributed to Richard of Cirencester, is worth noting. This curious work, which described in great detail the organisation of the Roman government of Britain, was for over one hundred and twenty years almost universally believed to be an addition of great value to the history of Roman Britain, and was accepted and utilised by such historians as Gibbon,<sup>bb</sup> Lappenberg<sup>z</sup> and Lingard.<sup>b</sup> It was "discovered" and published in 1747 by Professor Bertram of the University of Copenhagen, but the original manuscript could never be produced, and at any rate the grounds for attributing the work to Richard of Cirencester, a monk of the fourteenth century, another work of undoubted authority by whom is extant, were very insufficient.]

many British chieftains at this time became masters of the Latin tongue, and affected Roman manners and tastes. Tacitus, whose hatred of the tyranny of his time makes him savagely devoted to the untrammelled happiness of a barbarian life, attributes to Agricola the cunning design of keeping the Britons in subjection by effeminising their minds with poetry and the arts. He encouraged them to build spacious houses and noble temples; to adopt the Roman dress, and to taste all the pleasures of luxury and vice. What Tacitus calls luxury and vice were probably immense improvements both in life and morals upon the brutalised habitudes of the woods from which they had emerged. They probably ate cooked food instead of raw meat, and cheated each other in trade instead of murdering their enemy from behind a tree and selling his wives and daughters into slavery.



BRITON OF THE INTERIOR

The marshes were drained, the wood was cut down, the sunshine poured into its recesses, and the dreadful Taranis (Jupiter) or omnipotent Thoth (Mercury) was found to be no more terrifying than a death's-head lantern in the blaze of day. If a savage ceases to fear his gods, he despises them. Long-bearded priests, pretending to see visions at the farther end of caves, and to gather wisdom from bunches of mistletoe, were found out to be wretched impostors when the cave was turned into a granary of corn, and the oak that nourished the mistletoe had been cut down to fence a field. There were large tracts of country all round the stations of the Roman armies where the harvests were sown, and reaped, and gathered in peace. The wives and families of the soldiers came over to join them in their island quarters, and at last, colonists in the true sense of the word, removed their goods and household hopes from Italy or Cisalpine Gaul, and established themselves as permanent occupiers and

owners of the soil. They came over to seek new employment for their skill and labour—they ploughed, and wove, and painted—built noble galleys for the protection of the shore, and elegant carriages for traffic on the roads. Mighty changes had taken place upon the communication between camp and camp since the days of the unsocial Gael. Broad highways, with a noble disdain of engineering difficulties, went on, straight as an arrow from the bow, to the point they aimed at. Climbing steep hills or sinking into valleys, turning neither to the right nor left, the wonderful flight was pursued. Raised eighteen inches at the centre, the road admitted of drainage to the ditch at each side; the materials were massive blocks of stone; the workmanship extraordinary for its care and finish; and thousands of thought-



[84-190 A.D.]

less travellers have trotted or rolled along these solid and enduring causeways without considering their obligations to the real conquerors and civilisers of the land. The ancient inhabitants are supposed to have had some pathways of communication between the remote districts of the south. But it was the Romans, who knew the value of good roads, both morally and politically, who converted the rude levellings of their predecessors into the spacious highways which united the most distant portions of their dominions.

## HADRIAN AND SEVERUS

Though Agricola had defeated, he had not been able to subdue, the Caledonians. After his departure they frequently crossed the line of forts between the two firths, and in less than thirty years the state of Britain had become so precarious as to require the presence of the Emperor Hadrian (120 A.D.). Of his exploits history is silent; but on the testimony of medals and inscriptions, we may believe that he expelled the barbarians and recovered the provinces which had been lost. If, however, his victories have been forgotten, his memory has been preserved by a military work, which was executed under his direction, and has hitherto defied the ravages of time. Convinced by experience that the *pretentura* thrown up by Agricola could not confine the northern tribes, he resolved to oppose a second barrier to their incursions, by drawing a ditch and rampart across the island, from the Solway Firth on the western, to the mouth of the Tyne on the eastern, coast. This mighty fortification measured in length more than sixty miles; and strong bodies of troops were permanently stationed at short intervals on the whole extent of the line.<sup>1</sup>

But the tranquillity which had been established by Hadrian was repeatedly disturbed during the reign of his successor, Antoninus. On the north of the *vallum* the six tribes of the *Mætae* reasserted their independence; on the south the Brigantes took up arms, and invaded the territory of the Ordovices. Lollius Urbicus was appointed *proprator* of Britain. He chastised the Brigantes, subdued the *Mætae*, and, in imitation of Hadrian, carried a similar fortification across the isthmus, from the Forth to the Clyde, a distance of more than thirty-six miles. In honour of the emperor, it was called the *vallum* [or more commonly wall] of Antoninus.

In the reign of Commodus the incursions [of the Caledonians] assumed a more formidable appearance, and the discontent of the legions alarmed the emperor for the safety of Britain. Ulpius Marcellus, a soldier of valour and integrity, was made *proprator*. He restored the discipline of the army, and drove the Caledonians back to their native mountains. But his services were requited with ingratitude. By his severity he incurred the hatred of a seditious soldiery, while his glory excited the jealousy of a dissolute prince, and Commodus recalled him from his command.

The government of Britain was next conferred on Clodius Albinus. His birth and abilities awakened the jealousy of his imperial master, who, either

<sup>1</sup> The *vallum* may be traced from Burgh-on-the-Sands to the town of Newcastle, avoiding the mountains, and winding along the valleys. The ditch appears to have been eleven feet in breadth and nine in depth: the rampart, at the present day, rises in some parts six feet above the original surface. Besides this, two *aggeres* or mounds of earth, one on the north, the other on the south, run the whole length in lines parallel to the ditch, at the distance of nearly twenty feet. It is probable that the mound to the south was a military road; and that the original work of Hadrian, like that of Antoninus between the firths, consisted of no more than the ditch, the rampart, and the road. The *agger* on the north might be afterwards added as a military way for the wall of Severus, when the *vallum* could be no longer considered as a work of defence.

with the view of securing his fidelity, or, as is more probable, of trying his ambition, offered him the rank and authority of Cæsar. Albinus had the prudence to decline the insidious present; but after the death of Commodus, and the ephemeral reigns of Pertinax and Julian, he willingly accepted the same dignity from the emperor Severus. It soon, however, appeared that, with all the parade of friendship, Severus was a secret and mortal enemy; and Albinus, by the advice of his friends, assumed the imperial purple (193 A.D.), and led the British legions into Gaul. The two armies, amounting to one hundred thousand men, fought in the plain of Trévoux (Trivultium), near Lyons (Lugdunum). Severus obtained the victory, and the British Cæsar paid with his head the forfeit of his ambition (197 A.D.).

Severus was now undisputed master of the empire. To abolish the exorbitant power of the prefect of Britain, he divided the island into two governments, bestowing the one on Heraclianus, and the other on Virius Lupus. The latter, with an army of new levies, was unable to withstand the united efforts of the Mætæ and Caledonians, and was compelled to purchase with money a precarious respite from their incursions. The expedient, though it procured a temporary forbearance, invited them to a repetition of the attempt; and Lupus, wearied with continued hostilities, solicited the presence of the emperor and the aid of a numerous army.

Though Severus was advanced in years, and declining in health, he cheerfully obeyed the summons of his lieutenant. He was accompanied by his two sons, Caracalla and Geta: to the younger he committed the civil government of the province; to Caracalla he assigned a part in the projected expedition. When the army moved from York, the selection of the commanders, the number of the legions and auxiliary cohorts, and the long train of carriages laden with provisions and implements of war, proclaimed the determination of the emperor to subdue, if not to exterminate, all the rebellious tribes in the north. The [northern] Britons were but ill provided against so formidable an invasion. They possessed no other defensive armour than a narrow target. Their weapons were a dirk, an unwieldy sword hanging from the waist by an iron chain, and a short lance, from one extremity of which was suspended a bell. But they were aided by the nature of the country, abounding in mountains, lakes, and forests; by constitutions inured to fatigue, hunger, and every privation; by habits of running, swimming, and wading through rivers and morasses; and above all, by a contempt of danger, and an unconquerable love of freedom. The progress of the Romans was constantly interrupted by the necessity of opening roads through the woods, of throwing bridges over the rivers, and of erecting causeways across the marshes. It was in vain that Severus sought for an enemy in front. The natives had wisely divided themselves into detachments, which hung on the flanks of the Romans, watched every advantage, and often inflicted a sudden and severe wound on the long and encumbered line of their enemies. Still the emperor pressed forward till he reached the Firth of Cromarty, where he condescended to accept the offers of submission which he had formerly refused; and, that he might appear to punish the obstinacy of the natives, exacted the nominal surrender of a part of their territory. But this trivial advantage had been dearly purchased, and the number of the Romans who perished by fatigue, by disease, and by the sword, has been estimated at fifty thousand.<sup>1</sup>

When Severus returned to York, he had leisure to devise means for the

[<sup>1</sup> Dion Cassius <sup>i</sup> is the authority for this statement of the losses of Severus. This figure Ramsay <sup>k</sup> declares to be absurd and says it is very unlikely that he had as many as fifty thousand troops with him altogether.]

[208-280 A.D.]

future security of the southern provinces. From what he had seen, he was convinced that no rampart of turf could resist the assaults of these active and persevering barbarians; and he determined to confine their incursions by raising a solid wall of stone a few paces to the north of the *vallum* of Hadrian. In the neighbourhood of the sea it preserved a parallel direction; but as it approached the higher ground, leaving the work of that emperor to wind its circuitous course along the valleys, it boldly ascended the most lofty eminences, and ran along the margin of the most abrupt precipices. Its height was twelve feet; its breadth at the foundation varied from two to three yards. In front was sunk a ditch of the same dimensions with that of Hadrian; and for its protection were assigned four squadrons and fourteen cohorts, composing an army of ten thousand men, quartered in eighteen stations along the line of the wall.<sup>1</sup>

Scarcely had the Romans evacuated the territory of the Caledonians and Maætæ, when information was brought to Severus that the barbarians had recommenced hostilities. His infirmities had been so much increased by the fatigue of the late campaign, that he was no longer able to join the army. He gave the command to Caracalla, with an injunction to extirpate the whole race without mercy. But that prince had a far different object in view—to exclude his brother Geta from the succession. Instead of marching against the Britons, he endeavoured to gain the affection of the troops by indulgence and donatives; and, as soon as his father had expired at York, renewed the peace, disbanded the army, and returned to Rome.

### *The Successors of Severus*

History is little more than a record of the miseries inflicted on the many by the passions of the few. If then, for more than seventy years from the death of Severus, Britain has escaped the notice of the ancient annalists, we may infer that they were years of comparative tranquillity and happiness. The northern tribes respected the strength of the new fortification and the valour of the army by which it was guarded: and the natives of the south, habituated from their infancy to submission, bore without impatience the yoke which had pressed so heavily on their free-born fathers. The rest of the empire was convulsed by the claims of the numerous competitors, known by the name of the thirty tyrants.

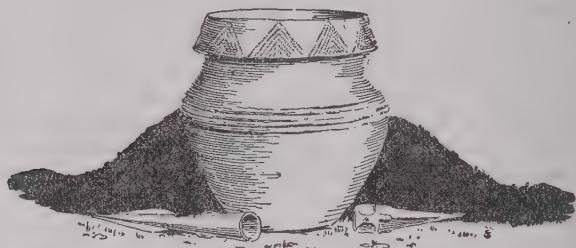
This distracted state of the empire had opened new prospects to the barbarians, who, under the appellations of Franks and Saxons, possessed the coast from the mouth of the Rhine to the extremity of Jutland (the Cim-

[There are few points in early British history upon which such divergent conclusions have been reached as that of the Roman walls. As high an authority as Elton *z* thinks that the whole system of defence bears the impress of a single mind, and that both stone wall and earthen *vallum* with their stations, camps, and parallel roads, were designed and constructed by Hadrian. Ramsay, *k* writing fifteen years later, holds to the more generally accepted theory that the *vallum* was the work of Hadrian, and that the stone wall was constructed at a later date by Septimius Severus. The earliest evidence is contained in the biographies of Hadrian and Severus written by Spartianus, *j* whose statement that both emperors built walls between the two oceans was accepted without question by later writers. Ramsay, taking the word of Spartianus, reasons simply. He holds that the *vallum* was the earlier work, and therefore the work of Hadrian, "because it seems clear that no men with a stone wall to protect them would seek to pile up useless earthworks behind it; while men who had only an earthen rampart to defend them might seek to supplement its construction by a bulwark of a stronger kind." The fortifications constructed by Urbicus along the line of Agricola's forts, and known as the "Wall of Antoninus," consisted of an earthen embankment and ditch, similar to but both deeper and higher than the *vallum* of Hadrian, and having military stations and watch-towers at regular intervals.]



brican Chersonesus). They swept into their own ports the commerce of the narrow seas, and insulted by their predatory expeditions the shores of Gaul and Britain. To chastise or restrain their insolence, the command of a powerful fleet, with the title of Count of the Saxon Shore, was given by the emperors Diocletian and Maximian to Carausius, an experienced officer, and a Menapian (Fleming) by birth. His conduct soon awakened suspicion. The pirates continued their depredations with impunity; a portion of their spoil was regularly surrendered to Carausius; and the money was employed in debauching the loyalty of the mariners. Maximian prepared to punish his perfidy. But the Menapian unexpectedly fortified Boulogne, concluded an alliance with the barbarians, sailed to Britain, induced the army and fleet to espouse his cause, and assuming with the imperial purple the name of Augustus (287 A.D.), set at defiance the whole power of Rome.

The reign of this adventurer was fortunate and glorious. The Caledonians were compelled to flee before his arms; his authority was acknowledged on



EARLY BRITISH POTTERY

the western coast of Gaul, and a numerous fleet carried the terror of his name to the entrance of the Mediterranean. It was not, however, to be expected that the emperors would tamely acquiesce in his usurpation. At first, indeed, they thought it more prudent to admit him as their colleague: but when they had adopted the two cæsars Galerius and Constantius Chlorus, they assigned to the latter the task of wresting Britain from his dominion. Constantius began the attempt with the siege of Boulogne. By his orders the mouth of the harbour was obstructed by a mound of stones; and the garrison, cut off from any assistance from Britain, was, after an obstinate resistance, compelled to surrender. But Carausius was still master of the sea, and at the head of a numerous army. While he was employed in providing against a distant danger, he fell a victim to domestic treachery; and in the eighth year of his reign was murdered at York by Allectus, a minister who had abused his confidence, and dreaded his resentment (297 A.D.).

Allectus enjoyed during three years the reward of his treachery. The time was spent by Constantius in preparing a fleet which might safely transport his troops to the island. To distract the attention of the enemy, it was divided into two squadrons, of which one under his command was stationed at Boulogne, the other, under that of the prefect Asclepiodotus, in the mouth of the Seine. The latter, owing to the impatience of the mariners, was the first which put to sea; and sailing under the cover of a fog, passed unobserved by the British fleet near the Isle of Wight, and reached without opposition the adjacent coast. Constantius himself, with a still more powerful armament, directed his course to the shore of Kent; and at his landing received the pleasing intelligence that Allectus was dead. On the first news of the arrival of

[300-314 A.D.]

Asclepiodotus, the usurper had hastened towards the spot: but the greater part of his forces were unable to equal his speed, and with his guard, a band of Franks, he was speedily overwhelmed by the Romans. A division of the Roman fleet, which had separated in the dark, entered the Thames, and advanced without meeting an enemy to the neighbourhood of London, and Constantius himself was hailed by the inhabitants as their sovereign and deliverer. He immediately restored the imperial authority, Britain became his favourite residence, and the natives enjoyed the benefit of a mild and equitable administration.

#### CHRISTIANITY IN BRITAIN

At the distance of so many ages it is impossible to discover by whom Christianity was first preached in the island. Some writers have ascribed that province to St. Peter; others have preferred the rival claim of St. Paul: but both opinions, improbable as they are in themselves, rest on the most slender evidence; on testimonies which are many of them irrelevant, all ambiguous and unsatisfactory. It is, however, certain that at a very early period there were Christians in Britain: nor is it difficult to account for the circumstance, from the intercourse which had long subsisted between the island and Rome. Of the Romans whom at that period choice or necessity conducted to Britain, and of the Britons who were induced to visit Rome, some would of course become acquainted with the professors of the gospel, and yield to the exertions of their zeal.

We have undoubted proof that the believers were numerous, and that a regular hierarchy had been instituted before the close of the third century. For by contemporary writers the church of Britain is always put on an equality with the churches of Spain and Gaul; and in one of the most early of the western councils, that of Arles in 314 A.D., we meet with the names of three British bishops, Eborius of York, Restitutus of London, and Adelphius of Lincoln.

It has been observed that the British Christians had hitherto escaped the persecutions to which their continental brethren were repeatedly exposed. But in the beginning of the fourth century, Diocletian and Maximian determined to avenge the disasters of the empire on the professors of the gospel; and edicts were published by which the churches in every province were ordered to be demolished, and the refusal to worship the gods of paganism was made a crime punishable with death. Though Constantius might condemn, he dared not forbid the execution of the imperial mandate: but he was careful at the same time to show by his conduct his own opinion of religious persecution. Assembling around him the Christian officers of his household, he communicated to them the will of the emperors, and added that they must determine to resign their employments, or to abjure the worship of Christ. If some among them preferred their interest to their religion, they received the reward which their perfidy deserved. The cæsar dismissed them from his service, observing that he would never trust the fidelity of men who had proved themselves traitors to their God. But the moderation of Constantius did not restrain the zeal of the inferior magistrates. The churches in almost every district were levelled with the ground: and of the Christians many fled for safety to the forests and mountains, many suffered with constancy both torture and death. Gildas<sup>1</sup> has preserved the names of Julius and Aaron, citizens of Caerleon-upon-Usk; and the memory of Alban, the

protomartyr of Britain, was long celebrated both in his own country and among the neighbouring nations. But within less than two years Diocletian and Maximian resigned the purple; Constantius and Galerius assumed the title of emperors, and the freedom of religious worship was restored to the Christian inhabitants of the island.<sup>b</sup>

The account of Diocletian's persecutions in England rests largely on the authority of Gildas,<sup>l</sup> who is hardly to be relied on for events which took place before his own time. His story is undoubtedly highly coloured and exaggerated. Even the legend of the martyrdom of St. Alban as related by him can hardly be accepted as it stands. Contemporary Latin writers say that the persecutions in Gaul and Britain were confined to a destruction of the churches, and that no violence was offered to persons. It is surmised that St. Alban may have fallen a victim to some popular outbreak, and it is very possible that his death occurred prior to the time of Diocletian.<sup>a</sup>

### *Constantius, Constantine, and Their Successors*

Constantius, while he was yet in an inferior situation, had married Helena, a native of Bithynia according to some writers, the daughter of a British prince if we may believe our national historians. When he was raised to the dignity of Cæsar, he was compelled to repudiate Helena for Theodora, the daughter-in-law of Maximian; but Helena had already borne him a son, the celebrated Constantine, on whom posterity has bestowed the epithet of the "great." The young prince was educated an honourable hostage in the court, first of Diocletian, and then of Galerius: but on the report that his father's health was rapidly declining, he snatched a favourable moment to escape, and maiming at every post the horses which were not necessary for his flight, contrived to retard the speed of his pursuers. He reached York a few days before Constantius expired; was recommended by him to the affection of the soldiery, and assumed, with their approbation, the titles of Cæsar and Augustus. The sequel of his story, and the long course of victories by which he united the whole empire under his own authority, are subjects foreign from these sheets.

When Constantine became sole emperor, Britain was placed under the jurisdiction of the prefect of the Gauls, whose authority extended from the wall of Antoninus to the southern limits of Mauretania Tingitana (North-west Africa). His deputy with the title of vicar (or vice-prefect) of Britain resided at York.<sup>b</sup> The ancient tribal boundaries of Britain were disregarded, and the island divided into five new provinces, each in charge of a civil governor, whose authority extended to all questions of justice and finance. The names of the five divisions were Britannia Prima, Britannia Secunda, Flavia Cæsariensis, Maxima Cæsariensis, and Valentia. Their exact boundaries are not known, but modern historical scholars have come to a general agreement as to their location. Britannia Prima is supposed to have included that part of the island south of the Thames Valley; Britannia Secunda to have comprised roughly Wales and the Welsh Marches; Flavia Cæsariensis to have extended from the Thames to the Humber, and Maxima Cæsariensis to have occupied the region between the Humber and the wall of Antoninus. Valentia, which was possibly not established until some time later, probably included the region north of the wall. The army was placed in command of three officers, the "count of Britain" (*comes Britannie*), who was apparently the commander-in-chief, the "duke of Britain," who commanded in the



[309-359 A.D.]

north, and the "count of the Saxon shore," who had charge of the defence of the southeastern coast.<sup>1a</sup>

Under Constantine and his sons Britain enjoyed more than fifty years of tranquillity. The aggressions of the barbarians were repressed; and industry and commerce were encouraged. The first check was given to the public prosperity by the cruelty and avarice of Paulus, a Spanish notary.<sup>2</sup> He had been sent to the island with a commission from the Emperor Constantius to inquire into the conduct of the officers, who, during the general defection of the western armies, had adhered to the usurper Magnentius. Paulus was eminently skilled in all the arts of rapacity and chicanery; with him wealth was a sufficient presumption of guilt; and no man, whose possessions might fill the coffers of the notary and his imperial master, was ever acquitted at his tribunal. Martin, the vicar of Britain, had lamented, and sometimes interposed to prevent, these iniquitous proceedings. But he was informed that a deep scheme had been laid to involve him in the common delinquency; and, impelled by despair, he made an attempt on the life of the notary. The stroke was parried; and Martin instantly plunged his sword into his own heart. His real or pretended accomplices were punished with torture and confiscation, exile or death; and Paulus continued his career regardless of the hatred and imprecations of the natives. By Constantius he was applauded for his fidelity: Julian, the succeeding emperor, commanded him to be burnt alive.



FOURTH-CENTURY BRITON

It is remarkable that from this period the Caledonians and Maëtæ tribes, which for two centuries had been the terror of the civilised Britons, disappeared without any ostensible cause from the page of history: and their places are supplied by the Picts and Scots, who, though differing from them in name, are described as barbarians equally savage in disposition and equally addicted to invasion and rapine. Of the origin of these two nations, which appear to start suddenly into existence in the course of the fourth century, many learned but fanciful theories have been invented. It seems manifest that the Picts were, under a new denomination, the very same people whom we have hitherto called Maëtæ and Caledonians.<sup>3</sup> The

[<sup>1</sup>The theory held by such eminent historians as Kemble,<sup>cc</sup> Palgrave,<sup>dd</sup> and Lappenberg,<sup>z</sup> that the "Saxon shore" in Britain derived its name from an early settlement of Saxons upon it, rather than from its use as a bulwark against the piratical attack of the Saxons, has been entirely discarded by more recent scholars following the lead of Doctor Guest.<sup>ff</sup> Stubbs<sup>ee</sup> says that it has no basis "either in fact or in probability." It must be remembered that there was another "Saxon shore" on the opposite French coast having its centre at Brittany.]

[<sup>2</sup>Knight,<sup>m</sup> pointing a comparison that has been frequently made, says: "What the judge Jeffreys was to England in the seventeenth century, the notary Paulus was in the fourth century."]

[<sup>3</sup>Gardiner,<sup>n</sup> agreeing with this conclusion, says: "The Picts were the same as the Caledonians of the time of Agricola. We do not know when they ceased to be Caledonians. The usual derivation of their name from the Latin *pictus*, said to have been given them because

name of Caledonians properly belonged to the natives of that long but narrow strip of land which stretches from Loch Fyne on the western, to the Firth of Tay on the eastern, coast: but it had been extended by the Romans to all the kindred and independent clans which lay between them and the northern extremity of the island. In the fourth century the mistake was discovered and rectified: and from that time not only the Caledonians, but their southern neighbours, the five tribes of the Maætæ, began to be known by the generic appellation of Picts, a word derived perhaps from the national custom of painting the body, more probably from the name which they bore in their own language.

The Scots came undoubtedly from Ireland, which, like its sister island, appears to have been colonised by adventurers from different countries. These were scattered on different points of the coast, while the interior was held by numerous clans of the Scoti, many of whom, in the fourth century, united with the Atecotti, a kindred clan in the neighbourhood of Loch Lomond, to plunder the rich provinces of the Roman Britons. But the Scots soon aspired to something more permanent than plunder. From the north of Ireland the passage was short and inviting: hordes of adventurers followed each other; settlements were obtained from the friendship, or extorted from the weakness, of the Picts; and at last the strangers acquired so marked a superiority over the indigenous tribes as to impart the name of Scotland to the northern division of Britain. It was long, however, before the two nations were blended in one people. We find the Picts distinguished from the Scots as late as the twelfth century.

### *Picts and Scots in the Roman Province*

In the reign of Constantius the Picts and Scots entered the Roman province in considerable numbers. The cæsar Julian could not be spared from Gaul: and Lupicinus, whom he sent as his deputy, did not venture to meet the invaders. This confession of weakness incited them to repeat their inroads; and at each repetition they penetrated farther into the country. They maintained spies in the Roman army; they tempted the fidelity of the garrisons; and they induced many of the foreign auxiliaries to join them in the pursuit of plunder. At length the emperor Valentinian was alarmed for the safety of the island, and Theodosius was appointed to the command. That celebrated officer, with the flower of the Gallic army, landed at Richborough (Rutupiæ), and, having divided his troops into several corps, attacked and defeated the marauding parties of the barbarians. He entered London in triumph (367 A.D.), and spent a few weeks in making preparations for new victories. The deserters were induced by an act of amnesty to rejoin their standards; the ancient discipline of the army was revived; supplies and reinforcements were provided; and, on the recommencement of hostilities, the invaders, after several bloody encounters, retired beyond the ancient limits of the empire; and Theodosius applied himself to re-establish the former system of government. The political and financial departments he confided to the vicar Civilis; and, as commander of the army, repaired the fortifications, placed garrisons in the military stations, and restored the province of Valentia, which had long been abandoned.

they painted their bodies, is inaccurate. They were probably Iberians." The Scots at that time lived in north Ireland. Rhys<sup>e</sup> concludes that "Scotus" is simply the Latin name for Gael.]

[375-403 A.D.]

## LAST YEARS OF ROMAN RULE

Gratian succeeded his father Valentinian in the empire (375 A.D.), and invested with the purple Theodosius the Younger, the son of the deliverer of Britain [placing him in control of the Eastern Empire]. There was at the time in the island an officer named Clemens Maximus, of great abilities and of greater ambition. Inflamed with jealousy by the promotion of one who had been his equal, he began to intrigue with the soldiery, and artfully extorted from their gratitude or their credulity an offer of the title of Augustus. It was not without apparent reluctance that he yielded to their entreaties: but his subsequent conduct betrayed his real sentiments. Not content with the possession of Britain, he aspired to the whole of the Western Empire. At the head of the British army he sailed to the mouth of the Rhine: the murder of Gratian gave him possession of Gaul, and the greater part of Italy was compelled to submit to his authority. He reigned with dignity, and severely chastised the Picts and Scots, who attempted to renew their inroads. Theodosius [at first] acknowledged his title; but roused at last by shame and apprehension, took the field against the usurper. On the banks of the Save (Savus) in Pannonia, the first shock was given to the power of Maximus; and the city of Aquileia soon afterwards saw him stripped of the imperial ornaments and beheaded by order of his victorious opponent (388 A.D.). [The Britons who had followed his standard never returned to their native country, and the defenceless state in which it was left by their absence exposed it to the inroads of its inveterate enemies.]

This favourable opportunity did not escape the vigilance of the Picts and Scots. They experienced only a feeble resistance from the small force that remained in the island, and returned home laden with the plunder of the provinces. Their repeated inroads impelled the Britons to lay their distressed situation before the imperial court, probably through the means of Crysantus the vicar, whose administration is mentioned with applause: and Stilicho, the master of the infantry and cavalry, despatched to their assistance a body of troops, which repelled the invaders, and confined them within their own territories.

But the great fabric of the Roman power was now shaken to its foundation. Hordes of barbarians, under different denominations, issuing from the unknown regions of the east and the north, had depopulated the fairest of the provinces; and a torrent of Goths, Vandals and Alans, under the celebrated Alaric, had poured from the summit of the Julian Alps into the flourishing plains of Italy. It became necessary to recall the troops from the extremities to defend the heart of the empire; and the cohorts which had been stationed along the walls in Britain fought and triumphed under the command of Stilicho in the bloody battle of Pollentia (403 A.D.). After the retreat of Alaric, the British forces seem to have returned to the island, and to have driven back the Picts, who had taken advantage of their absence to plunder the neighbouring province. But within two or three years the German nations, bursting into Gaul, spread devastation from one extremity to the other, and the legions in Britain, cut off from all communication with the emperor Honorius, determined to elect an emperor for themselves. The purple was bestowed on Marcus, one of their officers, who soon lost his life in a sedition of the soldiery. The next object of their choice was Gratian, a native of one of the British *municipia*, who, at the end of four months, experienced the fate of his predecessor. This dangerous pre-eminence was,



however, still an object of competition. Constantine, a soldier in the ranks, with no other pretensions than his name, offered himself to their suffrages. He was proclaimed Augustus, led them to Boulogne, and with the assistance of some Roman corps, which lay dispersed in the neighbourhood, cleared the province of the barbarians. His son Constans, who is said to have worn the monastic habit at Winchester, was named *cæsar*, and hastened to take possession of Spain. But their prosperity was of very short duration. The son was put to death at Vienne by Gerontius, one of his own officers; and the father was [besieged and captured] at Arles by Constantius, who commanded the forces of Honorius [and carried off to Ravenna, where he was beheaded] (411 A.D.).

While Constantine was thus hastening to his ruin, Britain had been the theatre of an important revolution. The natives, left without a military force, and exposed to the inroads of their enemies, determined to eject an authority which was unable to afford them protection. They deposed the Roman magistrates,<sup>1</sup> proclaimed their own independence, took up arms, and with the spirit of freemen, drove the barbarians out of their territories. When the intelligence reached Ravenna, Honorius, the legitimate emperor, wrote to the states of Britain "to provide for their own defence." By this ambiguous expression he has been thought to have released them from their allegiance; perhaps his only object was to authorize their present efforts.

From Zosimus<sup>o</sup> we learn that, on the extinction of the imperial authority in the island, the British states established domestic governments according to circumstances.<sup>2</sup> These states were undoubtedly the different cities to which Honorius had directed his letters. As the colonies, *municipia*, and Latin towns, had always formed so many separate commonwealths under the superintendence of the provincial presidents, they would probably wish to retain the forms of government to which they had so long been habituated. It is, however, easy to conceive that during the anarchy that must have been produced by the sudden removal of the Roman magistrates, and the confusion occasioned by the repeated incursions of the Picts and Scots, many a fortunate leader would abuse his own power and the confidence of his fellow-citizens to usurp the sovereign authority. In a few years every trace of popular government had vanished: and all the provinces which had belonged to the empire were divided among a multitude of petty chieftains, principally of British, but partly of Roman, origin. They were dignified with the title of kings, though the dominions of many were confined within narrower limits than most of our present counties: and their ambition, their wars, and their vices, inflicted on the country more permanent and extensive injuries than had ever been suffered from the incursions of foreign enemies. Soon after the Britons became independent, the greater part of Europe was depopulated by the two dreadful scourges of pestilence and famine. This island did not escape the general calamity: and the Scots and Picts seized the favourable moment for the renewal of their inroads. The dissensions of the native

[This statement rests on the authority of Zosimus,<sup>o</sup> the Greek historian. In this connection Mommsen's<sup>p</sup> words, "It was not Britain that gave up Rome, but Rome that gave up Britain," are worth quoting.]

[The status of Britain during this period is the subject of much controversy. Rhys,<sup>o</sup> who must be considered one of the highest authorities on Roman as on Celtic Britain, says: "It would be a mistake to take for granted that the people of Roman Britain, as soon as they were rid of the officials of the empire, resolved themselves into small communities or tribal states independent of each other—a stage which the Britons had pretty well left behind them before the Roman Conquest, and it is not to be believed that the prolonged lesson of imperial centralisation had been altogether lost on them. They seem to have simply persisted on the lines of the military leaderships which the Romans had made a reality among them"]

[411-449 A.D.]

chieftains facilitated their attempts; district after district became the scene of devastation; till the approach of danger admonished the more southern Britons to provide for their own safety. Some solicited, but in vain, the protection of Ætius, the Roman general in Gaul:<sup>1</sup> others, under the guidance of Vortigern, the most powerful of the British kings, had recourse to an expedient which, however promising it might appear in the outset, proved in the result most fatal to the liberty of their country.<sup>b</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> "The groans of the Britons to Ætius, for the third time consul," ran their plea, "The savages drive us to the sea, and the sea casts us back upon the savages; so arise two kinds of death, and we are either drowned or slaughtered."]





## CHAPTER II

### “THE ANGLO-SAXON CONQUEST”

[449-871 A.D.]

The Saxons, Angles, and Jutes, although speaking the same language, worshipping the same gods and using the same laws, had no political unity like the Franks of Clovis; they were not moved by one impulse or invited by one opportunity. The conquest of Britain was the result of a series of separate expeditions, long continued and perhaps, in point of time, continuous but unconnected, and independent of one another. It was not until the middle of the fifth century that they assumed the dimensions of conquest, colonisation, migration; and when they have attained that character, the progress and success of the several attempts are not uniform; each little state reaches greatness by its own route, and the history of its growth makes a mark upon its constitution.—STUBBS.<sup>o</sup>

ELEVEN centuries ago an industrious and conscientious historian, desiring to give a record of the establishment of his forefathers in England, could find no fuller or better account than this: “About the year of Grace 445-446, the British inhabitants of England, deserted by the Roman masters who had enervated while they protected them, and exposed to the ravages of Picts and Scots from the extreme and barbarous portions of the island, called in the assistance of heathen Saxons from the continent of Europe. The strangers faithfully performed their task, and chastised the northern invaders; then, in scorn of the weakness of their employers, subjected them in turn to the yoke, and after various vicissitudes of fortune, established their own power upon the ruins of Roman and British civilisation.” The few details which had reached the historian taught that the strangers were under the guidance of two brothers, Hengist and Horsa: that their armament was conveyed in three ships or keels: that it consisted of Jutes, Saxons and Angles: that their successes stimulated similar adventurers among their countrymen: and that in process of time their continued migrations were so large and numerous as



[ca. 450 A.D.]

to have reduced Anglia, their original home, to a desert. Such was the tale of the victorious Saxons in the eighth century.

Meagre indeed are the accounts which satisfied the most inquiring of our forefathers; yet such as they are, they were received as the undoubted truth, and appealed to in later periods as the earliest authentic record of our race. The acuter criticism of an age less prone to believe, more skilful in the appreciation of evidence, and familiar with the fleeting forms of mythical and epical thought, sees in them only a confused mass of traditions borrowed from the most heterogeneous sources, compacted rudely and with little ingenuity, and in which the smallest possible amount of historical truth is involved in a great deal of fable. Yet the truth which such traditions do nevertheless contain, yields to the alchemy of our days a golden harvest: if we cannot undoubtedly accept the details of such legends, they still point out to us at least the course we must pursue to discover the elements of fact upon which the Mythos and Epos rest, and guide us to the period and the locality where these took root and flourished.<sup>c</sup>

The annals of England for a period of thirty years after the temporary retirement of the Romans are so involved and contradictory that great scope is left for the ingenuity of historians to unravel and reconcile them. It was a period of disturbance and unrest in all quarters of the world. As soon as Rome was found to be weak, the savage peoples who had been collecting for ages on the limits of her power, and had been repelled by the strength of her legions and the awe they still entertained for her name, broke through the boundaries, and poured themselves all over the civilised lands which had resisted their attempts so long. Tribe after tribe of strange and uncouth name followed each other with the regularity and force of waves of the sea. Burgundians, Visigoths, and Suevi established themselves in Switzerland and Spain. The rich shores of Africa were seized by the Vandals; and the hardy sons of the north, the Saxons, the Jutes, and Angles prepared to follow the example of the other barbarians, and transport themselves into more fertile lands. There never was a prey more tempting or more easy than the disarmed and Romanised Britain. Its southern portion lay open to the hand of the first invader who chose to seize it. The inhabitants were wealthy and spiritless—the youth of the country and all its foreign garrisons had been carried over to resist the hordes which were devastating the Italian fields; little confidence could be placed in the turf bank which guarded them from the Piets and Scots, and still less in the undefended walls which surrounded their luxurious towns. Wherever there had in old times been a *castra*, or



ANCIENT BRITISH CANOE FOUND AT NORTH STOKE, SUSSEX

permanent camp, there was now a city filled with all the appliances of a civilisation which was, in fact, too high for the people on whom it had been impressed. They had no arms, no discipline, no patriotic feelings; they could only "eat, and sleep, and hoard," and left all the rest to the superior power.

The still unreclaimed barbarians of the north, bursting over the feeble ramparts of Hadrian and Severus, pressed onwards towards the central lowlands, and are reported to have made a dash upon London itself. But necessity and fear at last produced some appearance of combination and courage

on the part of the civilised Britons. The towns entered into confederacies for mutual support. Arms were put into the hands of the population, and leaders arose who established their authority on independent terms. Their independence, however, took the unhappy form of mutual war. Instead of combining against the common foe, they weakened the country by factions and quarrels. In these civil distractions the contending parties bargained for assistance from every quarter. Enlisted on different sides in these local dissensions, the population had no central authority round which to gather. Town after town was therefore given to the flames by the advancing Picts and Scots on the north, and the returning thousands of ancient Britons from the borders of Wales. It is a mere rhetorical exaggeration of the now degraded condition of the Romanised natives, when we are told that they were incapable even of so unscientific an operation as building a stone wall. Perhaps they had found out the futility of these inanimate defences when brave hearts were no longer to be found within, and considered such bulwarks as labour thrown away. Hopeless of resisting, and too uncertain of their tenure to plough their fields, they allowed the land everywhere to go out of cultivation. When their northern invaders accordingly burst through the newly renovated walls, they found no active enemy to face them with arms in their hands. The desolation of the country was its true defence. The cities were attacked and plundered, but the inhabitants had betaken themselves to the woods and morasses; the corn was either hidden in holes in the earth or utterly destroyed, and the Caledonians were forced to retrace their steps by the want of food. While the Celtic warrior was reconciled to his paradise in the Grampians, by comparing it with the howling wildernesses of Leicestershire and Derby, the citizens crept stealthily out of their hiding-places, and resumed their old occupations.

#### HERO-TALES

The old dissensions, however, arose with the old condition. Rival chieftains again fought for the pre-eminence in a realm which neither of them could defend. Vortigern, of pure Celtic blood, was the leader of the old or national party, and was opposed by Ambrosius, whose name demonstrates his civilised descent, as champion of the Romanised natives. As if to scatter the last hope of combination, a religious schism embittered the feelings on both sides. With the marks of conflagration still blackening the ruins of their churches, and their houses scarcely recovered from the Celtic ravagers' assault, they disputed on the Pelagian heresy. Prodiges were related on both sides in support of their respective faiths. The orthodox Germanus of Auxerre had come over to arrange the question, and showed the credentials of his authority in a great victory over the Picts, where, by the mere cry of *Hallelujah!* which his newly baptised battalions of Britons were ordered to raise, he dispersed the enemy with enormous slaughter. But it was easier to slay the barbarians than to convert the heretics, and the theological disputes went on. The sober inquiries of recent times have interfered very much with the beauty of the ancient legends. Heroes and kings are reduced to very small dimensions; the impossible grows improbable, whereas it was at one time the greatest test of truth; and even the improbable is looked on with suspicion, if any other method can be detected of arriving at the same results. The narrative of the invitation to the Saxons, as it is called, would be very simple if it rested only on the real facts of the case.<sup>n</sup>

[418-449 A.D.]

## THE THREE TRIBES OF GERMANY

The "three tribes of Germany"—the Jutes, the Angles, and the Saxons, by whom Britain was subdued, seem originally to have constituted but one nation, speaking the same language, and ruled by monarchs who all claimed their descent from the deified monarch of the Teutons, Woden or Odin. They frequently changed their position on the firm land of Europe, as the stream of population rolled forward, impelled by the secondary causes, prepared and destined to act in fulfilment of the decree by which the enlargement of Japhet had been foretold.

The Jutes, together with their neighbours the Angles, dwelt in the peninsula of Jutland, or the "Cimbric Chersonesus," and in the adjoining Holstein, where there is still a district called Anglen. That, in fact, is the real Old England. The Saxons were more widely dispersed. Ptolemy places them in the Cimbric Chersonesus, near the Jutes and Angles; but they afterwards occupied a much larger extent, from the delta of the Rhine to the Weser. After the migration of the Saxons to Britain, the name of Old Saxons was given to the parent stock. One very large body of Saxon population occupied the present Westphalia; but the tribes by whom Britain was invaded, appear principally to have proceeded from the country now called Friesland; for of all the Continental dialects, the ancient Frisick is the one which approaches most nearly to the Anglo-Saxon of our ancestors. It is necessary, however, to remark that the name "Saxon" appears rather to have been intended to denote a confederacy of tribes, than to have originally belonged to any one nation. Learned men have sought for the etymology of the term in the *seax* or short sword, a weapon with which they were armed. These and other suppositions are, however, after all, only ingenious sports and fancies. We possess but a very small number of authentic facts concerning the early history of the barbarian nations of the west; and, though the general outline of their position upon the ethnographical map can be understood with tolerable precision, yet we must be always uncertain concerning the details.<sup>d</sup>

It is almost exclusively from Roman writers that we gain our information about the institutions and usages of our Saxon ancestors in their primeval fatherland. Caution must be used in admitting and applying to them the details which we read in Cæsar and Tacitus respecting the manners and institutions of the Germans. But we may gain thence some general knowledge which may be safely relied on, especially when taken in connection with what we know of the Anglo-Saxons at a later period. Our German ancestors were freemen, having kings with limited authority, who were selected from certain families. Besides these kings, they had chieftains whom they freely chose among themselves for each warlike enterprise or emergency. All important state affairs were discussed at general assemblies of the people, matters of minor consequence being dealt with by the chief magistrates alone. Any person might be impeached and tried for his life at the chief popular assembly. The head men, or magistrates, who were to preside in the local courts, were also elected at popular assemblies; and the organisation of the men of each district into hundreds, for the purposes of local self-government and for being joint securities for the good behaviour of each other, appears also to have existed among them. They had no cities or walled towns, but they had villages, where each man dwelt in his own homestead. It is very important to mark this; and to observe that the ancient Germans were equally distinguished from the classic Greeks and Romans, who were essentially dwellers



in cities, and from the wandering tribes in Central Asia, who have ever been dwellers in tents, without settled home or habitation. The love of individual liberty, the spirit of personal independence, which characterised the German warrior, as contrasted with the classic citizen, to whom the state was all and the individual nothing, were perfectly compatible with a respect for order, and a capacity for becoming the member of a permanent and civilised community, such as never existed in the Scythian of antiquity or the Tatar of modern times.

Slavery existed among the ancient Germans, but it was generally of a very mitigated kind. They had few domestic slaves, like those of the classical nations, and the term "serf" would more accurately describe the German *servus* whom Tacitus speaks of. The serf had his own home and his land, part of the produce of which he was bound to render to his master; that was the extent of his servitude; but he was destitute of all political rights. Military valour was the common virtue of the nations of the north. The Germans possessed this, but they had also peculiar merits. The domestic virtues flourished nowhere more than in a German home. Polygamy was almost entirely unknown among them, and infanticide was looked on with the utmost horror. The great ethnologist, Pritchard,<sup>w</sup> in his survey of the different races of mankind, truly observes that "In two remarkable traits the Germans differed from the Sarmatic as well as from the Slavic nations, and, indeed, from all those other races to whom the Greeks and Romans gave the designation of barbarians. I allude to their personal freedom and regard to the rights of men; secondly, to the respect paid by them to the female sex, and the chastity for which the latter were celebrated among the people of the north. These were the foundations of that probity of character, self-respect, and purity of manners, which may be traced among the Germans and Goths even during pagan times, and which, when their sentiments were enlightened by Christianity, brought out those splendid traits of character which distinguished the age of chivalry and romance."

Much indeed of the spirit of chivalry, and even the germs of some of its peculiar institutions, may be found in the customs of our Germanic ancestors as they are described by Tacitus. The young warrior was solemnly invested with the dignity of arms by some chief of eminence; and the most aspiring and adventurous youths were wont to attach themselves as retainers to some renowned leader, whose person they protected in war, and whose state they upheld in peace. (*In pace decus, in bello præsidium.*) These were the "gesithas" of the Anglo-Saxons; they fed at the chief's table, they looked to him for gifts of war-horses or weapons, as rewards for deeds of distinguished valour. Their relation to him was that of fealty; and we may see here a species of feudalism, with the all-important exception that the relation between retainer and chief had no necessary connection with the tenure of any land.<sup>e</sup>

In the infancy of their naval power the Saxon boats resembled those of the other northern tribes; and a few planks, surmounted with works of osier, and covered with skins, bore the fearless barbarian across the ocean in the search of spoil and adventures. But in the fifth century, their *chirles* or war-ships had assumed a more formidable appearance: and from the number of warriors whom they carried, and the length of the voyages which they made, we may conclude that they were formed of more solid and lasting materials. In these the Saxons repeatedly issued from their ports, sometimes steering for a particular point, sometimes trusting entirely to the guidance of the winds: but whether they were conducted by chance or design, their object was invariably the same—to surprise and pillage the unoffending inhabitants

[449 A.D.]

on some part of the British or Gallic coasts. Sidonius,<sup>m</sup> the eloquent bishop of Clermont, has described in animated language the terrors of the provincials and the ravages of the barbarians. "We have not," he says, "a more cruel and more dangerous enemy than the Saxons. They overcome all who have the courage to oppose them. They surprise all who are so imprudent as not to be prepared for their attack. When they pursue, they infallibly overtake: when they are pursued, their escape is certain. They despise danger: they are inured to shipwreck: they are eager to purchase booty with the peril of their lives. Tempests, which to others are so dreadful, to them are subjects of joy. The storm is their protection when they are pressed by the enemy, and a cover for their operations when they meditate an attack. Before they quit their own shores, they devote to the altars of their gods the tenth part of the principal captives: and when they are on the point of returning, the lots are cast with an affectation of equity, and the impious vow is fulfilled."

## THE COMING OF THE SAXONS

Such was the terror of the Saxon name, when Hengist and Horsa,<sup>1</sup> in 449, were invited by Vortigern to fight his battles. For six years they served him with fidelity. The Picts were taught to respect, the Britons were eager to reward, their valour. Hengist, whether he had already formed designs of conquest, or was desirous of rendering greater service to his employers, obtained permission to solicit reinforcements from his own country. The messengers whom he sent, were received with welcome: chieftain after chieftain led his followers to Thanet; and the isle was crowded with strangers, till their number became an object of jealous apprehension to the Britons. An increased supply of provisions was demanded; and the refusal was to both parties the signal for war. The Jutes marched to the Medway (455 A.D.), and at Aylesford were opposed by the natives. The passage of the river was fiercely disputed; Vortigern lost a son, and Hengist his brother: but the issue appears to have been favourable to the strangers. After the death of Horsa, Æsc, the son of Hengist, was associated with his father in the command, and a second battle was fought more to the west, on the banks of the Cray. It proved most disastrous to the Britons. Four of their leaders were left on the field; their troops fled with precipitation to London: and Kent was abandoned to the possession of the invaders.<sup>b</sup>

After the victory at Crayford (Creccanford), however, the tide seems to have turned against Hengist and his followers, and the succeeding years saw the Britons reassert themselves and drive the Jutish conquerors back from the ground they had won, till they occupied only the Isle of Thanet. There,

[<sup>1</sup> Even if we accept Hengist and Horsa as historical characters, we may still entertain widely differing theories of the circumstances which led to their coming to England. Of the ancient authorities Bede, following Gildas, tells the story of the invitation by Vortigern. Nennius<sup>s</sup> says that they were roving exiles. Palgrave<sup>d</sup> accepts this explanation as the more probable, and thinks that the first landing was the result of a piratical expedition such as had often harassed Britain during the later Roman occupation. He believes that it bears "no nearer relation to the real history of England than the story of Æneas, as related by Virgil,<sup>x</sup> does to the real history of the foundation of Rome." Kemble,<sup>c</sup> summing up the evidence, finds only that "it is certain that at that period there took place an extensive migration to the shores of England," and adds that "the expeditions known to tradition as those of Hengist, Ælla, Cissa, Cerdic, and Port may therefore have some foundation in fact." Ramsay,<sup>i</sup> one of the most recent investigators in the field, touches the real point of weakness in the "invitation story" in remarking that "It seems hardly necessary to point out that if these men had been imported for service against northern enemies they would not have been quartered in Thanet."]

for the space of eight years or more, they remained practically prisoners, although the Britons wisely desisted from any attempt to dislodge them from their island stronghold. Just what caused this temporary check to the advance of the Jutes it is difficult to say. Perhaps the comparatively small number of Hengist's followers made it seem unwise to push much farther from the seaboard. Perhaps, as seems to be suggested by the early chroniclers, a revolution among the Britons themselves had placed a stronger leader than Vortigern at the head of their hosts, who had infused into them a new spirit of resistance. At any rate, this is the period to which tradition ascribes the ascendancy of Ambrosius Aurelianus, said to have been a descendant of Constantine, the private soldier, whom the legions in Britain had hailed emperor in the early days of the same century. Ambrosius appears to have overthrown Vortigern, and he it probably was who drove the conquering Jutes back to Thanet. The success of the Britons was not lasting. In 465 A.D. Hengist, reinforced, no doubt, by new bands from the Continent, advanced again towards the west, and Ambrosius marshalled all his strength to meet the onset. The hostile armies met at Wippdesfleet, where in a bloody battle Hengist won a decisive victory. The defence of the Britons was evidently gallant and stubborn, but was of little avail before the onslaught of Hengist's fierce warriors, of whom the chronicle tells us that "there twelve Wealish Ealdormen they slew." Kent fell into the hands of Hengist without further conflict, and the conquerors began their advance along the southern shore.<sup>a</sup>

The last victory of Hengist was obtained in 473 A.D. The Britons are said to have fled from their enemies as "from a devouring conflagration," and to have left behind them spoils of incalculable value. The conqueror survived fifteen years, and dying in 488 A.D. left the peaceable possession of Kent to his son Æsc.

A very different tale [of the beginnings of the conquest] is told by the British writers, whose vanity has attributed the loss of Kent to the infatuation of Vortigern and the treacherous policy of Hengist. That chieftain, if we may credit their relation, had a daughter, Rowena, of transcendent beauty. It was so contrived, that at a banquet given to the British nobles, she waited on Vortigern, who was captivated by her charms, took her to his bed, and bestowed on his father-in-law the kingdom of Kent. But his attachment to the Jutes deprived him of the affections of the Britons. His son Vortemir was placed on the throne, fought three battles with the strangers, and ultimately expelled them from Kent. During five years Hengist wandered an adventurer on the ocean: but at the death of Vortemir the father recovered his crown, and the son-in-law demanded the restoration of the possessions which he had lost. Three hundred deputies from each nation assembled in council to determine the question: but during the conference each Saxon singled out his victim: at the proper moment Hengist exclaimed, "Draw your daggers:" and the ground was covered with the dead bodies of two hundred and ninety-nine Britons.<sup>1</sup> The one who had been spared was Vortigern himself: and to free from captivity a prince whom they hated, the natives yielded to Hengist the territory which has since been divided into the counties of Kent, Essex, Sussex, and Middlesex. Can it be necessary to say that many of these pretended events are contradicted by undeniable evidence, and that

[<sup>1</sup> The strongest proof of the legendary character of many of these stories of early English history is found in their unmistakable identification with similar stories in the early history of other lands and peoples. Kemble, for instance, points out that the story of the treacherous murder of the British chieftains at Hengist's feast is not of English origin, but is related on the Continent in connection with the conquest of the Thuringians.]



[477-534 A.D.]

all escaped the notice of Gildas, a British, and almost a contemporary, writer? The whole appears to be a fable invented by the natives, to account for the first settlement of the Saxons without the admission of conquest.

Hengist and his successors were content with the possession of Kent. On the north, east, and south, their small domain was protected by the Thames and the sea; on the west they were removed from the hostility of the natives by the interposition of a new band of adventurers, under the command of Ælla and his three sons. In 477 A.D. these marauders landed at Keynor (Cymnisor), near Withering, in the Isle of Selsea. The Britons made an obstinate resistance, but were defeated with considerable loss, and compelled to shelter themselves in the Andred's weald, a forest of one hundred and twenty miles in length and thirty in breadth. The progress of Ælla was slow. In 485 A.D. he fought a great battle (at Meareredsburn), the result of which is unknown: and it was not till 490 A.D. that he could penetrate as far as the city of Anderida [near the modern Pevensey], which gave its name to the tract, and was deemed an impregnable fortress. Its fate is celebrated in our annals. While the Saxons besieged the city, they were besieged in their turn by a numerous army of Britons, who allowed them no rest either by day or night. As often as they began the assault, the natives attacked them in the rear: and if they turned on the assailants, these immediately found an asylum in the woods, from which they issued again the moment that the Saxons moved to their former position. This harassing species of warfare suggested to the barbarian the obvious expedient of dividing his force into two armies: of which one conducted the siege, while the other watched the motions of the enemy without the walls. At last the Saxons forced their way into the place: Anderida was reduced to ashes; and every inhabitant was put to the sword (491 A.D.). This conquest secured to Ælla the possession of his former acquisitions, and he became the founder of the kingdom of Sussex, or of the South Saxons.

Five years after the destruction of Anderida a more powerful armament of five chiules appeared in the channel. This was under the command of Cerdic, who, sailing past the previous conquests of his countrymen, landed more to the west, at a place which, from the circumstance, received the name of Cerdices-ore. Natanleod, the king of the district, opposed the foreigners with intrepidity and perseverance; and Cerdic was repeatedly compelled to solicit the co-operation of other adventurers. In 501 A.D., Port, with two chiules, arrived at Portsmouth, and slew a British prince who opposed his landing. Still Natanleod retarded the advance of the invaders; and in 508 A.D. he routed Cerdic, but was attacked during the pursuit by Cynric, and perished in the field with five thousand Britons. Even this important victory did not give to the Saxon quiet possession of the country. In 514 A.D. he received a great accession of strength by the arrival of his nephews Stuf and Wihtgar with three chiules at Cerdices-ore: repeated victories gradually extended the conquests of the strangers; and in 519 A.D. the great battle of Charford on the Avon finally established the kingdom of Wessex, or of the West Saxons. Cerdic, having associated his son Cynric in the regal dignity, and bestowed upon his nephews the subordinate sovereignty of the Isle of Wight, died in 534 A.D. His was the kingdom of the West Saxons [Gewissas].

The success of these adventurers had given a new direction to the policy of the Saxons. Their object, which had formerly been plunder, was now converted into that of colonisation. In pursuit of new settlements in a more opulent country and under a more genial sun, the most enterprising chieftains abandoned their homes, and were followed by numbers anxious to share their fortunes. There was no part of the eastern shore, from the Firth of Forth

to the mouth of the Thames, which was not visited by hordes of barbarians. While Cerdic was struggling with the southern Britons, several independent chieftains had pushed their conquests along the left bank of the Thames.<sup>b</sup>

More meagre even than our knowledge of the conquests of the Jutes and the South Saxons is the record of the advance which resulted at length in the establishment of the kingdom of the East Saxons (Essex). From the estuaries of the Thames and up the valleys of the Colne, the Chelm, and the



SAXON KING INSTRUCTING OFFICER

Stour, the Saxon chieftains pushed their conquests into the interior. The old Roman town of Camulodunum (Colchester) fell before them, but of their varying fortunes we know almost nothing. By 530 A.D., however, the chroniclers tell us, the bands had been united into a single federation or kingdom under Æscwine or Ercenwine.

The districts in which the Jutes and Saxons made their early conquests were cut off by forests, hills, or rivers from free communication with the interior. To this condition we must attribute the fact that for a hundred years after their first landing they were unable to extend their sovereignty over a wider area. But to the north of the Stour no such barrier kept back the tribes which had secured a foothold during this same period along the eastern coast from the Wash to the Firth of Forth. The people who had settled at different times along this great stretch of shore washed by the waters of the North Sea, and who were destined to play a far greater part in the conquest of the island than their southern neighbours, and eventually to give their name to the land which they conquered, were neither Saxons nor Jutes. They were Angles (Angli) or Engles, and their continental homes modern research seems to have fixed with reasonable certainty in the neighbourhood of Magdeburg in the valley of the middle Elbe, in Lower Hanover and Oldenburg, and at a later period in parts of what is now Schleswig-Holstein and the peninsula of Jutland. Unlike the Saxons, only a small part of whom crossed to Britain, the Angles seem to have emigrated in a body. The greater vigour of their conquests was very likely due in great part to the fact that they were less

[547-586 A.D.]

inspired by the love of fighting and plunder, than by the desire to establish new homes for their wives and children.<sup>a</sup>

The majority of the Angles had spread themselves more to the northward. Ida, who commanded a fleet of forty chiules, after many severe conflicts, succeeded in removing the Bernician Britons from the vicinity of the coast; and fixed his residence at Bamborough (Bebbanburh), a castle which he had built on a lofty promontory, and to which he had given that name in honour of his consort Bebba. He obtained the regal title in 547 A.D., and reigned twelve years. His states, from their British name Berneich, were called the kingdom of Bernicia, and were bounded on the south by the river Tyne or the Tees.

The Britons who lived on the right banks of those rivers were called Deiri, from Deyfyr. The first of the Anglian chieftains, by whom they had been assailed and defeated, was Soemil. Ælla, one of his descendants, in 560 A.D. obtained the undisputed possession of the country, and formed a new kingdom, which preserved its British appellation.<sup>1</sup>

The Angles of Deira stretched themselves as far as the Humber. In 586 A.D. a colony under the command of Creoda passed that river, and after clearing the coast of the Britons, pushed their conquest behind the East Angles, till they had reached the very centre of the island. They were in general called Mercians,<sup>2</sup> perhaps from the marshy district in which they first settled; but some of them took the name of Middle Angles from their central position.

From the arrival of Hengist to the last successes of Creoda a period had intervened of more than one hundred and fifty years. The natives had gradually retired before their enemies from the coast to the mountains, and had left about one-half of the southern division of the island in the possession of the invaders. Eight new kingdoms had been formed. Kent and Sussex were comprised within the small extent of the counties still known by those names. The East Saxons possessed Essex, Middlesex, and the south of Hertfordshire. East Anglia comprehended Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridge, and the Isle of Ely. These states were prevented from extending their territories by their position on the coast, and the contiguity of other Saxon adventurers. But the remaining kingdoms bordered on the Britons, and were successively augmented by conquest. When they had attained their full growth, Bernicia on the north, and Deira on the south, of the Tees, extended from the Forth to the Humber, and from the eastern sea to the western. Wessex was bounded by the Thames and the Severn on the north, and stretched from the borders of Kent and Sussex to the Land's End in Cornwall. Mercia comprised all the interior of the island as far as the mountains of Wales. It is easy to point out the continental origin of these different peoples. The nations of the Saxons discover themselves by their very name. The conquerors of Kent, of the Isle of Wight, and the coast of Hampshire opposite to that island were Jutes. All the remaining kingdoms were founded by the Angles.

During this long and eventful period, the Britons, though finally unsuccessful, had displayed a considerable share of courage and resolution.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> When Bernicia was afterwards united with Deira under one sovereign, the whole was called the kingdom of Northumbria, from its comprising the Saxon conquests north of the Humber.

<sup>2</sup> A more generally accepted derivation of the name Mercia, is that it was the same as the name March or Mark, meaning border-land.]

<sup>3</sup> The theory of Kemble,<sup>c</sup> which has many adherents, is quite contrary to that here expressed. He disbelieves that there was a long and doubtful struggle between the Britons and the Saxon invaders. "It is no doubt probable that the whole land was not subdued without some



If during the struggle they lost the fairer portion of the island, the origin of their misfortunes will be found in the want of union among their chieftains. Like their fathers of old, they were vanquished in detail. Their national writers talk of kings who at this period wielded the whole power of Britain: but of the existence of any such authority no trace can be discovered in genuine history. The population of the country was divided among a multitude of chieftains, whose crimes and dissensions had rendered them too attentive to objects of personal jealousy or aggrandisement, to act with any combined effort against the common enemy. The chief opposition made to the Saxons seems to have proceeded from the inhabitants of the places in which they successively landed.<sup>b</sup>

#### THE REAL KING ARTHUR

In the stream of bloody deeds that marks the story of the Saxon conquest one stands out in the imagination from all the rest, not because of its inherent importance, but because it afforded the foundation or the point of departure for the story which of all others in English history has been most often told and has most powerfully affected the historical imagination—the story of King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table. When the imagination has had a sway so nearly limitless it is especially interesting to discover the original facts. These are best presented in Ramsay's *Foundation of England*.<sup>a</sup>

The name of Arthur is not to be found in Gildas,<sup>i</sup> who wrote only forty-four years after the siege of the Mons Badonicus. As he gives the names of several native princes it seems clear that there was no leading native of that name known to him. If we search for the oldest historic record of an Arthur we find it among the Gael, in the person of a Dalriad prince, in Latin "Arturius," son of Aidan, killed in battle by the heathen Piets, 591 A.D. We also have an Arthur map Petr, and more clearly a Noe son of Arthur, ruling in Dyfed (Pembrokeshire), 600–660 A.D. The name therefore was not unknown in Great Britain. But neither of these men can serve as basis for the legendary Arthur. For him we have to skip on one hundred and fifty years to the pages of Nennius,<sup>s</sup> who wrote in the ninth century, and there we have the Arthurian legend in full bloom. He is represented not as being a British king, or even a Briton at all, but as a heroic personage who fought for them against the Saxons and led their armies. He fights twelve battles—a suspicious number—and apparently wins them all; the last being that "*in monte Badonis*," the victory of the historic Ambrosius.

If we turn to the old Bardic poems of Wales, we find in them no allusion to these battles. The name Arthur, however, does occur in four of the poems, for which a historic character is claimed by Mr. W. F. Skene.<sup>t</sup> But the only one that couples him with a personage that can be identified couples him with Geraint ap Erbin of Dyfnaint; apparently the Geraint who is defeated by Ine of Wessex in 710 A.D., two centuries after the time of the Arthur of Nennius. Another poem talks of fighting on the Wall, "the ancient boundary," and of the "loricated legion"; thus relegating its Arthur to the times of the Roman dominion.

The theory that commends itself to us is that the Arthurian legend is merely a reissue of Ossianic myths, brought over by the Dalriad Scots, dispains in different quarters," he writes. "But a skirmish, carried on by very small numbers on either side, seems generally to have decided the fate of a campaign."]

[550-568 A.D.]

seminated through the agency of the Columban missionaries, and appropriated and adopted by the Celtic people of Great Britain. This will account for the localisation of the legendary Arthur in North Britain; because the north was the chief scene of the labours of the Irish clergy; and the deficiency of Arthurian traditions in Wales will be due to the fact that the Irish missionaries gained no footing there.<sup>f</sup>

## THE EIGHT KINGDOMS

By the conquests of the Saxons the island was replunged into that state of barbarism from which it had been extricated by the Romans. The victors had long been inured to pillage and slaughter. On many occasions the towns and villages were with their inhabitants involved in the same ruin. A mighty conflagration, says Gildas,<sup>i</sup> was lighted up by the barbarians on the eastern coast, which gradually devoured the whole surface of the island. To escape from the exterminating sword of their enemies, the natives, as soon as opposition appeared fruitless, fled with their most valuable effects to the hills and forests. Multitudes found a secure asylum among the mountains which cover the west of the island: where, struggling with poverty, and engaged in constant warfare, they rapidly lost the faint polish of provincial civilisation, and relapsed into many of the habits of savage life. But the work of devastation was checked by views of personal interest. The habitations of the Britons were wanted for the use of the conquerors; and the labours of the captives were found necessary for the cultivation of the soil. Hence it was that, as the Saxons extended their conquests, the buildings were suffered to stand; and the lives of the Britons who fell into their hands were spared, unless the thirst of vengeance had been excited by the obstinacy of their resistance. The captives were divided, together with the land, among the conquerors: they became the property, the chattels, of their lord, subject to his caprice, and transferable at his will. The same fate attended their descendants for many generations: and from the authentic record of Domesday it appears that as late as the eleventh century a great part of the population of England remained in a state of serfhood.

The conquerors had established eight independent kingdoms in the island, though from the frequent union of Bernicia and Deira under the same head, they have generally been considered as only seven. The history of their different dynasties, were they to be arranged either collaterally or in succession, would perplex and fatigue both the writer and the reader. A sufficiently accurate notion of the period which precedes the preponderance of the West Saxon kings may be obtained by attending to the reigns of the more powerful monarchs; for there frequently was one among the number whose authority was acknowledged by all or by most of his contemporaries. The title by which he was designated was [according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*] that of Bretwalda, the wielder or sovereign of Britain.<sup>1</sup>

Æthelberht, the fourth king of Kent, was the first to disturb the harmony which had united the Saxon princes. In 568 A.D. he led an army against

[<sup>1</sup> The theory that Bretwalda was a regular title, recognised as denoting the possession by its holder of certain designated powers and privileges, was held by many historical writers of the early nineteenth century. Later writers have generally discarded the theory. The source upon which this idea of the title was based, the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*,<sup>k</sup> is not contemporaneous, and as Stubbs,<sup>o</sup> the highest authority on the subject, says, "It is most probable that the superiority was one of power and influence only; but it may have been recognised by occasional acts of commendation by which the weaker sovereign placed himself under the protection of the stronger."]

Ceawlin, king of Wessex, the grandson of Cerdic. At Wimbledon (Wibbandūn) his temerity was severely chastised. Oslac and Cnebba, his two ealdormen, fell in the conflict, and Æthelberht himself escaped with difficulty from the pursuit of the enemy. Ceawlin, content with the humiliation of the king of Kent, directed his arms against the Britons. The battle of Bedford (571 A.D.), which was fought under the direction of his brother Cutha or Cuthwin, added to his dominions the towns of Leighton, Ailesbury, Bensington, and Eynsham: and six years afterwards the victory of Deorham (577 A.D.) in Gloucestershire was marked by the fall of three British kings, Conmail, Condidan, and Farin-mail, and was followed by the surrender of the important cities of Gloucester, Cirencester, and Bath.<sup>b</sup> The victory at Deorham was decisive, and its results were far-reaching. Its great significance lay in the fact that by giving the Saxons command of the mouth of the Severn, and control of its fertile valley, the Britons of Cornwall were forever cut off from communication with their countrymen in Wales. With the possibility of common action in defence of their land gone, their subjugation became an easier task for the Saxon conquerors.<sup>a</sup> When Ceawlin had settled his new conquests, he resumed offensive operations against the Britons. At Frithern, on the left bank of the Severn, he lost his son Cutha: but victory declared for the Saxons, the neighbouring towns were plundered, and the army returned home laden with booty. A few years afterwards, on the death of Cissa, the son of Ælla, Ceawlin added Sussex to his other dominions. But fortune deserted him in the zenith of his power. His own subjects rose in arms against him; Angles and Britons hastened to assist them; and, after a bloody battle at Wodnesbeorh, the king was driven from his throne. He died in 593 A.D., and was succeeded by his nephew Ceolric.

### *The Reign of Æthelberht of Kent*

The disgrace which had clouded the first years of Æthelberht, king of Kent, was afterwards dispersed by the glory of a long and prosperous reign. At the death of Ceawlin his authority was admitted by all the Saxon princes south of the Humber. While he was in possession of this power, he received intelligence that forty strangers had landed on the Isle of Thanet. These were Augustine and his associates, partly Gauls, partly Italians, whom Pope Gregory the Great had sent for the benevolent purpose of converting the pagans.<sup>b</sup>

Pope Gregory had become much interested in the welfare of the Anglo-Saxons, in consequence of an incident which happened to him at an earlier period of his life. It chanced that he passed through the market at Rome (about 588 A.D.), where certain dealers had just arrived from foreign parts with various kinds of merchandise. Amongst other articles, there were slaves for sale, like cattle. Gregory was particularly interested by the appearance of some poor little lads, who stood trembling in the expectation of being consigned to a new master. They were beautiful children, with ruddy cheeks and blue eyes, and their fine yellow tresses flowing in long curls upon their shoulders.

"To what nation do these poor boys belong?" was the question which Gregory asked of the dealer. "They are Angles, father." "Well may they be so called, for they are as comely as angels; and would that, like angels, they might become cherubim in heaven! But from which of the many provinces of Britain do they come?" "From *Deira*, father." "Indeed," continued Gregory, speaking in Latin, "*De irā Dei liberandi sunt*" (From



[596-597 A.D.]

the wrath of God they are to be delivered). And when, on asking the name of their king, he was told it was Ælla, or Alla, he added, that *Allelujah*—praise ye the Lord—ought to be sung in his dominions. This conversation was destined to produce the most important effects. The state of Britain having been introduced to the notice of Gregory, he brooded over the thought, and determined to proceed thither in the character of a missionary. Impediments arose, which prevented him from carrying this design into effect, but the impression continued firm in his mind; and when he became pope of Rome he despatched Augustine to fulfil the task, the accomplishment of which he had so earnestly desired (596-601 A.D.).<sup>d</sup>

Æthelberht could not have been unacquainted with the Christian religion. It was probably the belief of the majority of the British slaves in his dominions: it was certainly professed by his queen, Bertha, the daughter of Charibert, king of Paris. The Saxon prince received the missionaries under an oak, in an open field, at the suggestion of his priests, who had told him that in such a situation the spells of the foreign magicians would lose their influence. At the appointed time, Augustine was introduced to the king. Before him were borne a silver cross, and a banner representing the Redeemer: behind him his companions walked in procession; and the air resounded with the anthems which they sang in alternate choirs. As soon as the interpreter had explained the object and motives of their mission, Æthelberht replied that he had no inclination to abandon the gods of his fathers for a new and uncertain worship: but as the intention of the strangers was benevolent, and their promises were inviting, they might preach without molestation, and should be supported at his expense. This favourable answer filled them with joy; and they proceeded to Canterbury. The care of the queen had already prepared a residence for the new apostles. They were lodged in the ancient church of St. Martin, which had originally belonged to the Britons, and had lately been repaired for the use of Liudhard, a Christian prelate who accompanied Bertha from Gaul. Curiosity led the Saxons to visit the strangers: they admired the ceremonies of their worship, compared their lives with those of the pagan priests, and learned to approve a religion which could inspire so much piety, austerity, and disinterestedness. With secret pleasure Æthelberht viewed the alteration in the sentiments of his subjects: on the feast of Pentecost, in the year 597 A.D., he professed himself a Christian, and received the sacrament of baptism; and on the following Christmas ten thousand of his subjects followed the example of their sovereign. As each canton embraced the new doctrine, the heathen temple was converted into a Christian church; and, in order to wean the proselytes from their idolatrous practices, they were permitted, instead of the feasts which they had formerly celebrated around the altars of their gods, to assemble upon the more solemn festivals in the neighbourhood of the church, and to partake of a sober repast. The kingdom of Essex was, at this period, governed by Sæberht, the son of its founder, and the nephew of Æthelberht. The influence of the uncle introduced a missionary, the abbot Mellitus, to the notice of Sæberht, who soon consented to receive the sacrament of baptism.<sup>b</sup>

#### THE RELIGION OF THE ANGLO-SAXONS

The heathendom which Gregory ardently desired to overthrow had taken a very deep root in the country before the arrival of the Christian missionaries. Woden was the Mercury of the Saxons. William of Malmesbury,<sup>p</sup> speaking

of the pretensions of Hengist and Horsa to be descended from him, says: "They were great-grandsons of the most ancient Woden, from whom almost all the royal families of these barbarous nations deduce their origin; and to whom the nations of the Angles, fondly deifying him, have consecrated the fourth day of the week, and the sixth day unto his wife Frea, by a sacrilege which lasts even unto this day." To him were human victims sacrificed. That his worship was universally spread in England is shown, according to Mr. Kemble,<sup>c</sup> by the extreme frequency of names of places compounded with his name. Thus, the ancient fortification Wansdike is Woden's dike. Thor, the thunderer, the god of storms and rains, wielding his terrible hammer, was the Saxon Jupiter, as Tiw was their Mars. Frea, according to Mr. Kemble, was a god, and Woden's wife was Frige. There were lesser gods—Baldr, and Geat, and Sætere, or Saturn. Goddesses were numerous. Eastre survives in the great festival of the Church. Their mythology included Fiends, and Monsters, and Fates. "The weird sisters" of Macbeth comes from the Wyrd, who weave the web of destiny. There was hero-worship, too, in which the rude but imaginative man recognised some great attribute of courage or goodness, which he exalted into a power below his divinities, but calling for his habitual reverence. Perhaps we have been too much accustomed to look only at the revolting aspect of these superstitions; and not to see in them that, however debasing in some essentials, they were manifestations of a spirit which did not walk in the material world without believing in some presiding influences which governed human actions. In this rude mythology we see glimpses of a belief in a future life, and of a state of rewards and punishments. That the mythology of the nations who overran England in the fifth and sixth centuries, and swept away whatever remained of Roman rites, with all that had been created of Christian worship, was a great dominant principle in the life of the people, admits of little question. But, at the same time, it possessed some capacity of assimilation with that faith before which the classical paganism of the ancient world had retreated. Mr. Kemble points out the pregnant fact in the history of our Anglo-Saxon progenitors, at the commencement of the sixth century, "that Christianity met but little resistance among them, and enjoyed an easy triumph, or, at the worst, a careless acquiescence, even among those whose pagan sympathies could not be totally overcome."<sup>d</sup>

From the conversion of the Saxons the zeal of Augustine was directed to the reformation of the Britons. During one hundred and fifty years of unsuccessful warfare, the ancient discipline of their church had been nearly abolished, and the lives of their clergy were disgraced by vices the most repugnant to their profession. Gregory had written to Augustine, that he had subjected all the bishops of Britain to his authority. The missionary, with the aid of Æthelberht, prevailed on the British prelates to meet him at a place, which has since been called Augustine's oak, in Worcestershire. After a long and unfruitful debate, the conference was adjourned to another day. In the interval the Britons consulted a neighbouring hermit, who advised them to watch the conduct of Augustine; if he arose to meet them, they were to consider him as a man of unassuming disposition, and to listen to his demands; but if he kept his seat, they should condemn him of pride, and reject his authority. With this sapient admonition, which left to accident the decision of the controversy, seven bishops, with Dinoh, abbot of Bangor, repaired to the place of conference. Augustine happened to be seated, and did not rise at their arrival. Both his reasons and his authority were consequently despised. In points of doctrine there had been no difference

[604-616 A.D.]

between them, and to facilitate their compliance in other matters, the archbishop had reduced his demands to three heads: that they should observe the Catholic computation of Easter, should adopt the Roman rite in the administration of baptism, and should join with the missionaries in preaching to the Saxons.<sup>1</sup> Each of these requests, in obedience to the advice of the hermit, was pertinaciously refused. "Know then," exclaimed the missionary with the tone of a prophet, "that if you will not assist me in pointing out to the Saxons the way of life, they, by the just judgment of God, will prove to you the ministers of death." He did not live to see the prediction verified.

## THE LAWS OF ÆTHELBERHT

The reign of Æthelberht lasted fifty-six years. Before his death he published a code of laws to regulate the administration of justice. For this improvement he was indebted to the suggestions of the missionaries, who, though they had been accustomed to the forms and decisions of Roman jurisprudence, did not, in legislating for the Saxons, attempt to abolish the national notions of equity, but wisely retained the principle of pecuniary compensation, a principle universally prevalent in the northern nations. Those crimes which appeared the most repugnant to the well-being of society were scrupulously enumerated; theft in its different branches, murder, sacrilege, insults offered to female chastity, and infractions of the peace of the king and of the church: and to each was attached a proportionate fine, which rose in amount according to the dignity of the person against whom the offence was committed. From these laws it appears that all freemen were classed according to their property, and the offices which they held. To each class was allotted its peculiar *mund* and *were*. The *mund* was the pecuniary mulct, which was intended to provide for the security of each individual, and of those under his roof. Thus the *mund* of a widow, if she were of the highest rank, was fifty shillings; of the second, twenty; of the third, twelve; and of the fourth, six. The *were* was the sum at which the life of each person was rated. If he was killed, the murderer paid it as a compensation to his family; if he himself transgressed the laws, he forfeited it, in lieu of his head, to the king. But murder was not only an offence against individuals, it was also considered as an injury to the community, and the criminal was compelled to make what was esteemed a compensation to the violated justice of his country as well as to the family of the deceased. For this purpose, besides the *were*, he paid an additional fine, called the *wite*, which was received by the king or the chief magistrate of the district. The same distinctions, and the same punishments, with a few variations arising out of times and circumstances, were retained in all the laws of succeeding legislators.

EADBALD

Æthelberht died in 616 A.D. The crown devolved upon his son Eadbald, the violence of whose passions nearly plunged the nation into that idolatry

<sup>1</sup> It is surprising that so many modern historians should have represented the Britons as holding different doctrines from those professed by the Roman missionaries, though these writers have never yet produced a single instance of such difference. Would Augustine have required the British clergy to join in the conversion of the Saxons, if they had taught doctrines which he condemned? Bede has related with great minuteness all the controversies between the two parties. They all regard points of discipline. Nowhere does the remotest hint occur of any difference respecting doctrine.



from which it had just emerged. The youth and beauty of his step-mother, the relict of Æthelberht, induced him to take her to his bed; and when the missionaries admonished him to break the unnatural connection, he abandoned a religion which forbade the gratification of his appetite. At the same time the three sons of Sæberht [of Essex] (their father was dead) restored the altars of the gods, and banished from the territory the bishop Mellitus. With Justus of Rochester he retired into Gaul, and Laurentius, the successor of Augustine in the see of Canterbury, had determined to follow their footsteps. On the morning of his intended departure, he made a last attempt on the mind of Eadbald. His representations were successful. The king dismissed his step-mother, and recalled the fugitive prelates. The sincerity of his conversion was proved by his subsequent conduct, and Christianity, supported by his influence, assumed an ascendancy which it ever afterwards preserved.

#### RÆDWALD AND ÆTHELFRIITH

The East-Anglian throne was now filled by Rædwald, one of the Uffingas. He had formerly paid a visit to Æthelberht, and at his persuasion had professed himself a Christian. But on his return home the new convert found himself assailed by the importunities of his wife, and the opposition of his people. His resolution was at last subdued, but to silence his conscience, he endeavoured to unite the two worships, and in the same temple, by the side of the statue of Woden, dedicated an altar to the god of the Christians. We cannot appreciate his subsequent conduct without reverting to the history of Northumbria. Æthelfrith, the grandson of Ida, was a restless and sanguinary prince, who for several years had directed all his efforts against the neighbouring Britons. In many districts they had been entirely exterminated by his arms; in others they were happy to purchase his forbearance by the payment of an annual tribute. Aidan, king of the Scots, jealous of so formidable a neighbour, assembled all his forces, and marched as far as the stone of Degsa, a spot long celebrated in the traditions of the country. Though Theodbald, the brother of Æthelfrith, was slain with his followers, victory declared for the Northumbrians. The greater part of the Scots were immolated to their vengeance; and the narrow escape of Aidan with a handful of attendants proved an instructive lesson to him and his successors. For more than a century no king of the Scots dared to meet the Northumbrians in battle.

At the death of Ælle, the founder of the kingdom of Deira, Æthelfrith, who had married his daughter, took possession of his dominions. Ælle had left a male child of the name of Eadwine (Edwin), who was conveyed beyond the reach of the tyrant, and intrusted to the protection of Cadvan, the king of North Wales. The hospitality of the British prince drew on him the vengeance of the Northumbrian; and the two armies met in the vicinity of Chester (613 A.D.). On the summit of a neighbouring hill Æthelfrith espied an unarmed crowd, the monks of Bangor, who, like Moses in the wilderness, had hoped by their prayers to determine the fate of the battle. "If they pray," exclaimed the pagan, "they fight against us;" and ordered a detachment of his army to put them to the sword. Victory was, as usual, true to his standard. Chester was taken and Bangor demolished. The number of the monks slain on the hill is generally said to have been twelve hundred; but Bede observes that others besides the monks had assembled to pray. He supposes that the victory of Æthelfrith fulfilled the predictions of Augustine.<sup>b</sup>

[æa. 600 A.D.]

The real significance of Æthelfrith's victory at Chester does not lie, however, in the number of the slain, but in the fact that it gave the Saxons a foothold on the western sea and thereby again divided the Welsh nation. The western coast from the Channel to the Clyde had been until shortly before this time entirely under Welsh control. If they could have presented a continuous line of defence to the Saxons the conquest of their country might have been at least retarded for some years. But they laboured under the disadvantage of having to defend a region which by its physical features was naturally divided by the Severn, the Dee and the Solway, into four distinct parts. By the battle of Deorham (577 A.D.) the West Saxons had reached the mouth of the Severn and thus split off the West Welsh from their kindred in Cornwall. In like manner the battle of Chester separated the Strathelyde and Cumbrian Welsh from the main body of their nation to the southward. "No general resistance of the Welsh people was henceforth possible," writes Green, "and the warfare of Britons against Englishmen died down into a warfare of separate English kingdoms against separate British kingdoms."<sup>a</sup>

The son of Ælle, who was incessantly harassed by the jealousy of Æthelfrith, wandered from the hospitable mansion of Cadvan through the different principalities of the Britons and Saxons. At last he found an asylum in the court of Rædwald. The fidelity of that prince was immediately tempted by the threats and promises of Æthelfrith; and after a long struggle he preferred the friendship of a powerful monarch to the danger of protecting a solitary exile. On the very evening while the council deliberated on his fate, Eadwine was sitting alone in the dark at the gate of the palace, when a friendly voice whispered in his ear that it was time to flee, for the king had given his assent to the demands of his enemy. "I have known too much misery," replied the prince, "to be anxious for life. If I must die, no death can be more acceptable than that which is inflicted by royal treachery." He remained in the same place musing on his melancholy situation, when his friend, stealing to him a second time, informed him that he was safe. The solicitations of the queen had overcome the perfidious resolve of her husband.

The moment Rædwald determined to reject the proposals of Æthelfrith, he saw the necessity of anticipating his resentment. The Northumbrian with a small body of followers was hastening to surprise his enemy, when he was met by the whole of the East-Anglian forces on the right bank of the Idle, in Nottinghamshire. They were skilfully (so we are told) arrayed in three bodies; and their helmets, spears, and banners gave them a martial and formidable appearance. Æthelfrith, though disconcerted, scorned to retire; and rushing on the first division, destroyed it with its leader, Rægenhere or Rainer, the son of Rædwald. But the Northumbrians were quickly trampled under foot by the multitude of the East Anglians; and the king, having opened with his sword a way into the midst of his enemies, fell on the bodies of those whom he had slain. The conquerors hastened to improve their advantage. By the men of Deira Eadwine was received with acclamations of joy; the children of Æthelfrith fled into the north of the island; and the Bernicians submitted cheerfully to the good fortune of the son of Ælle. Rædwald, having placed his friend on the united throne of the two kingdoms, returned in triumph to his dominions.

The martial genius of Æthelfrith had raised Northumbria to an equality with the most powerful of the Anglo-Saxon states: under the government of Eadwine it assumed a marked superiority. The steps by which this pre-eminence [was achieved] are not recorded: but the history of his conversion to Christianity has been preserved by the pen of the venerable Bede.

## THE SUPREMACY OF NORTHUMBRIA

In the ninth year of his reign Eadwine had married Æthelberga, the daughter of Æthelberht, the deceased king of Kent. Eadbald had previously stipulated that his sister should enjoy the free exercise of her religion. The queen was accompanied by Paulinus, a Roman missionary, who had lately received the episcopal consecration. The king faithfully observed his word: but, though he made no objection to the practice of Christianity by Æthelberga, he showed no inclination to embrace it himself. It was in vain that Paulinus preached; that the queen entreated; that Pope Boniface V sent letters and presents. Eadwine appeared immovably attached to the worship of his fathers.

The kingdom of Wessex was at this time governed by two princes, Cwichelm and Cynegils, the successors of Ceolwulf. They bore with impatience the superiority assumed by Eadwine; and, unable to contend with him in the field, attempted to remove him by assassination. Eomer, in quality of an envoy from Cwichelm, demanded an audience of Eadwine. He had concealed under his clothes a two-edged dagger, which had been previously dipped in poison; and while the king earnestly listened to his discourse, the assassin aimed a desperate stroke at his heart. His design did not escape the eye of the faithful Lilla, a thane, who threw himself between Eadwine and the dagger, and fell dead at the feet of his master. So great was the force of the stroke, that the king was wounded through the body of his attendant. Every sword was instantly drawn: but Eomer defended himself with such desperate courage, that he killed Frodheri, another thane, before he was overpowered.

The preceding night Æthelberga had been delivered of a daughter, and Eadwine publicly returned thanks to the gods for his own preservation and the health of his consort. Paulinus did not omit the opportunity of ascribing both events to the protection of Christ, whose resurrection from the grave had been that very day celebrated by the queen. His discourse made impression on the mind of the king, who permitted him to baptise his daughter, and promised to become a Christian, if he returned victorious from his meditated expedition against the perfidious king of Wessex.

At the head of a powerful army, Eadwine marched against his enemies. The two brothers were defeated; five of the West-Saxon chieftains fell in the battle; and the country was pillaged by the victors. Having satisfied his resentment, the king returned to Northumbria, and was reminded of his promise by Paulinus. From that moment he abstained from the worship of his gods, though he still hesitated to embrace Christianity. He consulted alternately his priests and the missionary, and revolved in solitude their opposite arguments. He called an assembly of his witan or counsellors, and required each to state his sentiments on the subject. The first who ventured to speak was Coifi, the high priest, who, instead of opposing, advised the adoption of the foreign worship. His motive was singular. No one, he said, had served the gods more assiduously than himself, and yet few had been less fortunate. He was weary of deities who were so indifferent or so ungrateful, and would willingly try his fortune under the new religion. To this profound theologian succeeded a thane, whose discourse exhibits a striking picture of national manners. "Often," said he, "O king, in the depth of winter, while you are feasting with your thanes, and the fire is blazing on the hearth in the midst of the hall, you have seen a bird, pelted by the storm, enter at one door, and escape at the other. During its passage it



[626-637 A.D.]

was visible, but whence it came, or whither it went, you knew not. Such to me appears the life of man. He walks the earth for a few years, but what precedes his birth, or what is to follow after his death, we cannot tell. Undoubtedly, if the new religion can unfold these important secrets, it must be worthy our attention." At the common request Paulinus was introduced, and explained the principal doctrines of Christianity. Coifi declared himself a convert, and to prove his sincerity, offered to set fire to the neighbouring temple of Godmundingham. With the permission of Eadwine, he called for a horse and arms, both of which were forbidden to the priests of the Angles. As he rode along, he was followed by crowds, who attributed his conduct to temporary insanity. To their astonishment, bidding defiance to the gods of his fathers, he struck his spear into the wall of the temple. They had expected that the fires of heaven would have avenged the sacrilege. The impunity of the apostate dissipated their alarms, and urged by his example and exhortations they united in kindling the flames, which with the fane consumed the deities that had been so long the objects of their terror and veneration.

When Gregory the Great arranged the future economy of the Anglo-Saxon church, he directed that the northern metropolitan should fix his residence at York. Eadwine accordingly bestowed on Paulinus a house and possessions in that city, and was baptised in a church hastily erected for the ceremony. Pope Honorius was immediately informed of the event, and at his request granted the use of the pallium to the archbishops of Canterbury and York, with the permission, that when one of these prelates died, the survivor should consecrate his successor, without waiting to consult the Roman pontiff. At the death of Rædwald the thanes of East Anglia offered him the regal dignity, but he declined it in favour of Eorpwald, the son of Rædwald, who was slain after a short reign of three years.

The empire of Eadwine was more extensive than that of any preceding ruler in Britain. The islands of Anglesea and Man were subject to his authority, all the princes of the Britons paid him tribute. Among the Saxon kings, Eadbald of Kent retained a nominal independence, owing, not to his own power, but to the influence of his sister Æthelberga. As a token of his authority, the Northumbrian assumed a distinction unknown to the Saxons, and the "tufa," a military ensign of Roman origin, was always borne before him when he appeared in public. Anxious to enforce the observance of the laws, he severely punished every act of theft or rapacity, and the advantages resulting from his inflexible administration of justice were long preserved in the recollection of posterity by a proverb, the truth of which is attested by Bede: "That in the days of Eadwine a woman with a babe at her breast might have travelled over the island without suffering an insult." On the highways, at convenient intervals, he placed cisterns of stone to collect water from the nearest fountains, and attached to them cups of brass, for the refreshment of passengers; an improvement which in the seventh century excited applause and gratitude.

### *The Power of Penda*

After the death of Cearl of Mercia (627 A.D.), Penda, the son of his predecessor, possessed the power, without the title, of king.<sup>1</sup> He was then advanced

<sup>1</sup> By the *Saxon Chronicle*, and most other writers, he is said to have begun his reign in 626 A.D., and to have reigned thirty years: but Bede expressly says that he reigned but twenty-two, which places the first year of his reign at the period of the battle of Hatfield.

in age, a brave and experienced warrior, and of insatiable ambition. For some years he bore with impatience the superiority of the Northumbrian: at last he found in Cadwallon, king of Gwynedd or North Wales, an associate of equal daring and of similar views. They united their armies, unfurled the standard of rebellion, and marched into Yorkshire. The battle was fought in Hatfield (Heathfelth) chase, between the Don and the Torre (633 A.D.). The Northumbrian army was routed; and Eadwine perished with a great part of his followers. Of his sons by his first wife, Quænburh, the daughter of Cearl, Osfrith was slain with his father, Eadfrith implored the protection of his relation Penda, and was afterwards murdered by him in violation of his oath. Æthelberga, with her children, and Paulinus, escaped by sea to the court of her brother in Kent. Having spread devastation from one end of the country to the other, the confederates separated. Cadwallon remained to accomplish his boast of utterly exterminating the Northumbrians; Penda marched with his Mercians into the territory of the East Angles. Sigebert, their king, had lately retired into a monastery, and had resigned the honours and cares of royalty to his cousin Egeric: but the East Angles were alarmed at the approaching danger, and clamorously demanded the aged monarch, who had so often led them to victory. With reluctance he left the tranquillity of his cell, to mix in the tumult of the combat. But arms were refused by the royal monk as repugnant to his profession, and he directed with a wand the operations of the army. The fortune of the Mercians prevailed; and both Sigebert and Egeric fell.

The unfortunate death of Eadwine dissolved for a short period the union of the Northumbrian kingdoms. Among the Deiri the family of Ælle retained the ascendancy; and the sceptre was placed in the hands, not indeed of the children of Eadwine, but of their cousin Osric, a prince mature in age and experienced in battle. In Bernicia the memory of Ida was still cherished with gratitude, and Eanfrith, the eldest of the sons of Æthelfrith, returning from his retreat in the mountains of Caledonia, ascended the throne of his ancestors. Each of these princes had formerly received baptism, and each with equal facility relapsed into the errors of paganism. If their ambition was satisfied with the possession of royalty, they quickly paid the price of it with their blood. Cadwallon still continued his ravages. He was in the city of York, when Osric, hastening to surprise him, was attacked unexpectedly himself, and perished on the spot. Eanfrith, terrified by the fate of Osric and the fame of Cadwallon, visited the Briton with only twelve attendants, solicited for peace, and was perfidiously put to death. The Northumbrians expunged the names of these apostate princes from the catalogue of their kings; and the time in which they reigned was distinguished in their annals by this expressive term—"the unhappy year."

### *Oswald*

By the deaths of Osric and Eanfrith the duty of revenging his family and country devolved on Oswald, the younger of the sons of Æthelfrith (635 A.D.). Impelled by despair, he sought, with a small but resolute band, the army of the Britons, and at the dawn of day discovered them negligently encamped in the neighbourhood of Hexham. Oswald had not imitated the apostasy of his brother. By his orders a cross of wood was hastily formed, and fixed in the ground. At his command they knelt down to pray: from prayer they rose to battle; and victory was the reward of their piety and valour. Cadwallon was slain; and his invincible army was annihilated.<sup>b</sup>

[635-642 A.D.]

The victory of Oswald at "Heaven's Field," as later chroniclers named the battle, was memorable as marking the culmination of the last effective rally the Britons ever made against the Saxon kingdoms. With the fall of Cadwallon, the last great hero of the British to oppose the English advance, the strength of the Welsh seemed to be exhausted. Thenceforth their warfare was one of dogged, futile defence. To the English, also, the victory was fraught with great results. Oswald, with the blood of the rulers of Bernicia and Deira flowing through his veins, united the two Northumbrian kingdoms under his strong rule, and restored the realm of Eadwine to its former greatness. His earliest concern was to restore also the religion of Eadwine. He sent therefore an invitation to the Irish monks, among whom his younger days had been spent, to send missionaries into Northumbria. The first to respond, after a brief and unsuccessful mission returned to his brethren with the complaint that the Saxons were obstinate and barbarous. "Was it their stubbornness or your harshness?" asked Aidan, one of the monks who listened to him—"did you not forget God's command to give them the milk first, and the meat afterwards?" Aidan himself was thereupon selected by his companions to carry out the mission, which he did with great success. With Northumbria united and Christianity re-established, Oswald set out to extend his temporal power. He seems in the ensuing years to have established a certain degree of supremacy over the Strathclyde Welsh and to have received from the Picts and Scots on the other side of the Forth an acknowledgment of his "overlordship." Wessex, Kent, or Mercia can scarcely have acknowledged any real supremacy, but even the fierce Penda himself was apparently cowed into a temporary cessation of hostilities.<sup>a</sup>

### *Penda Slays Oswald*

But the fate of Eadwine awaited Oswald, and the same prince was destined to be the minister of his death. In the eighth year of his reign, and the thirty-eighth of his age, the king of Northumbria fought with Penda and his Mercians in the field of Maser (642 A.D.). The pagans were victorious. Oswald, surrounded by enemies, was slain. The ferocity of Penda did not spare the dead body of his adversary, but severed the head and arms from the trunk, and fixed them on high poles driven into the ground. The body of Oswald was buried at Bardney, and his standard of purple and gold was suspended over the grave. The head and arms were taken down the year after his death by his brother Oswin, his successor, and deposited, the head in the monastery of Lindisfarne (Holy Island), the arms in the royal city of Bamborough.

Bamborough was the first place that ventured to stop the destructive progress of the Mercians after the battle of Maserfeld. Situated on a rock, and protected on one side by a steep ascent, on the other by the waters of the ocean, it bade defiance to their exertions. But the genius of Penda was fertile in expedients, and that which he adopted displays the ferocity of his disposition. By his order the neighbouring villages were demolished, every combustible material was collected from the ruins and reared up against the walls, and as soon as the wind blew fiercely towards the city, fire was set to the pile. Already were the smoke and flames wafted over the heads of the trembling inhabitants, when the wind suddenly changed, and the fire spent its fury in the opposite direction. Chagrined and confounded, Penda raised the siege, and led back his army.



## OSWIN AND PENDA

The retreat of Penda afforded leisure to the Northumbrian thanes to elect a successor to Oswald. The object of their choice was his brother Oswin (Oswy), who inherited the abilities of his predecessor, and who, to strengthen his throne, married Eanfled, the daughter of Eadwine. But the power of the nation was now broken, and his long reign of twenty-eight years, though it was occasionally distinguished by brilliant successes, was harassed at intervals by the inroads of the Mercians, the hostility of his nephew Æthelwald, and the ambition of his own son Alchfrith.

In the second year of his reign he was alarmed by the claims of a dangerous competitor of the house of Ælle, Oswine, the son of Osric, and prudence or necessity induced him to consent to a compromise, by which he allotted Deira to his rival, but reserved to himself Bernicia and the northern conquests. The character of Oswine has been drawn in the most pleasing colours by the pencil of the venerable Bede. He was affable, just, religious, and generous. His virtues were idolised by his subjects, and his court was crowded with foreign Saxons, who solicited employment in his service. Six years the two princes lived in apparent amity with each other, but in the seventh their secret jealousy broke into open hostilities. Oswine, seeing no probability of success, disbanded his army, and concealed himself, with one attendant, at Gilling, the house of the ealdorman Hundwald (651 A.D.). The perfidious thane betrayed him to his enemy, and nothing but his death could satisfy the policy of Oswin. The bishop Aidan, who loved and revered him for his virtues, bitterly lamented his fate, and in twelve days followed him to the grave. The Northumbrian, however, did not reap the fruit of his cruelty. Æthelwald, the son of Oswald, was placed on the throne of the Deiri, probably by the superior influence of Penda.

That restless monarch had lately expelled Cenwahl from the throne of Wessex, because that prince had repudiated his daughter Sexburga. He now directed his arms against Northumbria, penetrated again as far as Bam-borough, and set fire to every habitation in the line of his march. Oswin, warned by the fate of his immediate predecessors, Eadwine and Oswald, made every effort to mitigate the resentment of so formidable an enemy. He sent him the most valuable presents, his second son Egfrith was delivered as a hostage to the care of Cynwise, the queen of Penda, and Alchfrith, his eldest son, married Cyneburge, the daughter of the Mercian. This connection between the two families brought Peada, the son of Penda, to the Northumbrian court on a visit to his sister. There he saw and admired Alchfleda, the daughter of Oswin, but the difference of religion would have opposed an insuperable obstacle to their union, had not Alchfrith prevailed on his friend to listen to the teachers, and embrace the doctrines of Christianity. When his sincerity was questioned, he replied with warmth, that no consideration, not even the refusal of Alchfleda, should provoke him to return to the worship of Woden; and at his departure he took with him four priests to instruct his subjects, the southern Mercians, or Middle Angles, whom he governed with the title of king during the life of his father. It was to be feared that the conversion of Peada would irritate the fanaticism of Penda, but the old king, though he persevered in his attachment to the religion of his ancestors, expressed his admiration of the morality of the gospel, and permitted it to be taught to his subjects. To the converts, however, he shrewdly observed that as they had preferred the new worship, it was but just that they should practise

[654-658 A.D.]

its precepts, and that every individual would incur his displeasure who should unite the manners of the paganism which he had abjured with the profession of the Christianity which he had embraced.

But Penda had again summoned his Mercians to arms. The first victim of his resentment was Anna, king of the East Angles, who for three years had afforded an asylum to Cenwahl, king of Wessex. He fell in battle (654 A.D.), and was succeeded by his brother Æthelhere, who artfully directed the hostility of the conqueror against the Northumbrians. It was in vain that Oswin endeavoured to avert the danger by the offer of submission and tribute. The Mercian declared that it was his object to exterminate the whole nation: the presents which had been sent were distributed among his auxiliaries; and thirty vassal chieftains, Saxons and Britons, swelled with their followers the numbers of his army. Despair at last nerved the courage of Oswin. With his son Alelfrith and a small but resolute force, he advanced to meet the multitude of the invaders (655 A.D.). The night before the eventful contest, he fervently implored the assistance of heaven, and vowed, if he returned victorious, to devote his infant daughter Ælfleda to the monastic profession. In the morning Æthelwald, ashamed, perhaps, of fighting against his countrymen, separated from the Mercians, and remained at a distance, a quiet spectator of the combat. The valour or despair of the Northumbrians prevailed. Of the thirty vassal chieftains who served under the banner of the Mercian, only Æthelwald, and the British king of Gwynedd, escaped. Penda did not survive the destruction of his army. This hoary veteran, who had reached his eightieth year, and had stained his sword with the blood of three kings of the East Angles, and of two of the Northumbrians, had been borne from the field by the crowd of the fugitives, but was overtaken by the pursuers, and put to death. The battle was fought at Winwædfield near Leeds; and the Aire, which had overflowed its banks, swept away more of the Mercians in their flight than had fallen by the sword of the enemy.<sup>1</sup>

The fall of Penda and the annihilation of his army opened an unexpected prospect to the ambition of Oswin. With rapidity he overran East Anglia and Mercia, subdued the astonished inhabitants, and made them feel the miseries which they had so often inflicted. Mercia he divided into two portions. The provinces on the north of the Trent he annexed to his own dominions: those on the south, out of compassion for his daughter, he permitted to remain under the government of her husband Peada. But that unfortunate prince did not long enjoy the donation. At the next festival of Easter he perished, by the treachery, it is said, of his wife; and his territory was immediately occupied by the Northumbrians.

<sup>1</sup> This battle, says Freeman, "marks an important turning-point in the history of our island. The strife between the creeds of Christ and Woden was there finally decided."

Of Penda, Bright, in his *Early Church History*, says: "This was Penda, 'the strenuous, king of the Mercians, 'the first ruler of the united Midland kingdom,' whose name was long a terror to the inmates of cell and minster in every Christianised district. There is a sort of weird grandeur in the career of one who in his time slew five kings, and might seem as irresistible as destiny." Through all his life Penda struggled against the Christian kingdoms, and remained a consistent heathen to the last. The simplicity and sincerity of his nature elevated his achievements to the epic level of the struggle of Satan in *Paradise Lost*. He must have despised Christianity as teaching a doctrine of weakness and non-resistance; but he despised the Christians more for preaching peace, even while they were waging wars. Those who practised Christianity sincerely he spared. Here the veracity of Bede has again preserved to us a most interesting portrait. "Nor did King Penda obstruct the preaching of the word among his people, the Mercians, if any were willing to hear it; but, on the contrary, he hated and despised those whom he perceived not to perform the works of faith, when they had once received the faith, saying, 'They are contemptible and wretched who do not obey their God in whom they believe.'"<sup>a</sup>

Oswin was now king in the fullest sense of the word. The union of Mercia with Northumbria had placed under his control a greater extent of territory than had belonged to any of his predecessors: the princes of the Britons and Saxons unanimously submitted to his authority; and the greater part of the Picts and Scots were careful to avert his enmity by the payment of annual tribute. Yet long before his death his power suffered a considerable diminution. Three Mercian ealdormen, Immin, Eafha, and Eadbert, took up arms to recover the independence of their country, expelled the Northumbrian magistrates, and conferred the sceptre on a prince whom they had anxiously concealed from Oswin—Wulfhere, the youngest son of Penda. In defiance of the Northumbrian he retained his authority, and united under his government the Mercians, the Middle Angles, and the Lindiswaras, or natives of the county of Lincoln (659 A.D.). To add to the mortification of Oswin, his eldest son, Alchfrith, required a portion of the Northumbrian territory with the title of king. A hint in Bede would lead us to suppose that he even drew the sword against his father. As Æthelwald had perished, the ambition of Alchfrith was gratified, and a kingdom was assigned him in the country of the Deiri.<sup>b</sup>

It was during the reign of Oswin that the church began to assume something of the influence in England that was to make it at a later time one of the most powerful agents in welding together the warring kingdoms into a single nation. At this time, however, differences within the church itself made such a mission an impossibility. The greater part of England had been converted by the Celtic missionaries. The teachings of these men were orthodox, but in some matters of discipline they differed radically from the church at Canterbury and the churches on the Continent. Of these the most important were the form and shape of the tonsure, and the time of the celebration of Easter. In 664 A.D. Oswin called the clergy to meet at Whitby to discuss their differences. Oswin listened to the arguments advanced by both factions, and finally gave his decision in favour of the Roman party, who declared their authority was derived from St. Peter, for, as the king explained, St. Peter was the keeper of the keys of heaven, and he wanted to be sure of being admitted when he knocked at the gate. Thenceforth, in all matters of discipline and ritual, the English Church was, outwardly at least, regulated in conformity with that at Rome. Four years later Theodore of Tarsus, who had been consecrated archbishop of Canterbury at Rome, completely reorganised the church and introduced the penitential system.

Even before the death of Oswin, which occurred in 670 A.D., the power of Northumbria, as we have seen, had begun to decline. The neighbouring kingdom of Mercia, after having maintained a position of power under the great Penda, had, after a brief set-back following his death, again begun to assume strength under the able rule of his son Wulfhere. Wessex, during the years in which first Northumbria and then Mercia held positions of superiority among the Saxon nations, had struggled with varying success against both Britons and Saxons. For a hundred years internal dissensions and quarrels in the reigning family had rendered impossible anything more than the rather precarious maintenance of the kingdom's independent existence. But the state of the West Saxons possessed and preserved what neither Northumbria nor Mercia ever had—a national unity. And at the proper time the assertion of this spirit was to make Wessex the most potent factor in the welding of all England into a single nation. It is with the progress and development of these three kingdoms that the fortunes of the English people are henceforth chiefly linked—the history of Essex, Kent, East Anglia, and Sussex is important only as its relation to them is of importance.<sup>a</sup>



[670-684 A.D.]

## THE DECLINE OF NORTHUMBRIA

From Oswin, the Northumbrian sceptre was transferred to the hands of Egrith, the elder of his surviving sons. The Picts, despising the youth of the new monarch, assembled under their prince, Bernherth, and asserted their independence. But Egrith, with a vigour which surprised and dismayed them, put himself at the head of a body of horse, entered their territory, defeated them in a bloody battle, and compelled them to submit again to the superior power of the Northumbrians. With equal expedition he anticipated and defeated the designs of Wulfhere, king of Mercia, who numbered among his vassals most of the southern chieftains. The victory broke for a while the power of the Mercians. Wulfhere died soon after, and his kingdom was at first seized by the Northumbrian, but restored to Æthelred, who had married Osthryda, the sister of Egrith.

Religious prejudice has conferred an adventitious interest on the reign of Egrith, and his quarrel with Wilfrid, the celebrated bishop of York, occupies a distinguished but disproportionate space in our modern histories. Wilfrid was a noble Northumbrian, who had been selected as the instructor and confident of Alchfrith, the son of Oswin. When Tuda died, Wilfrid was chosen to succeed him in the bishopric of York. Egrith's first wife was Æthelthryda, the daughter of Anna, king of the East Angles, and widow of Tondberet, ealdorman of the Girvii. At an early period in life she had bound herself by a vow of virginity, which was respected by the piety or indifference of her husband. At his death she was demanded by Oswin for his son Egrith, a youth of only fourteen years: and in spite of her remonstrances was conducted by her relations to the court of Northumbria. She persisted in her former resolution; and Egrith, when he ascended the throne, referred the matter to the decision of Wilfrid, having previously offered him a valuable present if he could prevail on Æthelthryda to renounce her early vow. The prelate, however, disappointed his hopes: the princess took the veil at Coldingham; and the friendship between Wilfrid and Egrith was considerably impaired. The king now married Irmenburh, a princess, the violence of whose character excited the discontent of the people and the remonstrances of the bishop. The freedom of his admonitions mortified her pride, and she found in her husband the willing minister of her vengeance.

In the exercise of his authority Archbishop Theodore was always severe, occasionally despotic. At the solicitation of Egrith and Irmenburh, he came to Northumbria, divided the ample diocese of York into three portions, and consecrated three new prelates. Wilfrid appealed to Pope Agatho, who decided that Wilfrid should be restored to his former bishopric. [The hostility of Egrith and his wife, however, continued. Wilfrid was thrown into prison on his return and eventually was driven into Sussex, where he devoted himself to missionary labours.]

Though the royal families of Northumbria and Mercia were allied by marriage, their union had been broken by the ambition of Egrith. The hostile armies met on the Trent (679 A.D.); their valour was wasted in a dubious conflict; and peace was restored by the paternal exhortations of Theodore. Ælfwine, the brother of Egrith, had fallen in the battle; and, as the honour of the king compelled him to demand compensation, he was persuaded to accept the legal *were* instead of prolonging hostilities for the uncertain purpose of vengeance. Afterwards he despatched Berht, a warlike and sanguinary chieftain, to ravage the coast of Ireland. In the following

year (685 A.D.), Egfrith, against the advice of his council, led an army into the territory of the Picts. Brude, the Pictish king, prudently retired before a superior enemy, till his pursuers had entangled themselves in the defiles of the mountains. At Dun Nechtain [Dunnichen] was fought a battle which proved most fatal to the Northumbrians: few escaped from the slaughter; Egfrith himself was found on the field by the conquerors, and honourably interred in the royal cemetery in the Isle of Ilii. The Picts and Scots, and some tribes of the Britons, took advantage of this opportunity to recover their independence: Trumwin, whom Egfrith had appointed bishop at Abercorn, fled with his clergy into the south; and of the Saxon settlers, all who had not the good fortune to make a precipitate escape were put to the sword or consigned to perpetual slavery.

Egfrith had left no issue by Irmenburh; and the Northumbrian thanes offered the crown to Aldfrith, the reputed but illegitimate son of Oswin. During the last reign he had retired to the western isles, and had devoted the time of his exile to study under the instruction of the Scottish monks. His proficiency obtained for him from his contemporaries the title of the learned king. Though his pacific disposition and diminished power did not permit him to assume the superiority which had been possessed by several of his predecessors, he reigned respected by his neighbours, beloved by his subjects, and praised by the learned whom he patronised. If he conducted in person any military expedition, it has escaped the notice of historians: but the celebrated Berht, by his order or with his permission, attempted to obliterate the disgrace which the late defeat had brought on the Northumbrian arms; and, like the unfortunate Egfrith, lost in the attempt both his life and his army.<sup>b</sup>

With the death of Aldfrith the history of Northumbria ceases to hold much of interest to those who would seek in its annals anything that contributed to the progress of England towards a united nationality. The century that follows is one long succession of murders, treasons, and revolts. Of the fourteen kings who ascended the throne, only one died in the peaceable possession of royal power. Seven were slain, and six driven from the throne by rivals or rebellious subjects. Only in the reign of Eadbert (737-758 A.D.) do we find a temporary revival of the kingdom's glory and power. By the middle of the ninth century treason and anarchy had so eaten into the structure of the northern kingdom that its national pride and spirit had been broken, its central government had become little more than a shadow, and it fell an easy victim to the fierce onslaught of the Northmen. Its weakness enabled the invaders to secure a strong foothold on the island, and proved indeed one of the greatest contributing factors to their success.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE SUPREMACY OF MERCIA

We have noticed the accession of Wulfhere to the throne of Mercia, and his frequent and not inglorious struggles against the power of the Northumbrians. With equal spirit, and eventually with greater success, he opposed his southern rivals, the kings of Wessex. In the first conflict the chance of war made Wulfhere the prisoner of Cenwahl, but with the recovery of his liberty he obliterated the disgrace of his defeat. At the battle of Pontisbury (661 A.D.) the forces of Wessex were dispersed, and the victors ravaged the country of their enemies, and the Wihtwaras, the inhabitants of the Isle of Wight, submitted to the dominion of Wulfhere. That prince was

[675-709 A.D.]

now the most powerful of the kings on the south of the Humber. And he employed his authority in promoting the diffusion of Christianity among his dependents. Idolatry disappeared in Mercia: the natives of Essex, who, during the pestilence, had returned to the worship of Woden, were reclaimed by the preaching of the bishop Jaruman, and Edilwaleh, king of Sussex, at the persuasion of Wulfhere, professed himself a Christian. On the day of his baptism, he received from his royal god-father the sovereignty of the Isle of Wight, and of a district comprehending almost the eastern moiety of Hampshire.

The power of Wulfhere declined as rapidly as it had risen. Towards the end of his reign he was defeated by the Northumbrians, and lost the province of the Lindiswaras. The men of Wessex, who had borne his superiority with impatience, were encouraged by the victory of the Northumbrians to try again the fortune of war. Though the battle was not decisive, it contributed to break the power of Wulfhere, at whose death Egfrith, the Northumbrian monarch, overran and subjected the kingdom (675 A.D.).

Æthelred was the brother of Wulfhere, and had married Osthyrda, the sister of Egfrith. To this alliance he was perhaps indebted for the crown of Mercia. He led an army against Lothaire, king of Kent (676 A.D.), burnt the villages and churches, carried off the inhabitants, and destroyed the city of Rochester. He next demanded the province of the Lindiswaras from Egfrith; a war ensued; Ælfwine, the brother of the Northumbrian, was slain, and Æthelred, though he paid the *were* for the death of Ælfwine, recovered the possession of the disputed territory. For many years he reigned with honour, but the murder of his queen, Osthyrda, by the Suthenhymbre, the people between the Trent and the Humber, deeply affected his mind. He gave the government of the discontented district to his nephew Cœnred, the son of Wulfhere, and at last abdicated the throne in his favour. He had children of his own, but they were of an immature age, and the nation preferred a successor of approved judgment and in the vigour of manhood. Æthelred then took the monastic vows in the monastery of Bardeney, was raised to the office of abbot, and died at an advanced age in 716 A.D.

Cœnred was a prince whose piety and love of peace are loudly applauded by our ancient chroniclers, but whose short reign of five years affords only a barren theme to the historian. As soon as Cœlred, the son of the preceding monarch, was of an age to wield the sceptre, Cœnred resigned the crown (709 A.D.), and travelling to Rome, received the monastic habit from the hands of Pope Constantine.



ÆTHELRED  
(From an old print)



The reign of Ceolred was almost as tranquil as that of his predecessor. Once only had he recourse to the fortune of arms, against Ine, king of Wessex. The battle was fought at Wodnesbeorh, and the victory was claimed by each nation. But Ceolred degenerated from the piety of his fathers, and by the licentiousness of his morals alienated the minds of the Mercians. In the eighth year of his reign, as he sat at table with his thanes, he suddenly lost his reason, and shortly after expired in the most excruciating torment.

Contemporary with Ceolred was Æthelbald, a descendant of Alwin, the brother of Penda. He was in the vigour of youth, graceful in his person, ambitious of power, and immoderate in his pleasures. To avoid the jealousy of Ceolred, by whom he was considered a rival, Æthelbald had concealed himself among the marshes of Croyland, where he was hospitably entertained by Guthlac, a celebrated hermit. As soon as he had learned the death of his persecutor, he issued from his retreat, assumed the sceptre without opposition, and afterwards, to testify his gratitude for his former benefactor, raised a magnificent church and monastery over the tomb of Guthlac. The character of Æthelbald was a compound of vice and virtue. He was liberal to the poor and to his dependents, he watched with solicitude over the administration of justice, and he severely repressed the hereditary feuds, which divided the Mercian thanes and impaired the strength of the nation. Yet in his own favour he never scrupled to invade the rights of his subjects, and that no restraint might be imposed upon his pleasures, he refused to shackle himself with the obligations of marriage. The noblest families were disgraced, the sanctity of the cloister was profaned by his amours. The report of his immorality reached the ears of the missionary St. Boniface, who from the heart of Germany wrote to him a letter of most earnest expostulation. What influence it had on his conduct is not mentioned, but he soon afterwards attended a synod, held by Archbishop Cuthbert for the reformation of manners, and long before his death forsook the follies and vices of his youth.

Of the kings who had hitherto swayed the Mercian sceptre, Æthelbald was the most powerful. From the Humber to the southern channel, he compelled every tribe to obey his authority: but he seems to have respected the power or the abilities of the Northumbrian monarchs: he ventured twice to invade their territories, but it was at times when they were engaged in the north against the Picts, and the spoils which he obtained were dearly purchased by the infamy of the aggression. In the south the kings of Wessex struggled with impatience against his ascendancy, but every effort appeared only to rivet their chains.<sup>b</sup> The armies of Æthelbald continually overran the kingdom, and after the capture of the royal town of Somerton in 733 A.D. the Mercian supremacy was accepted. Against the Welsh he led an army in which the men of Kent, of East Anglia, and of Wessex fought side by side with the Mercians. For twenty years all Britain south of the Humber acknowledged the overlordship of Æthelbald, who proudly styled himself "King not of the Mercians only, but of all the neighbouring peoples who are called by the common name of Southern English."<sup>a</sup> At length, in 752 A.D., Cuthred of Wessex undertook to emancipate himself and his country, and boldly opposed the Mercians at Burford in Oxfordshire. In the open space between the two armies, Æthilhun, who bore the golden dragon, the banner of Wessex, himself slew the standard-bearer of Æthelbald: and his countrymen hailed his valour as the omen of victory. An ancient poet has strikingly described the shock of the two armies; the shouts of the combatants, their weapons—the spear, the long sword, and the battle-axe—and their prodigality of life in the defence

[752-785 A.D.]

of their respective standards. Chance at length conducted Æthelbald to Æthilhun: but the king of Mercia shrunk before the gigantic stature and bloody brand of his adversary, and gave to his followers the example of a precipitate flight.

This defeat abolished for a time the superiority of Mercia. Æthelbald did not long survive his disgrace. Beornred, a noble Mercian, aspired to the throne, and a battle was fought on the hill of Segeswald in Warwickshire (757 A.D.). The king either fell in the engagement or was killed by his own guards on the following night.

## THE REIGN OF OFFA

The death of Æthelbald transferred the momentary possession of the crown to Beornred; but the thanes espoused the interests of Offa, a prince of royal descent; and the usurper, at the end of a few months, was defeated in battle and driven out of Mercia (757 A.D.). Of the reign of the new monarch the first fourteen years were employed in the subjugation of his domestic enemies, and the consolidation of his own power. In 771 A.D. he first appeared in the character of a conqueror, and subdued the Hestingi, a people inhabiting the coast of Sussex. Three years afterwards he invaded Kent and routed the natives at Otford. From the more feeble, he turned his arms against the more powerful, states. He entered Oxfordshire, which then belonged to Wessex; Cynewulf, the West Saxon monarch [was defeated by him at] Bensington (777 A.D.), and the territory on the left bank of the Thames became the reward of the conqueror. The Britons were next the victims of his ambition. The kings of Powys were driven from Shrewsbury beyond the Wye; the country between that river and the Severn was planted with colonies of Saxons; and a trench and rampart [known as Offa's Dyke], stretching over a space of one hundred miles from the mouth of the Wye to the estuary of the Dee, separated the subjects of Offa from the incursions of their vindictive neighbours.

The chair of St. Peter was filled at this period by Adrian, the friend and favourite of Charlemagne. In 785 A.D. two papal legates, the bishops of Ostia and Tudertum, accompanied by an envoy from the French monarch, landed in England, and convoked two synods, the one in Northumbria, the other in Mercia. The latter was attended by Offa, and by all the princes and prelates on the south of the Humber. According to Offa's wishes a proposition was made in the synod that the jurisdiction of the see of Canterbury should be confined to the three kingdoms of Kent, Sussex, and Wessex; that one of the Mercian bishops should be raised to the archiepiscopal rank; and that all the prelates between the Thames and the Humber should be subject to his



ÆTHELBALD  
(From an old print)

authority. Jaenbercht [the archbishop of Canterbury] did not acquiesce without a struggle in the degradation of his church; but the influence of Offa was irresistible; and Higebert of Lichfield was selected to be the new metropolitan. Adrian assented to the wishes of the king:<sup>1</sup> the pallium with the archiepiscopal dignity was conferred upon Adulph, the successor of Higebert, in the see of Lichfield; and Jaenbercht was compelled to content himself with the obedience of the bishops of Rochester, London, Selsey, Winchester, and Sherborne. Before the conclusion of the council, Egferth, the son of Offa, was solemnly crowned, and from that period reigned conjointly with his father.

Alcuin, the Anglo-Saxon preceptor of Charlemagne, had been instrumental in opening an epistolary correspondence between his royal pupil and the king of Mercia. Charlemagne, as a proof of his friendship, had proposed a marriage between his illegitimate son Charles and a daughter of Offa. The Mercian, as the price of his consent, demanded a French princess for his son Egferth. If we reflect that the two monarchs had hitherto treated each other on the footing of perfect equality, there will not appear anything peculiarly offensive in such a demand. Yet it wounded the pride of Charlemagne; he broke off all communication with the Mercian court; and the trade with the English merchants experienced the most rigorous prohibitions. But Gerwold, the collector of the customs, whose interests probably suffered from this interruption of commerce, contrived to pacify his sovereign; and Alcuin, who was commissioned to negotiate with the Mercian, succeeded in restoring the relations of amity between the two courts.

The most powerful of the Saxon princes were ambitious of an alliance with the family of Offa. Beorhtic and Æthelred, the kings of Wessex and Northumbria, had already married his daughters Eadburh and Ælfleda; and Æthelberht, the young king of the East Angles, was a suitor for the hand of their sister Ætheldrida. This amiable and accomplished prince, by the advice of his council, proceeded with a numerous train to Mercia. On the confines he halted, and sent forward a messenger with presents and a letter announcing the object of his intended visit. A kind invitation was returned, accompanied with a promise of security. At his arrival he was received with the attention becoming his dignity, and expressions of affection most flattering to his hopes. The day was spent in feasting and merriment: in the evening Æthelberht retired to his apartment: but shortly afterwards was invited by Wimburt, an officer of the palace, to visit Offa, who wished to confer with him on matters of importance. The unsuspecting prince, as he followed his guide through a dark passage, was surrounded by ruffians and deprived of life. At the news, his attendants mounted their horses and fled: Ætheldrida, disappointed in her expectations of worldly happiness, retired from court, and lived a recluse in the abbey of Croyland: and Offa, shut up in his closet, affected, by external demonstrations of grief, to persuade the world of his innocence. Gratitude to the founder of his abbey has induced the monk of St. Albans to transfer the whole guilt from the king to his consort Cynethyrth: by every other ancient writer, though she is said to have suggested, he is shown as having sanctioned, the foul deed; and, if it be true that he immediately annexed East Anglia, little doubt can be entertained that the man who reaped the

<sup>1</sup>[Adrian was apparently at first opposed to granting Offa's request, and Offa was so incensed with his resistance that he communicated with Charlemagne, suggesting the Pope's deposition. The subsequent papal assent was probably due to Charlemagne's suggestion that it would save trouble to humour the Mercian king.]



[792-824 A.D.]

advantage had directed the execution of the murder. Offa honoured the memory of the prince whose blood he had shed by erecting a stately tomb over his remains, and bestowing rich donations on the church of Hereford, in which they reposed. About the same time he endowed the magnificent abbey of St. Albans. But his heart was corroded by remorse, and his body enfeebled by disease. Within two years (794 A.D.) he followed Æthelberht to the grave.

Egferth, who had been crowned nine years before, succeeded his father. The ancient writers indulge in reflections on the misfortunes of a family the establishment of which had cost its founder so many crimes. Egferth died without issue after he had possessed the crown one hundred and forty-one days. Of his sisters, Ælfleda became a widow soon after her marriage; Eadburh died in poverty and exile in Italy; and Ætheldrida finished her days in seclusion at Croyland. Within a few years after the murder of Æthelberht, Offa and his race had disappeared for ever.

The throne of Mercia was next filled by Ceonwulf, descended from another of the brothers of Penda. At the commencement of his reign (796 A.D.), a singular revolution in Kent directed his attention to that kingdom. By the death of Alric the race of Hengist became extinct, and the prospect of a throne awakened the ambition of several competitors. The successful candidate was a clergyman related to the descendants of Cerdic, Eadberht Praen,<sup>1</sup> whose aspiring mind preferred the crown to the tonsure. Æthelheard, the archbishop of Canterbury, treated Eadberht as an apostate, Eadberht considered him as a rebel, and the metropolitan, unable to maintain the discipline of the canons, consulted the Roman pontiff, Leo III, who after mature deliberation, excommunicated the king, and threatened that if he did not return to the clerical profession, he would exhort all the inhabitants of Britain to unite in punishing his disobedience. Ceonwulf took this office on himself, and Eadberht, convinced that resistance would be vain, endeavoured to elude the vigilance and revenge of his enemies. He was, however, taken: his eyes were put out, and both his hands amputated. Cuthred, a creature of the victors, obtained the throne, with the title, but without the authority, of king.

The next undertaking of Ceonwulf was to restore to the successors of St. Augustine the prerogatives of which they had been despoiled at the imperious demand of Offa. The authority of the new metropolitan had been endured with reluctance by the English prelates. The archbishops of Canterbury and York seized the first opportunity of conveying to the king the sentiments of the episcopal body, and the metropolitan of Lichfield was reduced to his former station among the suffragans of Canterbury.

After a prosperous reign of twenty-six years, Ceonwulf was killed in an expedition against the East Anglians. He was succeeded by his only son, Cenelm (St. Kenelm), a boy of seven years. After the lapse of a few months the young prince was barbarously murdered. Suspicion attributed his death to his elder sister Cwenthryth, whose ambition, it was said, would have willingly purchased the crown with the blood of a brother. If such were her views, she was disappointed. Ceolwulf, her uncle, ascended the throne; but his reign was short. In his second year he was dethroned by Beornwulf, a Mercian, who had no better title than his power and opulence. His abilities are said to have been unequal to his station, and he was soon compelled to yield to the superior genius of Egbert, king of Wessex (824 A.D.).

<sup>1</sup> [Ramsay *f* does not think Eadberht Praen a renegade priest at all. "A more probable explanation," he says, "suggests that Eadberht was a troublesome atheling, leader of a national Kentish party in opposition to the Mercian supremacy; and that he had been tonsured to incapacitate him for rule."]

## THE RISE OF WESSEX

In Wessex the descendants of Cerdic, after a struggle of three hundred years, triumphed over every opponent, and united all the nations of the Anglo-Saxons in one great and powerful monarchy. The death of Ceawlin and the accession of his nephew Ceolric have been already noticed. To Ceolric, after a short reign of five years, succeeded his brother Ceolwulf, whose enterprising spirit engaged him in constant hostilities with the Saxons, Britons, Scots, and Picts. The men of Sussex made a bold but unsuccessful effort to recover their independence. The war was conducted with the most obstinate valour, and though Ceolwulf crushed his opponents, it was with the loss of his bravest warriors. He next led a numerous army against the Britons, drove Mouric, their king, beyond the Severn, and penetrated to the banks of the Wye.

Ceolwulf was succeeded (611 A.D.) by Cynegils, the son of Ceolric, who divided the kingdom with his brother Cwichelm. This partition did not diminish the strength of the nation. The two brothers appeared to be animated by the same spirit, and united their efforts to promote the public prosperity. They led a powerful army to Bampton, in Devonshire. The Britons fled at the martial appearance of the enemy. The three sons of Sæberht, who had succeeded to the kingdom of Essex, ventured to provoke the hostility of the two brothers; but they fell on the field of battle, and of their followers but few escaped to carry the intelligence to their countrymen.

The character of Cwichelm is disgraced by the attempt of his messenger Eomer to assassinate Eadwine, king of Northumbria. What peculiar provocation he might have received, it is vain to conjecture: according to Malmesbury,<sup>p</sup> he had been deprived of part of his territory. The silence of historians acquits Cynegils of any share in the guilt of his brother; but he was unwilling to see him fall a victim to the resentment of the Northumbrian, and assisted him with all his forces in a fruitless attempt to repel Eadwine. Fortunately, the conqueror was appeased, and left them in possession of their territories. Two years afterwards, Penda, who was then beginning his sanguinary career, determined to measure his strength with that of the West Saxons. The battle was fought at Cirencester. The obstinacy of the two armies prolonged the contest till it was interrupted by the darkness of night. The conflict was about to be renewed in the morning, when both parties, appalled by the loss of the preceding day, were induced by their mutual fears to listen to terms of reconciliation. Cynegils survived his brother seven years, and died in 642 A.D.

The throne was next filled by Cenwahl, the son of the last monarch, who had refused to embrace Christianity with his father and uncle. He had formerly married a sister of Penda; but as soon as he obtained the crown, he dismissed her with ignominy, and bestowed his hand on a more favourite princess. The Mercian, urged by resentment, entered Wessex, defeated Cenwahl and chased him out of his dominions. He found an asylum in the territory of Anna, the virtuous king of the East Angles, where he was induced to abjure the deities of paganism. In the third year of his exile, he recovered his throne by the assistance of his nephew Cuthred. Cenwahl was eminently successful against the Britons. He defeated them at Bradford, and afterwards at Pen, and made the Parret the western boundary of his kingdom. But he was compelled to bend before the superior power

[661-685 A.D.]

of Wulfhere, king of Mercia. The chance of war threw that prince into the hands of Cenwahl, but he recovered his liberty, defeated the West Saxons (661 A.D.), and transferred the sovereignty of the Isle of Wight and part of Hampshire to Edilwalch, the king of Sussex.

At the death of Cenwahl without children (672 A.D.), an alluring prospect was opened to the ambition of the remaining descendants of Cerdic, but the reins of government were instantly seized by his widow Sexburga, a princess whose spirit and abilities were worthy of a crown. By her promptitude and decision she anticipated or suppressed the attempts of her opponents. At the head of her army she overawed the neighbouring princes, who were eager to humble the power of Wessex, and by the lenity of her sway, endeavoured to reconcile her subjects to the novelty of a female reign. Yet a general discontent prevailed; the chieftains conceived it a disgrace to submit to the sceptre of a woman, and she would probably have been driven from the throne, had not her death anticipated the attempt, before the first year of her reign was expired.

The government of Wessex now assumed the form of an aristocracy. The most powerful thanes associated for their mutual defence, and in the emergencies of foreign war conferred [in succession on several of their number] the title of king. Among the numerous princes of the family of Cerdic was Ceadwalla, of the house of Ceawlin. His youth, activity, and courage had distinguished him above his equals; but the qualities which attracted the admiration of the people alarmed the jealousy of Centwin [then king], and Ceadwalla, with a band of faithful adherents, retired into Sussex. Yet the fugitive scorned to solicit assistance from the enemies of his country, and in the forests of Andred's Weald and Chiltene he maintained his independence. Insensibly the number of his followers increased, adventurers and malecontents crowded to his standard, and he made a sudden and unexpected irruption into the cultivated part of Sussex. Æthelwealh, who attempted with a few followers to oppose him, was slain, and the flames of war were spread over the country, when the ealdormen Berhthune and Æthelhune returned from Kent with the army of Sussex, and drove this band of outlaws to their former asylum in the forest. There Ceadwalla received the welcome intelligence that his persecutor Centwin was dead, and had generously, on his death-bed, named him his successor. He hastened into Wessex (685 A.D.); his reputation had already interested the people in his favour, his rivals were intimidated by the martial appearance of his followers, and Ceadwalla ascended, without opposition, the throne of Cerdic.

The first care of the new king was to remove the disgrace which he had so lately received in Sussex. With a powerful army he entered that country, slew Berhthune in battle, and reduced the natives to their former dependence on the crown of Wessex. Thence he pursued his victorious career into Kent. The inhabitants fled at his approach: and the riches of the open country became the spoil of the invaders.

The Isle of Wight had been formerly subjugated and colonised by a body of Jutes. Wulfhere had severed it from Wessex: Ceadwalla resolved to reunite it to his dominions. Arvald, who held the island under the crown of Sussex, defended himself with courage; and Ceadwalla received several wounds before he could subdue his antagonist. The next theatre of his ambition was the kingdom of Kent. His brother Mul commanded the West-Saxon army; and the natives, recurring to the policy which they had adopted in the former year, retired at the approach of the invaders. Mul, whom the absence of an enemy had rendered negligent, incautiously separated from his forces with



twelve attendants. He was despoiled by the peasants, attacked, hunted into a cottage, and burnt to death. Ceadwalla hastened to revenge the fate of his brother, and devoted the whole of Kent to the flames and the sword.

From his first acquaintance with Wilfrid, the king had imbibed a favourable notion of the Christian worship: when he had mounted the throne, he invited the bishop into Wessex, honoured him as his father and benefactor, and determined to embrace the faith of the gospel. Another prince would have been content to receive baptism from his own prelate or his instructor: Ceadwalla resolved to receive it from the hands of the sovereign pontiff. He crossed the sea (688 A.D.), visited in his progress the most celebrated churches, testified his piety by costly presents, was honourably entertained by Cunincbert, king of the Lombards, and entered Rome in the spring of the year 688 A.D. On the vigil of Easter he was baptised by Pope Sergius, and changed his name to that of Peter, in honour of the prince of the apostles. But before he laid aside the white robes, the usual distinction of those who had been lately baptised, he was seized with a mortal illness, and died on the 20th of April, in the thirtieth year of his age.

#### INE AND HIS SUCCESSORS

The successor of Ceadwalla was Ine, who derived his descent from Ceawlin (689 A.D.). As a warrior Ine was equal, as a legislator he was superior, to the most celebrated of his predecessors. In the fifth year of his reign he assembled the witenagemot, and "with the advice of his father Cenred, of his bishops Hedda and Ereonwald, of all his ealdormen, and wise men and clergy," enacted seventy-nine laws, by which he regulated the administration of justice, fixed the legal compensation for crimes, checked the prevalence of hereditary feuds, placed the conquered Britons under the protection of the state, and exposed and punished the frauds which might be committed in the transfer of merchandise and the cultivation of land. Essex (by what means is unknown) had already been annexed to his crown; and Kent was again destined to lament the day in which Mul had perished. At the head of a resistless army Ine demanded the *were* for the death of his cousin; and Withred, king of Kent, to appease the resentment of the invader, paid the full compensation, thirty thousand pounds of silver. The West-Saxon monarch steadily pursued the policy of his fathers in the gradual subjugation of the Britons; added by successive conquests several districts to the western provinces of his kingdom; and expelled, after long struggles, Geraint, the king of Cornwall. His dispute with Ceolred of Mercia was more bloody and less glorious. The battle was fought at Wodnesbeorh (Wamborough) (715 A.D.). Both claimed the victory: but neither dared to renew the engagement.

If the abilities of Ine had promoted the prosperity of Wessex, the duration of his reign exhausted the patience of the more aspiring among the descendants of Cerdic. He had swayed the sceptre two-and-thirty years, when the ætheling Cynewulf ventured to claim the royal authority, and in a short time paid the forfeit of his ambition. The next year his example was followed by another pretender named Ealdberht, who seized the strong castle of Taunton, which Ine had lately erected in Somersetshire. It was at the moment when an insurrection had drawn the king into Sussex: but his queen, Æthelburh, assembled an army, took the fortress by storm, and levelled it with the ground. Ealdberht had the good fortune to escape from his pursuers, and was raised by the enemies of Ine to the throne of Sussex. During two years the natives successfully maintained the struggle for their independence,

[722-775 A.D.]

but in the third they were defeated, and the death of Ealdberht consummated the subjection of their country (725 A.D.).

Ine was the friend and benefactor of the churchmen. The religious sentiments which he had imbibed in early life sunk more deeply into his mind as he advanced in years, and their influence was strengthened by the exhortations of his queen, who ardently wished for the retirement of the cloister. With this view, if we may credit the narrative of Malmesbury,<sup>a</sup> she devised and executed the most singular stratagem. The king and queen had given a splendid entertainment to the nobility and clergy of the kingdom. The following morning they left the castle, but after a ride of a few hours, Ine, at the earnest solicitation of Æthelburh, consented to return. He was surprised at the silence and solitude which appeared to reign in the castle. At each step his astonishment increased. The furniture had disappeared, the hall was strewn with fragments and rubbish, and a litter of swine occupied the very bed in which he had passed the night. His eyes interrogated the queen, who seized the moment to read her husband a lecture on the vanity of human greatness and the happy serenity of an obscure and religious life. It is not, however, necessary to have recourse to the story. There are other grounds on which the determination of Ine may be explained, without attributing it to so clumsy an artifice. He had now reigned seven-and-thirty years. The peace of his old age had been disturbed by rebellion. His body was broken by infirmity, his mind distracted by care. Experience had taught him how difficult it was to hold with a feeble hand the reigns of government among a warlike and turbulent nobility. He resolved to descend from that situation, which he could no longer retain with dignity, and religion offered to his gray hairs a safe and a holy retreat. In the witenagemot he resigned the crown (728 A.D.), released his subjects from their allegiance, and expressed his wish to spend the remainder of his days in lamenting the errors of his youth. Within a few weeks the royal penitent, accompanied by Æthelburh, quitted Wessex. To watch and pray at the tombs of the apostles Peter and Paul was the first object of their wishes, and after a tedious journey they arrived in Rome, and visited the holy places. It may be, as some writers have asserted, that Ine then built the school of the English in that city: but this circumstance was unknown to the more ancient historians, and can hardly be reconciled with the humility of the king, whose endeavour it was to elude the notice of the public, and to live confounded with the mass of the common people. On this account he refused to shave his head, or wear the monastic habit, and continued to support himself by the labour of his hands, and to perform his devotions in the garb of a poor and unknown pilgrim. He died before the expiration of the year, and was followed to the grave by Æthelburh, the consort of his greatness, and the faithful companion of his poverty and repentance.<sup>b</sup>

When Ine resigned the crown, he recommended to his people Æthelheard, his queen's brother, and Oswald, a descendant of the house of Ceawlin. The two princes immediately became antagonists, and Oswald, defeated, died in 730 A.D. Æthelheard followed him in 741 A.D., leaving his throne to his brother Cuthred, who defeated the Mercians and again secured the independence of Wessex. Cuthred, in turn, was succeeded in 754 A.D. by Sigebert, who before the year's end was deposed and replaced by Cynewulf of the house of Cerdic.<sup>a</sup>

Of the long reign of Cynewulf we know little more than that it was signalised by several victories over the Britons, and disgraced by the surrender of Bensington to the Mercians (775 A.D.).

The throne was next occupied by Beorhtric. The West-Saxon thanes had still retained the ancient privilege of electing their kings. Though they confined their choice to the descendants of Cerdic, they frequently disregarded the order of hereditary succession. This practice was productive of the most serious evils. Every prince of the royal race nourished the hope of ascending the throne; and, as the unsuccessful candidate often appealed to the sword, the strength of the nation was impaired by domestic dissensions; and the reigning king was frequently compelled to divert his attention from the general welfare to his own individual security. The opponent of Beorhtric was Egbert, who, unable to withstand the power of his enemy, left the island, and sought employment in the armies of Charlemagne. Of the exploits of Beorhtric, during the sixteen years of his reign, historians are silent: the circumstances of his death, on account of its consequences, have arrested their attention. Beorhtric had married Eadburh, the daughter of Offa, a princess as ambitious and unprincipled as her father. By her imperious temper she governed her husband, and, through him, the whole nation. The king had noticed with particular distinction the ealdorman Worr. Jealous of the rising influence of this young nobleman, Eadburh prepared for him a poisonous potion; but, unfortunately, the king drank of the same cup, and accompanied his favourite to the grave. The West Saxons vented their imprecations against the murderer, who escaped with her treasures to France; and the witenagemot enacted a law by which the consorts of the future kings were deprived of the style and privileges of royalty. Eadburh was presented to Charlemagne, and when the jeering monarch asked her whom she would have, him or his son, "Your son," she replied, "for he is the younger." The emperor was, or affected to be, displeased; but made her a present of an opulent monastery, in which she resided with the title of abbess. Soon, however, her dissolute conduct scandalised the sisterhood and the public. She was expelled with ignominy, and after many adventures terminated her miserable existence at Pavia in Italy, where the daughter of the king of Mercia, and widow of the king of Wessex, was often seen soliciting in rags the charity of passengers.

#### EGBERT AND THE COMING OF THE NORTHMEN

The expulsion of Egbert, and his reception at the court of Charlemagne have been already mentioned. Three years he served in the armies of that emperor, and improved the period of his exile in acquiring a proficiency in the arts of war and government. The death of Beorhtric recalled him to his native country (802). He was the only remaining prince of the house of Cerdic, and by the West-Saxon thanes his claim was unanimously acknowledged.

Egbert devoted the commencement of his reign to the cultivation of peace and the improvement of his people. It was not till 809 that he unsheathed the sword: but from that period each succeeding year was marked by new victories and conquests. He repeatedly invaded and appropriated to himself a portion of the territory of the ancient Britons, and the natives of Cornwall, exhausted by numerous defeats, reluctantly submitted to the conqueror. The East Angles, by entreaties and presents, induced him to make war upon the Mercians. The two armies met at Ellandun (823), on the banks of the Willy; and Beornwulf, after an obstinate resistance, yielded to his adversary, who overran the feeble kingdoms of Kent and Essex, and united them to his own dominions. Beornwulf and, after him, his successor,



[823-828 A.D.]

Ludecan, sought to wreak their vengeance on the East Angles. Both lost their lives in the fruitless attempt; and Wiglaf, who next ascended the throne, had scarcely grasped the sceptre when he was compelled to drop it at the approach of the West Saxons. Unable to collect an army, he endeavoured to elude the pursuit of the invaders; wandered for three years in the forests and marshes; and during four months obtained a secure retreat in the cell of Ætheldrida, the daughter of Offa, who lived a recluse in the church of Croyland. Time and the entreaties of the abbot Siward mitigated the resentment of Egbert, who at last permitted Wiglaf to retain the sceptre [of Mercia] on condition that he should pay an annual tribute, and swear fealty to the king of Wessex. By the submission of the Mercians and of the East Angles, Egbert found himself on the frontiers of Northumbria (828) which was already subdued by the terror of his name. The chieftains, with Eanfrid at their head, met him at Dore, acknowledged him for their lord, and gave hostages for their obedience. Thence he directed his arms against the Britons, penetrated through the heart of North Wales, and planted his victorious standard in the Isle of Anglesea. Thus in the space of nineteen years did Egbert, by his policy and victories, extend the authority of Wessex over the greater part of the island.<sup>1</sup>

Scarcely, however, had the king attained this superiority over the native princes, when he saw himself assailed by a foreign and most dangerous enemy. At this period the peninsula of Jutland, the islands of the Baltic, and the shores of the Scandinavian peninsula were the birthplace of a race of men, who, like the Saxons of old, spent the best portion of their lives on the waves, despised the tranquil enjoyments of peace, and preferred the acquisitions of rapine to the laborious profits of industry. Their maritime situation familiarised them with the dangers of the ocean; and an absurd law of succession, which universally prevailed among a multitude of chieftains, consigned the majority of their children to the profession of piracy. The eldest son obtained the whole patrimony of his family: the rest of the brothers received no other inheritance than their swords and ships, with which they were expected to acquire reputation and riches. Till the eighth century these seakings confined their depredations to the northern seas: but they had heard of the wealthy provinces in the south; and the success of their attempts incited



EGBERT

(From an old print)

[<sup>1</sup> Green, *in* closing his *Making of England*, says that the subsequent struggles never wholly undid the work which the sword of Egbert had accomplished, and that "from the moment the Northumbrian thegns bowed to their West Saxon overlord, England was made in fact if not in name."]

them to engage in more distant and important expeditions. Their first attempts were directed against the British Isles: next they desolated the coasts of France and Spain; at last they sailed through the straits which divide Europe from Africa, and taught the shores of the Mediterranean to tremble at the names of the Danes and Northmen.<sup>1</sup> The establishment of a Danish dynasty in England, of the duchy of Normandy in France, and afterwards of a powerful kingdom in Italy, bears sufficient testimony to their courage, their activity, and their perseverance.<sup>b</sup>

The Danes were not a people altogether foreign to the English; they were of kindred race and spoke a kindred tongue. Had their inroads begun when the settlements of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes were still new, they might have passed for a fourth branch of the same stock, come to share the spoil with their kinsfolk. As it was, their nearness in blood and speech made them disposed to accept a new religion at the hands of the English, and in the end to merge their own national being in that of the English, in a way in which the English themselves had been in no way disposed to do towards the wholly foreign races among whom they settled.<sup>c</sup>

Of their descents in England during the eighth century three only are recorded, one on the Isle of Thanet (787 A.D.) and two on the coast of Northumbria. If these attempts produced a temporary alarm, they furnished no cause of permanent uneasiness. But towards the close of the reign of Egbert, the numbers of the pirates perpetually increased, and their visits were annually renewed. In 832 they landed in the Isle of Sheppey, conveyed away the plunder, and returned home without molestation. The next year a fleet of five-and-thirty sail entered the mouth of the Dart, and Egbert had the mortification to see his West Saxons turn their backs to the invaders. Convinced of the necessity of preparation, he summoned all his vassals to meet him in London, explained to them the measures which he had resolved to adopt, and waited in anxious suspense for the next descent of the enemy. They landed on the coast of Cornwall (836), where, by the offers of friendship, they seduced the Britons from their allegiance, and at Hengests' Down encountered with united forces the men of Wessex. The king commanded in person; and a bloody but decisive victory restored the glory of his arms, crushed the rebellion of the Britons, and compelled the invaders to seek refuge in their ships. This was the last exploit of Egbert, who died (839), after a long, glorious, and fortunate reign.

#### ÆTHELWULF AND HIS SONS

Egbert, about the middle of his reign, had moulded the petty kingdoms of Kent, Essex, and Sussex into one government, which he gave to his elder son, Æthelwulf, with the title of king. Æthelwulf, on the death of his father (839), succeeded to the higher throne of Wessex, and transferred this subordinate kingdom to his son Æthelstan.

Of this monarch it has frequently been observed that he was fitter to wear the cowl than to wield the sceptre. The education of his early years had been confided to Swithin, provost of Winchester, and the care of the

[<sup>1</sup> A distinction must be noted between the Danes and the Northmen. Freeman says that the Scandinavian settlements in England were almost wholly Danish in the stricter sense, and only in the northern part of the island are invasions of actual Northmen recorded. "The name Northmen at an earlier time," says Freeman,<sup>a</sup> "meant the Scandinavian nations generally; it is now specially used to mean the men of Norway."] <sup>a</sup>

[839-853 A.D.]

tutor was repaid by Egbert with the office of royal chaplain. From the lessons of his preceptor, the young prince was removed to study the military art under the auspices of his father; and after the victory of Ellandun, he commanded the army which expelled Baldred, king of Kent, from his dominions, and annexed that province, with Surrey and Essex, to the ancient patrimony of the house of Cerdic. As soon as he had mounted the throne, he bestowed upon his former tutor the vacant bishopric of Winchester; but retained at the head of the council the experienced bishop of Sherborne. The incessant and desultory invasions of the Northmen suggested the propriety of appointing officers in the maritime districts, who, on the first alarm, might collect the inhabitants, and oppose the landing or progress of the enemy; and this arrangement, though, by dividing the force of the country, it lessened the chance of victory, generally succeeded in confining the depredations of the invaders to the vicinity of the coast. The whole island was now surrounded by their squadrons (840). While one occupied the attention of Æthelwulf, a second of thirty-three sail entered the port of Southampton, and soon afterwards a third effected a landing on the Isle of Portland. Of the king's success we are not informed. Wulfhere defeated the invaders at Southampton, but Æthelhelm was slain at Portland with many of the men of Dorset. The next spring a powerful army landed in Lincolnshire. The ealdorman Herebryht, with his followers, perished in the marshes, and the barbarians pushed their victorious career through East Anglia to the Thames. The following year three bloody battles were fought at Rochester, Canterbury, and London; and Æthelwulf himself was defeated in an action at Charmouth.

Whether it was that the pirates were discouraged by the obstinate resistance which they experienced, or that France, now become the theatre of intestine feuds and fraternal ambition, offered a more inviting prospect, they appear to have abandoned Britain for the next ten years. But in 851 several squadrons returned to the island. One army had landed the preceding autumn in the Isle of Thanet, and had passed the winter on shore, a circumstance which filled the Saxons with consternation, as it seemed to denote a design of permanent conquest. In the spring a fleet of three hundred and fifty sail ascended the Thames; Canterbury and London were sacked, and Beorhtulf, the tributary king of Mercia, was defeated. The barbarians turned to Surrey, where Æthelwulf with his West Saxons waited to receive them at Ockley. The battle that ensued was most obstinate and sanguinary. The victory remained to Æthelwulf, and the loss of the Northmen is said to have been greater than they had ever sustained in any age or country. The other divisions of the Saxon forces were equally successful. Ceorl, with the men of Devon, defeated the barbarians at Wenbury, and Æthelstan, king of Kent, captured nine of their ships in an engagement near Sandwich. So many victories gave to this the name of the prosperous year; and the Northmen, disheartened by their losses, respected during the remainder of Æthelwulf's reign the shores of Britain.

The pious curiosity which had induced so many of the Saxon princes and prelates to visit the city of Rome, was not yet extinguished in the breasts of their posterity. The bishop of Winchester had lately performed the journey, and had been accompanied by Alfred, the youngest and best-beloved of the sons of Æthelwulf, a boy in the fifth year of his age.<sup>1</sup> The prince was

[<sup>1</sup> The generally accepted date of Alfred's birth on the authority of Asser *u* is 849, which would make him only four years old at the time of his first journey to Rome. In another place, however, Asser tells us that Alfred was ten years old at this time and this statement is taken as more nearly probable by Ramsay, *f* who, therefore, sets 842 as the year of his birth.



honourably received by the pontiff, Leo IV, who, at the request of his father, conferred on him the regal unction, and the sacrament of confirmation. In 855 the tranquillity which England enjoyed encouraged Æthelwulf to undertake the same journey. Attended by a splendid retinue, the royal pilgrim, with his son Alfred, crossed the channel, visited the most celebrated churches of Gaul, and was sumptuously entertained at the court of Charles the Bald, king of France. At Rome he spent several months, rebuilt the school or hospital of the Saxons, which had lately been burnt, made numerous presents to the pope, and solicited an ordinance that no Englishman should be condemned to do penance in irons out of his own country. On his return he again visited the French monarch, and after a courtship of three months was married to his daughter Judith, who probably had not yet reached her twelfth year. The ceremony was performed by Hincmar, archbishop of Rheims. At the conclusion the princess was crowned and seated on a throne by the side of her husband, a distinction which she afterwards claimed, to the great displeasure of the West Saxons.

Ancient writers have not mentioned to whom Æthelwulf had intrusted the reins of government during his absence. But Æthelbald, his eldest son, a prince of impetuous passions and insatiable ambition, conceived the design of seizing the throne for himself, and of holding it in defiance of his father. His advisers and accomplices were Ealstan, the celebrated bishop of Sherborne, and Eanwulf, the ealdorman of Somerset. In the forest of Selwood the project was disclosed to some of the more powerful thanes, whose approbation appeared to insure its success. But at the return of Æthelwulf (856) the tide of popularity flowed in his favour; the majority of the nation condemned the treason of an unnatural son, and a civil war would have been the consequence had not the moderation of the king consented to a partition of his dominions. He resigned to Æthelbald the kingdom of Wessex, and contented himself with the provinces which [his son] Æthelstan, who died in 853, had governed with the title of king. He survived this compromise but two years. By his will, which was confirmed in a general assembly of the thanes, he left that share of the kingdom still in his possession to his second son, Æthelberht.<sup>1</sup> He died in 857.

After the death of Æthelwulf, Æthelbald continued to sit on the throne of Wessex: Æthelberht, in pursuance of his father's will, assumed the government of Kent, Essex, Sussex, and Surrey. The new king had been the foremost to condemn the marriage of Æthelwulf with the daughter of the French monarch: he now forgot his former enmity to the princess, and took the young widow to his own bed. This incestuous connection scandalised the people of Wessex: their disapprobation was publicly and loudly expressed; and the king, overawed by the remonstrances of the bishop of Winchester, consented to a separation.

In the battles which were fought during the life of Æthelwulf, Æthelbald had acquired peculiar distinction. During his own reign, either he possessed no opportunity of displaying his courage, or the memory of his exploits has been obliterated. Yet his martial character so endeared him to the youth of Wessex, that they lamented his death as a national calamity. He died in 860.

"This," concludes Ramsay, "is intelligible: a mission to Rome at four years of age passes belief. Again, if we take Alfred to have been eleven years old in 853, the story about his mother and the book harmonises with the statement that he began to read when he was twelve. That would be after his first visit to Rome."

<sup>1</sup> [A bequest of three hundred mancusses a year to the pope may have been the beginning of the later *Romefeoh* or Peter's Pence. One mancus equalled one-fourth of a mark, two of which at that time made a pound.]

[867-865 A.D.]

According to some writers, the crown of Wessex, agreeably to the provisions contained in the testament of Æthelwulf, ought, on the demise of the last king, to have descended to Æthelred, the third of the brothers. But Æthelberht, who had hitherto possessed the kingdom of Kent, advanced the claim of seniority, and his pretensions were admitted by the great council of Wessex. His martial virtues are said to have been equal to those of his late brother: and the title of "invincible conqueror" was accorded to him by the admiration or flattery of his contemporaries. Yet the meagre chronicles of the times contain no record of his victories; and we are only told that his reign was short, and that he died in 865.

Under this prince the city of Winchester was sacked by the Northmen, who, as they conveyed the plunder to Southampton, were defeated with great slaughter by the ealdormen of Hampshire and Berkshire. Another army landed in the Isle of Thanet, and sold to the men of Kent their forbearance for a considerable sum of money. But they laughed at the credulity of the purchasers; and the eastern moiety of the province was pillaged and depopulated by the faithless barbarians.

It was also during his reign that an event occurred in the north which endangered by its consequences the very existence of the Saxons as a nation. Among the sea-kings, one of the most adventurous and successful was Ragnar Lodbrok.<sup>1</sup> On the shores of the Baltic, in the Orkneys, and the Hebrides, in Ireland, Scotland, and Northumbria, he had diffused the terror of his name. In France the intrepid pirate had conducted his fleet up the Seine, spread the flames of devastation on each side of its banks, and taken possession of the city of Paris, which was redeemed from destruction by the payment of seven thousand pounds of silver. By his orders ships of a larger size than had hitherto been navigated by his countrymen were constructed for an invasion of England: but, whether it was owing to the violence of the weather, or the unskilfulness of the mariners, they were wrecked on the coast of Northumbria. Ragnar with several of his followers reached the shore, and heedless of the consequences, commenced the usual career of depredation. Though the Northumbrians had cast off the yoke imposed on them by Egbert, their country was torn by civil dissensions; and at this very moment they were divided by the opposite pretensions of two competitors, Osbert and Ælla. At the first news of the descent of the Northmen, the latter flew to the coast, fought with the plunderers, made Ragnar prisoner, and immediately put him to death. He is said to have been devoured by snakes, and to have consoled his last moments with the hope that "the cubs of the boar" would avenge his fate. Nor was he disappointed. His sons, who were in Denmark, swore to punish the murderer; the relations, the friends, and the admirers of the deceased chieftain crowded to their standard; and eight sea-kings, with twenty jarls, combined their forces in the pursuit of revenge and plunder.

By the death of Æthelberht the crown of Wessex had devolved on Æthelred, the third of the sons of Æthelwulf. About the same time the northern armament, conveying several thousand warriors, under the command of Ivar and Ubba, reached the coast of East Anglia. They landed without opposition; but finding their number unequal to the enterprise which they

<sup>1</sup> [The story of Ragnar Lodbrok, or Lodbrog, and his sons, Healfdene and Ivar, the first leaders of the Northmen whose names have come down to us, is so clouded in legend and romance that it is wellnigh impossible to discover exactly what they accomplished. With their invasions, says Ramsay, we have at any rate "the first unquestionable appearance of the Danes proper in Great Britain" as distinguished from the rovers of the Scandinavian peninsula.]

had undertaken, they fortified their camp, and patiently awaited the arrival of reinforcements from the Baltic. The winter was spent in procuring horses for the army, and in debauching the fidelity of some among the Northumbrian chieftains. In February they abandoned East Anglia, and by the 1st of March were in possession of York. Alarmed for their country, Osbert and Ælla postponed the decision of their private quarrel, and united their forces against the common enemy. On the 21st of March they surprised the Danes in the neighbourhood of York, drove them into the city, and made a breach in the walls. They had penetrated into the streets, when despair redoubled the efforts of the Northmen, and the assailants were in their turn compelled to retire. Osbert, with the bravest of the Northumbrians, was slain; Ælla had the misfortune to fall alive into the hands of his enemies, who enjoyed the exquisite delight of torturing the man who had slain Ragnar. His ribs were divided from the spine; his lungs were drawn through the opening, and salt was thrown into the wounds. This victory gave the Danes an undisputed possession of the country south of the Tyne; the natives on the north of that river solicited the friendship of the invaders, and, with their consent, conferred the sovereign power on a chieftain called Egberht.

The army of the barbarians now divided itself into two bodies. The smaller remained at York to cultivate the country; the more numerous marched to the south, and took possession of Nottingham. Burhred, king of Mercia, immediately solicited the assistance of Æthelred, who, with his brother Alfred and the forces of Wessex, joined the Mercian army. The enemy prudently confined themselves within the walls of the town, and the besiegers were unable to force them to a battle. At length Nottingham was surrendered by capitulation, and the Danes retired without molestation to their countrymen at York.

The next expedition of the Northmen (870) led them across the Humber into Lincolnshire. The Saxon princes remained idle spectators of the progress of the Danes, instead of uniting their forces for the defence of their common country. They appear to have conceived that the fury of the torrent would, as it rolled on, gradually subside. The king of Mercia had seen one of his most opulent provinces for six months in their possession, and yet, under the pretence of opposing the Britons in the west, had not made a single effort for its deliverance. From Mercia the invaders entered the country of the East Angles. They had already burned Thetford, when Ulfketul, the ealdorman, retarded their advance for a few days. But Eadmund, the king, conscious of his inability to contend against superior numbers, and afraid of inflaming their resentment by a fruitless resistance, disbanded his forces, and retired towards his castle of Framlingham. He was intercepted at Hoxon, on the Waveney, and conducted in chains to the quarters of Ivar. The proposals of the sea-king were rejected by the captive as repugnant to his honour and religion. To extort his compliance, he was bound naked to a tree and lacerated with whips; some of the spectators, with cruel dexterity, shot their arrows into his arms and legs; and the Dane, wearied out by his constancy, ordered his head to be struck off. Eadmund was revered as a martyr by his subjects and their posterity.

The winter was spent by the Northmen in regulating the fate of the East Angles, and in arranging plans of future conquest. From Thetford, the general rendezvous, Ivar returned to his former associates in Northumbria; Guthrum assumed the sceptre of East Anglia, which, from that period (871) became a Danish kingdom, and Healfdene and Baeseeg, leading the more adventurous of the invaders into Wessex, surprised the town of Reading.



[871 A.D.]

They fortified the place, and, to strengthen their position, began on the third day to open a trench from the Thames to the Kennet; but the ealdorman Æthelwulf attacked them at Englefield, killed one of their commanders, and drove the workmen into the camp. Four days later Æthelred and his brother Alfred arrived with the army of Wessex. The parties, which the pursuit of plunder had led to a distance, were easily put to flight; but in an attempt to storm the Danish intrenchments the Saxons experienced a loss, which taught them to respect the skill as well as the valour of the invaders. Æthelred, however, sensible that his crown was at stake, reinforced his army, and, before the end of the week, met the enemy at Æseesdune. The night was spent on each side in preparation for the combat; the morning discovered the Danes assembled in two divisions on different parts of an eminence. Æthelred ordered the Saxons to adopt a similar arrangement, and retired to his tent to assist at mass. The impudence of Alfred condemned the piety of his brother, and ordering his men to cover their heads with their shields, he boldly led them up the declivity, and attacked one of the hostile divisions. Æthelred followed quickly with the remainder of the army, and the Northmen, after a most obstinate resistance, were routed, and pursued in confusion as far as Reading (871).

Within a fortnight after the last sanguinary conflict, another was fought at Basing, in which the invaders took an ample revenge. Their numbers were soon after increased by the arrival of another armament from the Baltic, and a most obstinate battle ensued at Merton, in Surrey. The Saxon chronicles give the advantage to their countrymen, but acknowledge that the Danes remained in possession of the field. Æthelred, who had been wounded, survived only a few days.<sup>b</sup>





## CHAPTER III

### ALFRED AND HIS SUCCESSORS

[871-1017 A.D.]

"A SAINT without superstition, a scholar without ostentation, a warrior all whose wars were fought in defence of his country, a conqueror whose laurels were never stained with cruelty, a prince never cast down by adversity, never lifted up to insolence in the hour of triumph—there is no other name in history to compare with his." In these words Freeman<sup>i</sup> pays tribute to the greatness of Alfred. It demanded, indeed, all the unswerving devotion to a high ideal of kingship, such as few sovereigns of that time or any time have possessed, to undertake the leadership of the West Saxons on the death of Æthelred. For it was rather to the leadership of a people, already despairing of the outcome of the struggle in which they were engaged, than to the throne of a real nation, that Alfred succeeded. He had, we are told, as a prince of the royal house, been possessed of a subordinate authority during the brief and stormy reigns of his elder brothers. *Secundarius* is the term which his biographer Asser<sup>f</sup> applies to him, but of the real meaning of the word we have no further explanation.<sup>a</sup>

Alfred was already so much distinguished, both by his good sense and valour, that he might, had he chosen to do so, have obtained the title of king of Wessex, to the prejudice of Æthelred; but he did not covet the dignity;

[The "*Life*" of Alfred attributed to the pen of Asser,<sup>f</sup> a contemporary and friend, is the principal authority for his reign. Thomas Wright,<sup>p</sup> in his *Biographia Britannica Literaria*, disputed the authenticity of the work, but other scholars have generally accepted it. Pauli,<sup>m</sup> in a critical examination of the text, has, however, pointed out numerous later interpolations and emendations. Earle,<sup>q</sup> in the introduction to his edition of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, concludes that "No theory of authorship or date of the work has ever been proposed which, on the whole, meets the facts of the case better than that set forth in the book itself, that it was written in 893," during the prime of Alfred's life.]

[871 A.D.]

and, when, upon the decease of his brother, the voice of the nobles and people designated him as Æthelred's successor, he unwillingly accepted the laborious honour. In those days, royalty, never an easy or enviable station, was accompanied by great danger and toil. A king was compelled to sleep on the hard ground, to encounter every privation and difficulty, and to expose his life for the defence of his crown and people; and, had Alfred been a sluggard, it might have been supposed that love of ease rendered him unwilling to undertake an office of so much peril. But his conduct, both before and after his accession, disproves this supposition; and we may, therefore, fully believe that he was actuated by the motive assigned for his reluctance, and transmitted to us by Asser, his biographer and friend. He knew that he could not be furthered in his attempts to govern well, except by the continual aid of providence; and he feared that such help might not be granted unto him. With this full sense and conviction of his own utter weakness and inability to help himself, did Alfred begin his reign, during which he was enabled to acquire a better reputation than any other monarch of western Christendom.<sup>b</sup>

Another point with regard to the succession should be noticed. On the death of Æthelred, Alfred succeeded, though Æthelred had children living. This is, of course, simply an instance of the general law of choosing from the royal house, but of choosing only one who was personally qualified to reign. Minors were therefore passed by, as a matter of course, in favor of a full-grown uncle or other kinsman. The children thus shut out might or might not be chosen at some future vacancy. The right of Alfred to his crown was not disputed in his own day, nor has he commonly been branded by later historians with the name of usurper. But it is well to bear in mind that his succession was of exactly the same kind as that of some later kings to whom the name of usurper has been freely applied. In all such cases the mistake comes from forgetting that the strict laws of succession to which we have been used for the last two or three centuries were altogether unknown in the earlier stages of our constitution.<sup>i</sup>

[The extent of territory over which the Danes exercised at least potential authority is indicative of the strength of the power with which the new king had to cope.] They held the Isle of Thanet, which gave them the command of the river Thames and the coasts of Kent and Essex; they had thoroughly overrun or conquered all Northumbria, from the Tweed to the Humber; they had planted strong colonies at York, which city, destroyed during the wars, they rebuilt. South of the Humber, with the exception of the Isle of Thanet, their iron grasp on the soil was less sure, but they had desolated Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk, and Suffolk; and, with numbers constantly increasing, they ranged through the whole length of the island, on this side of the Tweed, with the exception only of the western counties of England, and had established fortified camps between the Severn and the Thames. The Anglo-Saxon standard had been gradually retreating



KING ALFRED



towards the southwestern corner of our island, which includes Somersetshire, Devonshire, and Cornwall, and which was now about to become the scene of Alfred's most romantic adventures. For a while, the English expected the arrival of their foes during the spring and summer months, and their departure at the close of autumn; but now a Danish army had wintered seven years in the land, and there was no longer a hope of the blessing of their ever departing from it.

But Alfred, the saviour of his people, did not despair, even when worse times came: he calmly abode the storm over which his valour, but still more his prudence, skill, and wisdom, finally triumphed. Though only twenty-three years of age, he had been already tried in many battles. He had scarcely been a month on the throne when his army, very inferior in force to that of the Danes, was forced into a general engagement at Wilton. After fighting desperately through a great part of the day, the heathens fled but seeing the fewness of those who pursued, they set themselves to battle again, and got the field.<sup>c</sup>

Alfred at once rallied his forces, and again within the month met the Danes in battle. Throughout the entire first year of his reign the conflict raged—nine battles in all were fought, the chroniclers tell us—and in every one Alfred was worsted. But the losses of the Danes were by no means small, and they were probably willing enough to accept a truce. Alfred, in his extremity, took counsel with his witan, and on their advice—offered—with what grief and shame we can imagine—to buy a brief respite for his people. For three years they left him unmolested.

The peace gave the Danes the opportunity to turn to the conquest of other fields, and it was upon Mercia that they next fell. In the spring of 874, reinforced by fresh bands from the north, they burst into the land of the Mercians with more than their accustomed fury. There was no withstanding them. King Burhred tried to buy a peace as Alfred had done. The Danes accepted his gold, but continued their depredations. Burhred, despairing of ever ridding his country of the conquerors, abandoned his throne and fled across the sea, where broken in health and in spirit he died at Rome before the end of the year. The Danes set up a puppet king, Ceolwulf by name, who did their bidding, and paid them tribute which he extorted from his down-trodden countrymen, for the space of three years. At the end of that period his masters, tiring of the farce of his rule, swept him from his throne. He was the last to bear the independent title of king of the Mercians.<sup>a</sup>

The next year (875) one army, under Hlalden, or Halfdane, was employed in settling Northumbria, and in waging war with that mixed population that still dwelt in Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Galioway, or what was called the kingdom of Strathclyde. They now came into hostile collision with the Scots, who were forced to retreat beyond the Firths of Clyde and Forth. Halfdane then divided the mass of the Northumbrian territory among his followers, who, settling among the Anglo-Saxons there, and intermarrying with them, became, in the course of a few generations, so mixed as to form almost one people. It is not easy, from the vagueness of the old writers, to fix limits, but this fusion was probably felt strongest along the northeastern coast, between the Tees and the Tweed, where some Danish peculiarities are still detected among the people. While Halfdane was pursuing these measures in the north, a still stronger army, commanded by three kings, marched upon Cambridge, which they fortified and made their winter quarters. By this time the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms of Northumbria, Mercia, and East Anglia were entirely obliterated, and the contest lay between the Danes and Alfred's men of Wessex.

[876 A.D.]

## THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ENGLISH NAVY

At the opening of the year 876 the host that had wintered in Cambridge took to their ships, and, resolving to carry the war they had renewed into the heart of Wessex, they landed on the coast of Dorsetshire, surprised the castle of Wareham, and scoured the neighbouring country. But in the interval of the truce, Alfred's mind had conceived an idea which may be looked upon as an embryo of the naval glory of England. After their establishment in our island, the Saxons, who, at their first coming, were as nautical a people as the Danes, imprudently neglected sea affairs; but in his present straits Alfred saw the advantages to be derived from the employment of ships along the coast, where they might either prevent the landing of an enemy, or cut off their supplies and reinforcements, which generally came by sea, and as frequently from the Continent as elsewhere. The first flotilla he launched was small, and almost contemptible; but in its very first encounter with the enemy it proved victorious, attacking a Danish squadron of seven ships, one of which was taken, the rest put to flight. This happened immediately after the surprise of Wareham; and when, in a few days, the Danes agreed to treat for peace, and evacuate the territory of Wessex, the consequences of the victory were magnified in the eyes of the people. In concluding this peace, after the Danish chiefs or kings had sworn by their golden bracelets—a most solemn form of oath with them—Alfred insisted that they should swear upon the relics of some Christian saints. The Danes swore by both, and the very next night fell upon Alfred as he was riding with a small force, and suspecting no mischief, towards the town of Winchester. The king had a narrow escape; the horsemen who attended him were nearly all dismounted and slain; and, seizing their horses, the Danes galloped off in the direction of Exeter, whither, as they were no doubt informed, another body of their brethren were proceeding, having come round by sea, and landed at the mouth of the Exe. Their plan now was to take Alfred in the rear of his stronghold in the west of England, and to rouse again the people [Britons] of Cornwall against the Saxons. A formidable Danish fleet sailed from the mouth of the Thames to reinforce the troops united in Devonshire; but Alfred's infant navy, strengthened by some new vessels, stood ready to intercept it. A storm which arose caused the wreck of half the Danish ships on the Hampshire coast; and when the others arrived, tardily and in a shattered condition, they were met by the Saxon fleet that blockaded the Exe, and entirely destroyed, after a gallant action. Before this, his second sea victory, Alfred had come up with his land forces and invested Exeter, and King Guthrum, the Dane who held that town, on learning the destruction of his fleet, capitulated, gave hostages and oaths, and marched with his Northmen from Exeter and the kingdom of Wessex into Mercia. Alfred had now felt the value of the fleet he had created, and which, weak as it was, maintained his cause on the sea during the retreat to which he was now about to be condemned. The crews of these ships, however, must have been oddly constituted; for, not finding English mariners enough, he engaged a number of Friesland pirates, or rovers, to serve him. These men did their duty gallantly and faithfully. It is curious to reflect that they came from the same country which, ages before, had sent forth many of the Angles to the conquest of Britain; and they may have felt, even at that distance of time, a strong sympathy with the Anglo-Saxon adherents of Alfred.

## THE PROSTRATION OF WESSEX

Guthrum had no sooner retreated from Exeter than he began to prepare for another war, and this he did with great art, and by employing all his means and influence, for he had learned to appreciate the qualities of his enemy, and he was himself the most skilful, steady, and persevering of all the invaders. He fixed his headquarters at no greater distance from Alfred than the city of Gloucester, around which he had broad and fertile lands to distribute among his warriors. His fortunate "raven" attracted the birds of rapine from every quarter; and when everything was ready for a fresh incursion into the west, he craftily proceeded in a new and unexpected manner. A winter campaign had hitherto been unknown among the Danes, but on the first day of January, 878, his choicest warriors received a secret order to meet him on horseback at an appointed place. Alfred was at Chippenham, a strong residence of the Wessex kings. It was the feast of the Epiphany, or Twelfth Night, and the Saxons were probably celebrating the festival when they heard that Guthrum and his Danes were at the gates. Surprised thus by the celerity of an overwhelming force, they could offer but an ineffectual resistance. Many were slain; the foe burst into Chippenham, and Alfred, escaping with a little band, retired, with an anxious mind, to the woods and the fastnesses of the moors. As the story is generally told, the king could not make head against the Danes, but other accounts state that he immediately fought several battles in rapid succession. We are inclined to the latter belief, which renders the broken spirits and despair of the men of Wessex more intelligible; but all are agreed in the facts that, not long after the Danes stole into Chippenham, they rode over the kingdom of Wessex, where no army was left to oppose them; that numbers of the population fled to the Isle of Wight and the opposite shores of the Continent, while those who remained tilled the soil for their hard taskmasters, the Danes, whom they tried to conciliate with presents and an abject submission. The brave men of Somerset alone retained some spirit, and continued, in the main, true to their king; but even in their country, where he finally sought a refuge, he was obliged to hide in fens and coverts, for fear of being betrayed to his powerful foe, Guthrum. Near the confluence of the rivers Tone and Parret there is a tract of country still called Athelney, or the Prince's Island. In the time of Alfred the whole tract was covered by a dense wood, the secluded haunt of deer, wild boars, wild goats, and other beasts of the forest. It has now long ceased to be an island; but in those days, where not washed by the two rivers, it was insulated by bogs and inundations, which could only be passed in a boat. In this secure lurking-place the king abode some time, making himself a small hold or fortress there. For sustenance he and his few followers depended upon hunting and fishing, and the spoil they could make by sudden and secret forays among the Danes. From an ambiguous expression of some of the old writers, we might believe he sometimes plundered his own subjects; and this is not altogether improbable, if we consider his pressing wants, and the necessity under which he lay of concealing who he was. This secret seems to have been most scrupulously kept by his few adherents, and to have been maintained on his own part with infinite patience and forbearance.<sup>c</sup>

From among the stories of the dark days in the Somerset marshes that have come down to us, one at least has found a place in English history from



[878 A.D.]

which no scholarly criticism or antiquarian research can dislodge it. Every schoolboy knows the "story of the cakes," but it is worth repeating in the simple words of Asser.<sup>f</sup> During this time, the chronicler tells us, the king was long concealed in the hut of one of his cowherds. "It happened one day that the countrywoman, the wife of this cowherd, was baking some cakes for food, while the king was sitting before the fire and repairing his bows and arrows and instruments of war. When the unlucky woman saw that the cakes which had been placed on the fire were burning, she ran up in great haste and removed them, and scolded our invincible king after this fashion: 'Look, man, the cakes are burning, and you do not take the trouble to turn them; when the time for eating them comes, then you are active enough.' This unlucky woman little thought her guest was Alfred who had fought so many battles against the pagans, and who had gained so many victories."<sup>a</sup>

## THE CAMPAIGN OF 878 A.D.

From his all but inaccessible retreat in Athelney, the king maintained a correspondence with some of his faithful adherents. By degrees a few bold warriors gathered round him in that islet, which they more strongly fortified, as a point upon which to retreat in case of reverse; and between the Easter and Whitsuntide following his flight (878), Alfred saw hopes of his emerging from obscurity. The men of Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, and Hampshire began to flock in; and, with a resolute force, Alfred was soon enabled to extend his operations against the Danes. In the interval, an important event in Devonshire had favoured his cause. Ubba, in attempting to land there, was slain, with 800 or 900 of his followers, and their magical banner, a raven, which had been embroidered in one noon-tide by the hands of the three daughters of the great Lodbrok, fell into the hands of the Saxons. Soon after receiving the welcome news at Athelney, the king determined to convert his skirmishes and loose partisan warfare into more decisive operations. Previously to this, however, he was anxious to know the precise force and condition of the army which Guthrum kept together; and, to obtain this information, he put himself in great jeopardy, trusting to his own resources and address. He assumed the habit of a wandering minstrel, or gleeman, and with his instruments of music in his hands, gained a ready entrance into the camp, and the tents and pavilions of the Danes. As he amused these idle warriors with songs and interludes, he espied all their sloth and negligence, heard much of their counsels and plans, and was soon enabled to return to his friends at Athelney with a full and satisfactory account of the state and habits of that army. Then secret messengers were sent to all quarters, requesting the trusty men of Wessex to meet in arms at Egbert's Stone, on the east of Selwood Forest. The summons was obeyed, though most knew not the king had sent it; and when Alfred appeared at the place of rendezvous he was received with enthusiastic joy, the men of Hampshire, and Dorset, and Wilts rejoicing as if he had risen from death to life. In the battle of Ethandune [Heddington] which ensued seven weeks after Easter, the Danes were taken by surprise, and thoroughly beaten. Alfred's concealment, counting from his flight from Chippenham, did not last above five months.

[<sup>f</sup> In this particular case it appears to be fairly well established that the story was not a part of the *Life* as originally written by Asser, but was a later interpolation. This, however, as pointed out by Gairdner,<sup>o</sup> in his *Early Chroniclers of England*, in no wise means that the incident is entirely apocryphal.]

## THE TREATY OF CHIPPENHAM AND ITS RESULTS

Guthrum retreated with the mournful residue of his army to a fortified position. Alfred followed him thither, cut off all his communications, and established a close blockade. In fourteen days famine obliged the Danes to accept the conditions offered by the Saxons. These conditions were liberal; for, though victorious, Alfred could not hope to drive the Danes by one, nay, nor by twenty battles, out of England. They were too numerous, and had secured themselves in too considerable a part of the island. The first points insisted upon in the treaty were that Guthrum should evacuate all Wessex, and submit to baptism. Upon Guthrum's ready acceptance of these two conditions, an extensive cession of territory was made to him and the Danes; and here the great mind of Alfred probably contemplated the gradual fusion of two people—the Saxons and the Danes—who differed in but few essentials; and foresaw that the pursuits of agriculture and industry, growing up among them, after a tranquil settlement, would win the rovers of the north from their old plundering, piratical habits. As soon as this took place, they would guard the coast they formerly desolated. If it had even been in Alfred's power to expel them all (which it never was), he could have had no security against their prompt return and incessant attacks. There was territory enough, fertile, though neglected, to give away, without straitening the Saxons.

Alfred thus drew the line of demarcation between him and the Danes: "Let the bounds of our dominion stretch to the river Thames, and from thence to the water of Lea, even unto the head of the same water; and thence straight unto Bedford; and finally, going along by the river Ouse, let them end at Watling street." Beyond these lines, all the east side of the island, as far as the Humber, was surrendered to the Danes; and as they had established themselves in Northumbria, that territory was soon united, and the whole eastern country from the Tweed to the Thames, where it washes a part of Essex, took the name of the *Danelagh*, or "Dane-law," which it retained for many ages, even down to the time of the Norman conquest. The cession was large; but it should be remembered that Alfred, at the opening of his reign, was driven into the western corner of England, and that he now gained tranquil possession of five or perhaps ten times more territory than he then possessed. In many respects, these his moderate measures answered the end he proposed. Soon after the conclusion of the treaty, Guthrum, relying on the good faith of the Saxons, went with only thirty of his chiefs to Aulre, near Athelney. His old but gallant and generous enemy, Alfred, answered for him at the baptismal font, and the Dane was christened under the Saxon name of Athelstan. The next week the ceremony was completed with great solemnity at the royal town of Wedmore, and after spending twelve days as the guest of Alfred, Guthrum departed loaded with presents. Whatever were his inward convictions, or the efficacy and sincerity of his conversion, the Danish prince was certainly captivated by the merits of his victor, and ever after continued the faithful friend and ally, if not vassal, of Alfred. The subjects under his rule in the Danelagh assumed habits of industry and tranquillity, and gradually adopted the manners and customs of more civilised life. By mutual agreement, the laws of the Danes were assimilated to those of the Saxons; but the former long retained many of their old Scandinavian usages. All sales, whether of men, horses, or oxen, were declared illegal, unless the purchaser produced the voucher of the seller. This was to put a stop on both sides to the lifting of cattle, and the carrying off of the peasantry as

[878-893 A.D.]

slaves. Both kings engaged to promote the Christian religion, and to punish apostasy. We are not well informed as to the progress the faith made among his subjects on Guthrum's conversion; but it was probably rapid, though imperfect, and accompanied with a lingering affection for the divinities of the Scandinavian mythology.<sup>c</sup>

## EFFECTS OF THE DANISH SETTLEMENT

But in truth the Danish occupation of northern and eastern England did but make ready the way for the more thorough incorporation of those lands with the West-Saxon kingdom. Egbert had established his supremacy over the English powers in those lands. But it was the supremacy of an external master. The Danish settlements gave the West-Saxon kings a wholly new character. Unless we reckon the tributary kingship of Bernicia, all the ancient English kingdoms, with their royal houses, were swept away wherever the Danes established their power. The West-Saxon kings remained the only champions of Christian faith and English nationality. They were now kings of the English, and they alone. Mark also that, by the treaty between Alfred and Guthrum, while the West-Saxon king lost as an overlord, he gained as an immediate sovereign. The actual West-Saxon dominion, as distinguished from mere West-Saxon supremacy, again reached far beyond the Thames. English Mercia was ruled under Alfred by Æthelred, an ealdorman of the old royal stock, the husband of his daughter, the renowned Æthelflæd. The lord and lady of the Mercians held a place intermediate between that of an under-king and an ordinary ealdorman. At the other end of Wessex, Kent and Sussex were completely incorporated, and ceased to be even distinct appanages. The West-Saxon supremacy was more fully established in Wales, and at last, in 893, even the Danes of the north acknowledged it. Alfred had thus, in name at least, won back the overlordship of Egbert, combined with an enlarged immediate kingdom. As that immediate kingdom took in by far the greater part of Saxon England, and little or nothing that was not Saxon, he sometimes bears, neither the narrower style of king of the West Saxons nor the wider style of king of the English, but the title, almost peculiar and specially appropriate to himself, of king of the Saxons. His overlordship over the heathen Danes was doubtless far less firmly established than Egbert's overlordship had been over their Christian predecessors. But now, in the eyes of the Christian inhabitants of Northumberland and Mercia, the West-Saxon king was no longer a stranger and a conqueror. He had become the champion of their race and faith against their heathen masters.<sup>d</sup>

## ENGLAND AFTER THE PEACE

But some time had yet to pass ere Alfred could give himself up to quiet enjoyments, to law-making, and the intellectual improvement of his people. Though Guthrum kept his contract, hosts of marauding Danes, who were not bound by it, continued to cross over from the Continent and infest the shores and rivers of England. In 879, the very year after Guthrum's treaty and baptism, a great army of pagans came from beyond the sea, and wintered at Fullanham, or Fulham, hard by the river Thames. From Fulham this host proceeded to Ghent, in the Low Countries. At this period the Northmen alternated their attacks on England, and their attacks on Holland, Belgium,



and east France, in a curious manner, the expedition beginning on one side of the British Channel and the North Sea, frequently ending on the other side. The rule of their conduct, however, seems to have been this—to persevere only against the weakest enemy. Thus, when they found France strong, they tried England; and when they found the force of England consolidated under Alfred, they turned off in the direction of France, or the neighbouring shores of the Continent.<sup>c</sup>

The cessation of raids, however, enabled Alfred to undertake the work of unifying his kingdom as it never had been unified, and of providing a system of defence of a truly national character. London, which had been sacked and destroyed during the wars with Guthrum, was rebuilt on a more extensive plan than ever and strongly fortified. In other parts of the kingdom, also, particularly along the coast, towers and fortifications were erected. The navy which he had begun to build a few years before was added to and improved, and a beginning was made in organising the defensive forces of the land.<sup>a</sup>

From measures of defence against a foreign enemy, the king turned his attention to the domestic economy of the country. During the long period of Danish devastation, the fabric of civil government had been nearly dissolved. The courts of judicature had been closed; injuries were inflicted without provocation, and retaliated without mercy, and the Saxon, like the Dane, had imbibed a spirit of insubordination, and a contempt for peace, and justice, and religion. To remedy these evils, Alfred restored, enlarged, and improved the salutary institutions of his forefathers; and from the statutes of Æthelberht, Ine, Offa, and other Saxon princes, composed a code of law, adapted to the circumstances of the time, and the habits of his subjects. But legislative enactments would have been of little avail had not the king insured their execution by an undertaking of no small difficulty, but which by his vigilance and perseverance he ultimately accomplished. The Saxon jurisprudence had established an ample gradation of judicatures, which diverged in different ramifications from the king's court into every hamlet in the kingdom; but of the persons invested with judicial authority very few were qualified for so important an office. Almost all were ignorant; many were despotic. The powerful refused to acquiesce in their decisions, and the defenceless complained of their oppression. Both had frequent recourse to the equity of Alfred, who listened as cheerfully to the complaints of the lowest as of the highest among his subjects. Every appeal was heard by him with the most patient attention; in cases of importance he revised the proceedings at his leisure, and the inferior magistrates trembled at the impartiality and severity of their sovereign. If their fault proceeded from ignorance or inadvertence, they were reprimanded or removed according to the magnitude of the offence; but neither birth, nor friends, nor power, could save the corrupt or malicious judge. He was made to suffer the punishment which he had unjustly inflicted, and, if we may believe an ancient authority [Andrew Horne's *Miroir des Justices*], forty-four magistrates were by the king's order executed in one year for their informal and iniquitous proceedings. This severity was productive of the most beneficial consequences. The judges were careful to acquire a competent degree of knowledge; their decisions became accordant to the law; the commission of crime was generally followed by the infliction of punishment; and theft and murder were rendered as rare as they had formerly been prevalent. To prove the reformation of his subjects, Alfred is said to have suspended valuable bracelets on the highway, which no one ventured to remove; and as a confirmation we are told [by William of Malmes-

[893 A.D.]

bury] that if a traveller lost his purse on the road he would at the distance of a month find it lying untouched in the same spot. These are probably the fictions of a posterior age; but they serve to show the high estimation in which Alfred's administration of justice was held by our forefathers.

The decline of learning in the Saxon states had been rapidly accelerated by the Danish invasions. The churches and monasteries, the only academies of the age, had been destroyed; and at the accession of Alfred, Wessex could hardly boast of a single scholar able to translate a Latin book into the English tongue. The king, who from his early years had been animated with the most ardent passion for knowledge, endeavoured to infuse a similar spirit into all who aspired to his favour. For this purpose he invited to his court the most distinguished scholars of his own and of foreign countries. Plegemund and Werfrith, Æthelstan and Werwulf, visited him from Mercia. John of Old Saxony left the monastery of Corvei for an establishment at Ethelingeby. Asser of St. David's was induced by valuable presents to reside with the king during six months in the year; and an honourable embassy to Hinemar, archbishop of Rheims, returned with Grimbold, the celebrated provost of St. Omer. With their assistance Alfred began in his thirty-ninth year to apply to the study of Roman literature; and opened schools in different places for the instruction of his subjects. It was his will that the children of every free man, whose circumstances would allow it, should acquire the elementary arts of reading and writing; and that those who were designed for civil or ecclesiastical employments, should moreover be instructed in the Latin language.

It was a misfortune which the king frequently lamented, that Saxon literature contained no books of science. "I have often wondered," says he, "that the illustrious scholars, who once flourished among the English, and who had read so many foreign works, never thought of transferring the most useful into their own language." To supply the deficiency Alfred himself undertook the task. Of his translations two were historical, and two didactic. The first were the *Ecclesiastical History of the English* by Bede, and the epitome of Orosius, the best abridgment of ancient history then extant, both works calculated to excite and gratify the curiosity of his subjects. Of the others one was meant for general reading, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, by Boethius, a treatise deservedly held in high estimation at that period; and the second was destined for the instruction of the clergy, the *Pastoral* of Gregory the Great, a work recommended both by its own excellence and the reputation of its author. Of this he sent a copy to every bishop in his dominions, with a request that it might be preserved in the cathedral for the use of the diocesan clergy.

In the arrangement of his time, his finances, and his domestic concerns, Alfred was exact and methodical. The officers of his household were divided into three bodies, which succeeded each other in rotation, and departed at the end of the month, the allotted period of their service. Of each day he gave one-third to sleep and necessary refreshments: the remainder was divided between the duties of his station and works of piety and charity. His treasurer was ordered to separate his revenue into two moieties. The first he subdivided into three parts, of which one was destined to reward his servants and ministers, another to supply presents for the strangers who visited his court, and the third to pay the numerous bodies of workmen whom he employed. For he erected palaces in different parts of his dominions; repaired and embellished those which had been left by his predecessors, and rebuilt London and several other towns which the Danes had reduced to heaps of ruins. In all these undertakings we are told that he displayed an

improved taste and considerable magnificence. Among his artists were numbers of foreigners attracted by his offers and the fame of his liberality; and by frequent conversation with them he is said to have acquired a theoretical acquaintance with their respective professions which astonished the most experienced workmen.

The other moiety of his revenue was parcelled out into four portions. One was devoted to the support of his school, his favourite project. Another was given to the two monasteries which he had founded, one at Shaftesbury for nuns, at the head of whom he placed his daughter Æthelgiva; another at Ethelney for monks, which he peopled with foreigners, because the Danish devastations had abolished the monastic institute among his own subjects. The third portion he employed in relieving the necessities of the indigent, to whom he was on all occasions a most bountiful benefactor. From the fourth he drew the alms, which he annually distributed to different churches. They were not confined to his own dominions, but scattered through Wales, Northumbria, Brittany (Armorica), and Gaul. Often he sent considerable presents to Rome; sometimes to the nations in the Mediterranean and to Jerusalem; on one occasion to the Indian Christians at Meliapur. Swithelm, the bearer of the royal alms, brought back to the king several oriental pearls, and aromatic liquors.<sup>e</sup>

The notion, so widely prevalent, that the education of Alfred had been neglected in his childhood, is a popular error, founded upon the monastic ideas of his biographer, Asser. In these early ages those children only were taught to read and write who were destined for the clerical order. This continued to be the case with the two classes of society (churchmen and laymen), long after the conversion of the Saxons; it was no part of the accomplishments of a prince to be able to write or to read, for with them learning and literature were intrusted to the memory, and in this respect we are sure that Alfred experienced no neglect. The learning of his father, and the influence of Swithun, are proofs that he could not want teachers; and Asser himself informs us that he was taught and excelled in all the accomplishments which became a prince. He spent much of his time in listening to the national poetry as sung by the minstrels of his father's household, and committed it to memory with great facility. He was skilful beyond his age in hunting and the use of arms. His early visits to Rome, the capital of western civilisation, must have tended to enlarge his mind. It is said that when he had reached his twelfth year, he had not yet been taught to read; yet, according to the anecdote related by Asser, in this point he was not inferior to his elder brothers. It appears that when Æthelwulf married the French princess Judith, Alfred's mother was set aside to make way for his step-mother, and it is probable that the children took her part and went with her. It was after his father's death and in his mother's house (not, as some have supposed, in that of his step-mother, who had then become his sister-in-law), that the following incident is said to have occurred. In his twelfth year, when he and his brothers were one day in their mother's presence, she showed them a splendid book of Anglo-Saxon poetry, an article then of great value, and she told them that she was ready to give it to him who should first make himself master of its contents, and commit them to memory. Alfred, attracted by the beauty of the initial letter, and already distinguished by his thirst for knowledge, accepted the challenge, took the book out of his mother's hand, and "went to his master and read it, and, having read it, he brought it back to his mother, and recited it." <sup>p</sup>



[886-893 A.D.]

## THE LAWS OF ALFRED

At a very early period the statement was put forward that Alfred had been in the truest sense of the word the lawgiver of his people. The designation strictly understood is erroneous—he introduced no new code of law; his labours consisted purely in re-establishing, renewing, and improving. Alfred found everywhere in his kingdom existing laws of which he could avail himself as a groundwork; but after the war of liberation, the organisation of new conditions, as well as the closer connection of the different constituent parts of the monarchy, and the elevation of the royal power, required a revision and sifting of the old laws; it became necessary to make preparations for a general system of legislation.

When Alfred commenced the work, he had before him the Kentish collection of Æthelberht and his successors: his own ancestor Ine had caused the West-Saxon laws to be inscribed; and in Mercia the code of the great Offa was adopted. Upon reviewing them he found, in all three, much which met with his full approval; with some things, however, he was not satisfied, and they were therefore expunged with the consent of his councillors. Nevertheless, he sometimes hesitated in replacing them by laws of his own because he could not tell whether they would be considered good by his successors. Ine's collection alone was completely included in the code. Alfred's motives in these reformatory proceedings were of two kinds, the changed and increased range of action of the royal power, and the strong desire felt by his own heart of infusing Christian convictions into the popular laws which had come down from paganism, and of making them their principal support. As soon as such traces are met with in his code, the spirit of Alfred is clearly observable. Alfred impressed upon the whole code the character much rather of his own mind than that of his age.<sup>m</sup>

## THE INVASION OF HASTING

The siege of Paris, which began in 886, employed the Danes or Northmen two whole years. Shortly after the heathens burst into the country now called Flanders, which was then a dependency of the Frankish or French kings, and were employed there for some time in a difficult and extensive warfare. A horrid famine ensued in those parts of the Continent, and made the hungry wolves look elsewhere for sustenance and prey. England had now revived, by a happy repose of seven years; her corn-fields had borne their plentiful crops; her pastures, no longer swept by the tempests of war, were well sprinkled with flocks and herds; and those good fatted beeves, which were always dear to the capacious stomachs of the Northmen, made the island a very land of promise to the imagination of the famished. It is true that of late years they had found those treasures were well defended, and that nothing was to be got under Alfred's present government without hard blows, and a desperate contest, at least doubtful in its issue. But hunger impelled them forward; they were a larger body than had ever made the attack at once; they were united under the command of Hasting, a chief equal or superior in fame and military talent to any that had preceded him; and therefore the Danes, in the year 893, once more turned the prows of their vessels towards England. It was indeed a formidable fleet. As the men of Kent gazed seaward from their cliffs and downs, they saw the horizon darkened by it; as the

winds and waves wafted it forward, they counted 250 several ships; and every ship was full of warriors and horses brought from Flanders and France, for the immediate mounting of a rapid, predatory cavalry. The invaders landed near Romney Marsh, at the eastern termination of the great wood or weald of Anderida at the mouth of a river, now dry, called Limine. They towed their ships four miles up the river towards the weald, and there mastered a fortress the peasants of the country were raising in the fens. They then proceeded to Apuldre, or Appledore, at which point they made a strongly fortified camp, whence they ravaged the adjacent country for many miles. Nearly simultaneously with these movements, the famed Hasting, the skilful commander-in-chief of the entire expedition, entered the Thames with another division of eighty ships, landed at and took Milton, near Sittingbourne, and there threw up prodigiously strong intrenchments. Their past reverses had made them extremely cautious; and for nearly a whole year the Danes in either camp did little else than fortify their positions, and scour the country in foraging parties. Other piratical squadrons, however, kept hovering round our coasts, to distract attention and create alarm at many points at one and the same time. The honourable and trustworthy Guthrum had now been dead three years; and to complete the most critical position of Alfred, the Danes settled in the Danelagh, even from the Tweed to the Thames, violated their oaths, took up arms against him, and joined their marauding brethren under Hasting. It was in this campaign, or rather this succession of campaigns, which lasted altogether three years, that the military genius of the Anglo-Saxon monarch shone with its greatest lustre, and was brought into full play by the ability, the wonderful and eccentric rapidity, and the great resources of his opponent Hasting. To follow their operations the reader must place the map of England before him, for they ran over half of the island, and shifted the scene of war with almost as much rapidity as that with which the decorations of a theatre are changed.

#### ALFRED'S NEW MILITARY PLAN

The first great difficulty Alfred had to encounter was in collecting and bringing up sufficient forces to one point, and then in keeping them in adequate number in the field; for the Saxon "fyrd," or *levée en masse*, were only bound by law to serve for a certain time (probably forty days), and it was indispensable to provide for the safety of the towns, almost everywhere threatened, and to leave men sufficient for the cultivation of the country. Alfred overcame this difficulty by dividing his army, or militia, into two bodies; of these he called one to the field, while the men composing the other were left at home. After a reasonable length of service those in the field returned to their homes, and those left at home took their places in the field. The spectacle of Alfred's large and permanent army, to which they had been wholly unaccustomed, struck Hasting and his confederates with astonishment and dismay. Nor did the position the English king took up with it give them much ground for comfort. Advancing into Kent, he threw himself between Hasting and the other division of the Danes. He thus kept asunder the two armies of the Northmen, and so active were the patrols and troops he threw out in small bodies, and so good the spirit of the villagers and townfolk, cheered by the presence and wise dispositions of the sovereign, that in a short time not a single foraging party could issue from the Danish camp without almost certain destruction. Worn out in body and spirit, the Northmen resolved

[894-895 A.D.]

to break up from their camps, and, to deceive the king as to their intentions, they sent submissive messages and hostages, and promised to leave the kingdom. Hasting took to his shipping, and actually made sail, as if to leave the well-defended island; but while the eyes of the Saxons were fixed on his departure, the other division, in Alfred's rear, rushed suddenly from their intrenchments into the interior of the country, in order to seek a ford across the Thames, by which they hoped to be enabled to get into Essex, where the rebel Danes that had been ruled by Guthrum would give them a friendly reception, and where they knew they should meet Hasting and his division, who, instead of putting to sea, merely crossed the Thames, and took up a strong position at Benfleet, on the Essex coast. Alfred had not ships to pursue those who moved by water; but those who marched by land he followed up closely, and brought them to action on the right bank of the Thames, near Earnham, in Surrey. The Danes were thoroughly defeated. Those who escaped the sword and drowning marched along the left bank of the Thames, through Middlesex, into Essex; but being hotly pursued by Alfred, they were driven right through Essex, and across the river Colne, when they found a strong place of refuge in the Isle of Mersea. Here, however, they were closely blockaded, and soon obliged to sue for peace, promising hostages, as usual, and an immediate departure from England. Alfred would have had this enemy in his hand through sheer starvation, but the genius of Hasting, and the defection of the Northmen of the Danelagh, called him to a distant part of the island. Two fleets, one of one hundred sail, the second of forty, and both in good part manned by the Danes who had been so long, and for the last fifteen years so peacefully, settled in England, set sail to attack in two points, and make a formidable diversion. The first of these, which had probably been equipped in Norfolk and Suffolk, doubled the North Foreland, ran down the southern coast as far as Devonshire, and laid siege to Exeter: the smaller fleet, which had been fitted out in Northumbria, and probably sailed from the mouth of the Tyne, took the passage round Scotland, ran down all the western coast, from Cape Wrath to the Bristol Channel, and, ascending that arm of the sea, beleaguered a fortified town to the north of the Severn.

## THE CAMPAIGNS IN THE WEST

Though Alfred had established friendly relations with the people of the west of England, who seem on many occasions to have served him with as much ardour as his Saxon subjects, he still felt that Devonshire was a vulnerable part. Leaving, therefore, a portion of his army on the confines of Essex, he mounted all the rest on horses, and flew to Exeter. Victory followed him to the west; he obliged the Danes to raise the siege of Exeter; he beat them back to their ships with great loss, and soon after the minor expedition was driven from the Severn. The blockade of the Danes in the Isle of Mersea does not appear to have been well conducted during his absence, and yet that interval was not devoid of great successes: for, in the mean time, Æthelred, caldorman of the Mercians and Alfred's son-in-law, with the citizens of London and others, went down to the fortified post at Benfleet, in Essex, laid siege to it, broke into it, and despoiled it of great quantities of gold, silver, horses, and garments; taking away captive also the wife of Hasting and his two sons, who were brought to London, and presented to the king on his return. Some of his followers urged him to put these captives to death—others to detain them in prison as a check upon Hasting; but Alfred, with a generosity



which was never properly appreciated by the savage Dane, caused them immediately to be restored to his enemy, and sent many presents of value with them. By this time the untiring Hasting had thrown up another formidable intrenchment at South Shoebury, in Essex, where he was soon joined by fresh adventurers from beyond the sea. Thus reinforced, he sailed boldly up the Thames. From the Thames, Hasting marched to the Severn, and fortified himself at Buttington. But here he was surrounded by the Saxons and the men of North Wales, who now cordially acted with them; and in brief time Alfred, with Æthelred and two other ealdormen, cut off all his supplies, and blockaded him in his camp. After some weeks, when the Danes had eaten up nearly all their horses, and famine was staring them in the face, Hasting rushed from his intrenchments. Avoiding the Welsh forces, he concentrated his attack upon the Saxons, who formed the blockade to the east of his position. The conflict was terrific; several hundreds (some of the chroniclers say thousands) of the Danes were slain in their attempt to break through Alfred's lines; many were thrown into the Severn and drowned; but the rest, headed by Hasting, effected their escape, and, marching across the island, reached their intrenchment and their ships on the Essex coast. Alfred lost many of his nobles, and must have been otherwise much crippled, for he did not molest Hasting, who could have had hardly any horse in any part of his retreat. Most of the Saxons who fought at Buttington were raw levies, and hastily got together.

#### THE CAPTURE OF HASTING'S FLEET

When Hasting next showed front it was in the neighbourhood of North Wales, between the rivers Dee and Mersey. During the winter that followed his disasters on the Severn, he had been reinforced by the men of the Danelagh, and at early spring he set forth with his usual rapidity, and marched through the midland counties. Alfred was not far behind him, but could not overtake him until he had seized Chester, which was then almost uninhabited, and secured himself there. This town had been very strongly fortified by the Romans, and many of the works of those conquerors still remaining, no doubt gave strength to Hasting's position, which was deemed too formidable for attack. But the Saxon troops pressed him on the land side, and a squadron of Alfred's ships, which had put to sea, ascended the Mersey and prevented his receiving succour in that direction. Dreading that Chester might become a second Buttington, the Danes burst away into North Wales. After ravaging part of that country, they would have gone off in the direction of the Severn and the Avon, but they were met and turned by a formidable royal army, upon which they retraced their steps, and finally marched off to the northeast. They traversed Northumbria, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk—nearly the whole length of the Danelagh—where they were among friends and allies, and by that circuitous route at length regained their fortified post at South Shoebury, in Essex, where they wintered and recruited their strength as usual.

Early next spring the persevering Hasting sailed to the mouth of the Lea, ascended that river with his ships, and at or near Ware, about twenty miles above London, erected a new fortress on the Lea. On the approach of summer, the burgesses of London, with many of their neighbours, attacked the stronghold on the Lea, but were repulsed with great loss. As London was now more closely pressed than ever, Alfred found it necessary to encamp his army round about the city until the citizens got in their harvest. He then pushed

[896-897 A.D.]

a strong reconnoissance to the Lea, which (far deeper and broader than now) was covered by their ships, and afterwards surveyed, at great personal risk, the new fortified camp of the Danes. His active, ingenious mind forthwith conceived a plan, which he had confidently hoped would end in their inevitable destruction. Bringing up his army, he raised two fortresses, one on either side of the Lea, somewhat below the Danish station, and then he dug three deep channels from the Lea to the Thames, in order to lower the level of the tributary stream. So much water was thus drawn off that "where a ship," says an old writer, "might sail in time afore passed, then a little boat might scarcely row;" and the whole fleet of Hasting was left aground, and rendered useless. But yet again did that remarkable chieftain break through the toils spread for him, to renew the war in a distant part of the island. Abandoning the ships where they were, and putting, as they had been accustomed to do, their wives, their children, and their booty under the protection of their friends in the Danelagh, the followers of Hasting broke from their intrenchments by night, and hardly rested till they had traversed the whole of that wide tract of country which separates the Lea from the Severn. Marching for some distance along the left bank of the Severn, they took post close on the river at Quatbridge, supposed to be Quatford, in Shropshire. When Alfred came up with them there, he found them already strongly fortified. Alfred was compelled to respect the intrenchments at Quatbridge, and to leave the Danes there undisturbed during the winter. In the mean time the citizens of London seized Hasting's fleet, grounded in the Lea. Some ships they burned and destroyed, but others they were enabled to get afloat and conduct to London, where they were received with exceeding great joy.

For full three years this Scandinavian Hannibal had maintained a war in the country of the enemy; but now, watched on every side, worn out by constant losses, and probably in good part forsaken as an unlucky leader, both by his brethren settled in the Danelagh and by those on the Continent, his spirit began to break, and he prepared to take a reluctant and indignant farewell of England. In the following spring of 897, by which time dissensions had broken out among their leaders, the Danes tumultuously abandoned their camp at Quatbridge, and utterly disbanded their army soon after, fleeing in small and separate parties in various directions. Some sought shelter among their brethren of the Danelagh, either in Northumbria or Norfolk and Suffolk; some built vessels, and sailed for the Schelde and the mouth of the Rhine; while others, adhering to Hasting in his evil fortune, waited until he was ready to pass into France. A small fleet, bearing his drooping raven, was hastily equipped on our eastern coast, and the humbled chieftain, according to Asser, crossed the Channel "*sine lucro et sine honore*," without profit or honour. It appears that he ascended the Seine, and soon after obtained a settlement on the banks of that river (probably in Normandy) from the weak king of the French.

## ALFRED'S NAVY

A few desultory attacks made by sea, and by the men of the Danelagh, almost immediately after Hasting's departure, only tended to show the naval superiority Alfred was attaining, and to improve the Anglo-Saxons in maritime tactics. A squadron of Northumbrian pirates cruised off the southern coasts, with their old objects in view. It was met and defeated on several occasions by the improved ships of the king. Alfred, who had some mechanical

skill himself, had caused vessels to be built, far exceeding those of his enemies in length of keel, height of board, swiftness, and steadiness; some of these carried sixty oars or sweepers, to be used, as in the Roman galleys, when the wind failed; and others carried even more than sixty. They differed in the form of the hull, and probably in their rigging, from the other vessels used in the North Sea. Hitherto the Danish and Friesland builds seem to have been considered as the best models; but these ships, which were found peculiarly well adapted to the service for which he intended them, were constructed after the plan of Alfred's own invention. At the end of his reign they considerably exceeded the number of one hundred sail; they were divided into squadrons, and stationed at different ports round the island, while some of them were kept constantly cruising between England and the main. Although he abandoned their system of ship-building, Alfred retained many Frieslanders in his service, for they were more expert seamen than his subjects, who still required instruction. After an obstinate engagement near the Isle of Wight, two Danish ships, which had been much injured in the fight, were cast ashore and taken. When the crews were carried to the king at Winchester, he ordered them all to be hanged. This severity, so much at variance with Alfred's usual humanity, has caused some regret and confusion to historians. The real rule of Alfred's conduct seems to have been this—to distinguish between such Danes as attacked him from abroad, and such Danes as attacked him from the Danelagh at home. On the services and gratitude of the former he had no claim, but the men of Northumbria, Norfolk, and Sussex had, through their chiefs and princes, sworn allegiance to him, had received benefits from him, and stood bound to the protection of his states, which they were ravaging. From the situation they occupied they could constantly trouble his tranquillity, and in regard to them he may have been led to consider, after the experience he had had of their bad faith, that measures of extreme severity were allowable and indispensable. The two ships captured at the Isle of Wight came from Northumbria, and the twenty ships taken during the three remaining years of his life, and of which the crews were slain or hanged on the gallows, came from the same country, and the other English lands included in the Danelagh.<sup>c</sup>

Alfred's fleet preserved Wessex itself from anything more than a few plundering raids and soon even these ceased. At the same time the Danes of the Danelagh were compelled to observe the Peace of Chippenham, and during the last years of Alfred's life his kingdom enjoyed peace on sea and land. He died in 901.

#### THE PERSONALITY OF KING ALFRED

The glowing tribute of a modern English statesman to an early English king was pronounced by Lord Rosebery at Winchester during the celebration of the Alfred Millenary in September, 1901.<sup>a</sup>

Around King Alfred there has grown up a halo of tradition such as would dim a lesser man, though his personality stands out pure and distinct amid the legends. And yet for our purpose even the tradition is perhaps sufficient. The Alfred we reverence may well be an idealised figure, for our real knowledge of him is scanty and vague. We have, however, draped round his form, not without reason, all the highest attributes of manhood and kingship. The Arthur of our poets, the paladin king, without fear, without stain, and without reproach, is to us the true representation of Alfred. In him, indeed, we venerate not so much a striking actor in our history as the ideal Englishman,



[901 A.D.]

the perfect sovereign, the pioneer of England's greatness. With his name we associate our metropolis, our fleet, our literature, our laws, our first foreign relations, our first efforts at education. He is, in a word, the embodiment of our civilisation; and yet so narrow was his stage, so limited his opportunities, that he would have marvelled not less than the son of Jesse or the son of Kish at the primacy to which he has been called and at the secular reverence which embalms his memory. Even at his best he ruled over but a province. He made no great conquests, he wrote no great books, he knew none of the splendours of wealth and dominion, there was nothing in him of the Alexander or the Cæsar, he had none of the glories of Solomon, save wisdom alone.

What, indeed, is the secret of his fame, of his hold on the imagination of mankind? It is in the first place a question of personality. He has stamped his character on the cold annals of humanity. How is that done? We cannot tell. We know only that two homely tales of his life—the story of his mother's book and that of the neatherd's hut—have become part of our folklore. His life, too—for at one time he is hunted with the deer, as desolate as a defeated pretender, and at another he is the predominant prince in his country and one of the rare sovereigns recognised in the darkness of Europe—his life has those romantic elements which fascinate successive generations. But when all is said and done we cannot wholly explain it. The magnetism of history is an unexplored secret of nature. From another point of view we behold in his career the highest and best type of the qualities which we cherish in our national character. Note first his absorbed devotion to duty. "This will I say," he writes, "that I have sought to live worthily while I lived, and after my life to leave to the men who come after me a remembrance in good works"; and he gave himself, we are told, wholly, unreservedly, to his royal responsibilities and the charge of his people. Then he was the first Englishman of whom it is recorded that he never knew when he was beaten. Sometimes the Danes crushed him, sometimes he crushed the Danes; but he won in the end. Nor was it only with these that he had to contend. In the best twenty years of the half century that was his life he struggled against agonising disease, and the paralysing apprehension of its recurrence. That he should have done so much is wonderful; that he should have done so much under this disability is amazing. Then he had the supreme quality of truth, frankness, candour, an open heart. His word was his bond. That is a quality which was then rare among princes, and is never too common; but it is one which Englishmen love. He was known as the Truth-teller. It is a noble title, more distinguished than the vapid and prostituted epithet of Great. In history he stands as Alfred the Truth-teller. Then he was a man, a complete man. What strikes one most in him, indeed, is his completeness. Complete is, I think, his distinctive epithet. Though profoundly pious, he was no anchorite. Though a king, not a pompous and mysterious phantom. Though a passionate seeker after knowledge, not a pedant or a prig. He lived as a man among men, for he was "all things to all men" in the best sense of the word; rejoicing in the society of his scholars, his priests, his huntsmen, his craftsmen, his farmers; interested in all worthy interests, mixing freely with his subjects, working and playing among them, but with a little scroll of high thoughts always in his bosom. A man among men, dealing all day with the common affairs of life, but with the high ideal burning at his heart.

Then he was a king, a true king, the guide, the leader, the father of his people. He did for them all that in their barbarous condition they required, and in so working a limited work for them he wrought an immortal work for us. He was the captain of all their enterprise, their industrial foreman, their

schoolmaster, their lay bishop, their general, their admiral, their legislator. On a small scale and therefore less, but without distorting vices and therefore greater, he was to his English kingdom what Peter was to Russia. And in working for his people, raising them, strengthening them, enlarging their horizons, he builded better than he knew. His rude councillors were the ancestors of our parliament, his flotilla of galleys was the foundation of our fleet; he first won an English victory at sea. He formed his casual levies into a powerful militia, if not an army. He breathed the earliest inspiration of education into England, an inspiration vital then, which would be scarcely less precious now. And he, with an eye for commerce and defence, gave us London, not as the first or the second founder, but as founder of the London which we know. It is indeed less for what he did, great as were his achievements in relation to his opportunities, than for what he engendered that we honour his name.<sup>n</sup>

Interesting also is the clear and judicious characterisation of the great Anglo-Saxon king from the pen of his biographer, the eminent German historical scholar, Reinhold Pauli.<sup>a</sup>

### *Pauli's Characterisation of Alfred*

The qualities of his mind were those of a statesman and a hero, but elevated, and, at the same time, softened, by his ardent longing for higher and more imperishable things than those on which all the splendour and power of this world generally rest. The most unshakable courage was most certainly the first component of his being; he showed it, while still a youth, in the tumult of the battle of Ascesdune. There was one period when his courage seemed about to desert him. This was when the young king imagined that he saw his country forever in the hands of the foe, and his people doomed to never-ending despair; but from the ordeal of Athelney he came out proved and victorious, and a large number of brave men rivalled each other in imitating his example.

We have already had occasion several times, in the course of this work, to notice another peculiarity of Alfred's mind that was attended with no less gratifying results; he possessed a decided turn for invention, which enabled him not only to extricate himself from personal difficulties, but to suggest new and original ideas in the execution of all sorts of artistic productions and handiwork. The pillars on which the church at Athelney was built, the long ships he constructed, the manner in which he turned a river from its natural course, and his clock of tapers, afford us as convincing evidence of his powers of thought as the battles which he gained.

Elevated by his piety above all his subjects and contemporaries, no one could be farther than he was from becoming a weak bigot, willingly bending beneath the yoke of an arrogant priesthood; and, while immersed in the fulfilment of his religious duties, forgetting the prosperity of worldly affairs, as well as that of his subjects. He was well aware that the country had suffered from the too yielding disposition of his father to the will of the higher ecclesiastics. It is impossible to draw a parallel between Alfred and his descendant, Edward the Confessor. The latter lost his kingdom, and was made a saint; the former kept it by the aid of his sword and a firm reliance on the Almighty. The church of Rome, it is true, did not thank him for this; but he lived, through his works, in the hearts of his people, who celebrated his praises in their songs.<sup>m</sup>

[901-911 A.D.]

## EADWARD THE ELDER

The succession of Eadward was opposed by his cousin Æthelwold, who claimed the crown as the representative of Æthelred, the elder brother of the late monarch. His pretensions were overruled by the decision of the witenagemot, and the discontented prince, apparently under pretence of recovering the hereditary patrimony of his father, assembled his retainers, and occupied the castles of Christchurch and Wimborne. In the latter place he forcibly married a nun out of the convent, and announced his resolution never to surrender the fortress but with his life. The approach of Eadward to Badbury suggested a less hazardous policy. He retired in secrecy, and reached the northern Danes, who pitying his misfortunes, or admiring his spirit, gave him the title of king, and hastened to fight under his banner. In a short time the exile saw himself at the head of an army of adventurers from Northumbria, East Anglia, and France (904). With these he landed in Essex, and obtained possession of that county. The next year he marched through Mercia, crossed the Thames at Cricklade, and pillaged the greater part of Wiltshire. But at the approach of Eadward he retired; and the West Saxons in their turn retaliated on the Danes the injuries which they had inflicted on Mercia and Wessex. From St. Edmund's dyke, in Cambridgeshire, they spread the flames of war to the mouth of the Ouse; and crossing that river, continued in the fenny country the work of devastation. At last Eadward thought proper to withdraw his army.<sup>e</sup>

His Kentish troops which formed his rearguard were surprised and attacked by Æthelwold and the Danes. But although severely defeated, their loss was compensated by the death of Eohric, king of East Anglia, and the ætheling Æthelwold, who fell in the attack.<sup>a</sup>

From this period the king's attention was principally directed to two great objects, the union of Mercia with his own dominions, and the subjugation of the Northumbrian and East Anglian Danes. For a few years the government of Mercia, during the frequent infirmities of Æthelred, was intrusted to the hands of Æthelflæd, a princess whose masculine virtues and martial exploits are celebrated in the highest strains of panegyric by our ancient historians. At the death of her husband, Eadward seized and united to Wessex the two important cities of London and Oxford; nor does Æthelflæd appear to have resented this partition of her territory. She continued to govern the remainder with the title of the Lady of Mercia, and cordially supported her brother in all his operations against the common enemy. But that respect which Eadward had paid to the merit of his sister, he refused to the weakness of his niece Ælfwyn. When Æthelflæd died in 920, he pretended that the young princess had promised marriage to Regnald the Dane, and entering Mercia at the head of his army, sent her an honourable captive into Wessex, abolished every trace of a separate government, and moulded the whole of the Saxon territories into one undivided kingdom.

Had the Danes in England been united under the same monarch, they would probably have been more than a match for the whole power of Eadward; but they still preserved the manners and spirit of their ancestors, and diminished their national strength by dividing it among a number of equal and independent chieftains. After the death of Æthelwold five years elapsed without any important act of hostility; in 910 Eadward conducted his forces into Northumbria, and spent five weeks in ravaging the country and collecting slaves and plunder. The next year the Northmen returned the visit. They



penetrated to the Avon, and thence into Gloucestershire; but in their retreat were overtaken by the Saxons, and suffered a defeat, which was long a favourite subject among the national poets. Eadward now adopted the plan, which had been so successfully pursued by his father, of building fortresses for the defence of his dominions and the annoyance of the enemy. A line drawn from the mouth of the Thames, through Bedfordshire, to Chester, will pretty accurately describe the boundary which separated the hostile nations. To curb the East Anglians, the king built Witham and Hertford; while Æthelflæd, at his suggestion, erected similar fortresses at Bridgenorth, Tamworth, Stafford, Warwick, and other places in the vicinity. Their utility was soon demonstrated in the failure of a Danish expedition from the coast of Brittany. After ravaging the shores of Wales, the barbarians attempted to penetrate into Herefordshire. They were opposed by the inhabitants of the neighbouring burghs, driven into a wood, and compelled to give hostages as a security for their peaceable departure. Eadward was, however, suspicious of their honour, and lined the northern coast of Somersetshire with troops. As he expected, they made two attempts to land in the night at Watchet and at Porlock, and were defeated at both places with considerable slaughter. The survivors fled to one of the uninhabited isles in the mouth of the Severn, but want compelled them to abandon their asylum, and seek new adventures in Wales and Ireland.

The royal brother and sister, having thus provided for the security of their own territories, proceeded to attack those of their enemies. Æthelflæd took Derby by storm, though the Danes obstinately defended themselves in the streets; and then laid siege to Leicester, which, with the adjacent territory, was subdued by her arms. Eadward, on his side, built two forts at Buckingham to overawe the Northmen of the adjoining counties (919), took Bedford by capitulation, and, advancing into Northamptonshire, fortified Towcester. The Danes, alarmed at the progressive encroachments of the Saxons, made in the same year four attempts to obtain possession of the nearest fortresses. One party occupied Tempsford, and besieged Bedford; another stormed the walls of Towcester; a third attacked Wigmore, and a fourth surrounded Malden. In each instance the garrisons defended themselves till the royal army came to their assistance; and Eadward, eager to improve his success, took possession of Huntingdon and Colchester. The Danes were dispirited by so many losses; and all their chieftains from the Welland, in Northamptonshire, to the mouth of the Thames, submitted to the conqueror, took the oaths of allegiance, and acknowledged him for their "lord and protector."

During the next three years the king with unceasing industry pursued the same line of policy. He successively carried his arms to every part of the ancient boundary of Mercia; erected fortresses at Manchester, at Thelwall, on the left bank of the Mersey, at Nottingham, and at Stamford; and by the severity with which he punished every outbreak, tamed into submission the several bands of barbarians who had settled in the island. By these conquests Eadward acquired more real power than had ever been possessed by his predecessors. All the tribes from Northumbria to the Channel formed but one kingdom subject to his immediate control; while the other nations in the island, warned by the fate of their neighbours, anxiously solicited his friendship. The Danes and Angles of the north made him offers of submission; the kings of the Scots and Strathelyde Britons chose him for their "lord and father"; and the princes of Wales paid him a yearly tribute. Yet he was not long permitted to enjoy this preeminence. He died in 925, and his death was immediately followed by that of his eldest son, Ælfward, at Oxford.

[911-925 A.D.]

Eadward had been thrice married, and left a numerous family. Of the sons who survived him, three successively ascended the throne, Æthelstan, Eadmund, and Eadred. Six of his daughters were married to foreign princes, some of them the most powerful sovereigns in Europe; and three embraced a religious life.

In legislative and literary merit Eadward was much inferior to his father: he surpassed him in the magnitude and the durability of his conquests. The subjection of the Danes to Alfred was only nominal; and at his death the kingdom, which he left to his son, was bounded by the Mercian counties on the banks of the Thames and the Severn. Eadward, by steadily pursuing the same object, and insuring the submission of each district before he proceeded to further conquests, extended his rule all over the Danes of Mercia and East Anglia. Wherever he penetrated, he selected a strong position, and while a multitude of workmen surrounded it with a wall of stone, encamped in the neighbourhood for their protection. That these fortifications were equal to their object is evident from the fact that not one of them was ever captured by the enemy; and they were productive, in after ages, of consequences which this monarch could not possibly have foreseen. They were long the principal towns in England, and served to multiply a class of men of a higher order and distinguished by greater privileges than the serfs or husbandmen. To the burghers was intrusted the defence of their walls and of the adjacent country. By living in society, and having arms in their hands, they grew into consideration, and insensibly acquired such a degree of power and wealth as ultimately to open to their representatives the national council, and thus lay the foundation of that influence which the people enjoy in our present constitution.

#### ÆTHELSTAN

By the will of the late monarch the crown was left to Æthelstan, his eldest son, about thirty years of age. The claim of the new king was immediately admitted by the thanes of Mercia (925), and after a short time by those of Wessex. The ceremony of his coronation was performed at Kingston by Æthelm, archbishop of Canterbury.

Of the mother of Æthelstan, Malmesbury<sup>h</sup> has told a romantic tale, on the faith of an ancient ballad. She was the daughter of a neatherd, and called Egwina. Her superior beauty, even in her childhood, had attracted admiration: and a dream was said to portend that she would prove the mother of a powerful monarch. This report excited the curiosity of the lady who had nursed the children of Alfred. She took Egwina to her house, and educated her as one of her own family. When the ætheling Eadward casually visited his former nurse, he saw the daughter of the neatherd, and was captivated with her beauty. Æthelstan was the fruit of their mutual affection. From this very doubtful story it has been inferred that the king was an illegitimate son: but the force of the inference is weakened by the testimony of a contemporary poetess, who in mentioning the birth of Æthelstan, alludes to the inferior descent of his mother, but at the same time calls her the partner of Eadward's throne. The child was the delight of his grandfather Alfred, who created him a knight by investing him with a mantle of purple, and a short sword in a golden scabbard. After the death of his mother he was intrusted to the care of his aunt Æthelflæd, a fortunate circumstance, as it probably caused his interests to be, at this period, so eagerly espoused by the natives of Mercia.

In Wessex Æthelstan had to guard against the secret designs of his enemies, of whom the most dangerous was the ætheling Ælfred. The associates of this prince had conspired to seize the person of the king at Winchester, and to deprive him of his sight. On the discovery of the plot Ælfred demanded, according to the forms of the Saxon jurisprudence, to clear himself by oath; and Æthelstan, who dared not refuse the privilege, sent him to Rome in the custody of his messengers, to perform the ceremony in the presence of the pontiff. The unfortunate ætheling swore to his innocence on the altar of St. Peter. But as he survived his oath only three days, his death was considered a sufficient proof of his guilt by the witan, who adjudged his estates to the king.

Sihtric, the Danish king of Northumbria, had braved the power of Eadward: he solicited the friendship of Æthelstan, and with it his sister in marriage. The two princes met at Tamworth. Sihtric was baptised, received the hand of Æthelstan's sister, and accepted from Æthelstan a grant of what he already possessed, the country between the Tees and the Firth of Forth. It is said that the barbarian soon repented of his choice, and abandoned both his wife and religion: it is certain that he died at the end of twelve months, and that Æthelstan seized the opportunity to annex Northumbria to his own dominions. The two sons of Sihtric fled before the superior power of the Anglo-Saxon; Godfrith into Scotland, and Olaf [Anlaf] into Ireland. Olaf had the good fortune to meet with friends and associates: but Constantine, the king of the Scots, dared not afford an asylum to the enemy of Æthelstan; and Godfrith, after a fruitless attempt to surprise the city



ÆTHELSTAN  
(895-940)

of York, voluntarily surrendered himself to the mercy of the conqueror. He was received with humanity and treated with honour: but the mind of the Dane could not brook the idea of dependence, and on the fourth day he fled to the coast, and commenced the profession of a sea-king.

The ambition of Æthelstan now grasped at the sovereignty of the whole island. In the north he levelled with the ground the castle of York, the principal bulwark of the Danish power; Ealdred, the son of Ealdulf, a Saxon chieftain, was compelled to yield to him the strong castle of Bamborough; and the king of Scots and the prince of Cumberland obeyed his summons and acknowledged his superiority. On the west he intimidated the Britons of Wales and Cornwall. The chieftains of the former waited on him at Hereford, where they stipulated to confine their countrymen to the right bank of the Wye, and to pay a yearly tribute of twenty pounds of gold, three hundred pounds of silver, and five thousand head of cattle. The Cornish Britons had hitherto reached from the Land's End to the river Exe, and possessed one-half of Exeter. He commanded them to retire beyond the Tamar, and surrounded the city with a strong wall of stone. To confirm his claim of sovereignty, he convened at a place called Eadmote all the princes of the Scots, Cambrians, and Britons, who, placing their hands between his, swore to him that fealty which the Saxon vassal was accustomed to swear to his lord.



[934-937 A.D.]

During this tide of success, and when Æthelstan had just reached the zenith of his power, Eadwine, the eldest of his brothers, perished at sea. The traditional ballads, consulted by Malmesbury, attribute his death to the jealousy of the king, who, convinced of his own illegitimacy, suspected Eadwine of aspiring to that crown which belonged to him by the right of inheritance. It was in vain that the young prince asserted his innocence upon oath; and when his oath was disregarded, threw himself on the affection of his brother. The tyrant thought his own safety incompatible with the life of Eadwine; and, while he affected lenity by commuting the sentence of death into that of banishment, committed his victim to the mercy of the waves in an open and shattered boat, with only one companion. The prince, in despair, leaped into the sea; his attendant coolly waited for the flow of the tide, and was wafted back to the shore in the neighbourhood of Dover. Such is the tale which Malmesbury<sup>b</sup> has preserved, but of which he does not presume to affirm or deny the truth. It seems not to deserve credit. No trace of it is to be discovered in the contemporary biographer of Æthelstan, and in the poem from which it was extracted it was coupled with another tale evidently fabulous. That Eadwine perished at sea, cannot be doubted; but the king appears rather to have deplored his death as a calamity than to have regretted it as a crime. The account of Huntingdon<sup>z</sup> contains all that can now be known of the transaction: "Soon afterwards he had the misfortune to lose in the waves of the ocean his brother Eadwine, a youth of great vigour and good disposition."<sup>1</sup>

Constantine, the king of Scots, eagerly sought to free himself from his dependence on the English monarch; and with this view entered into alliance with Howel, king of Wales. But the power of Æthelstan was irresistible. At the head of his army he extended his ravages as far as Dunfördor and Wextermore, while his fleet pillaged the coast to the extremity of Caithness. Constantine was compelled to implore the clemency of the conqueror, and to surrender his son as a hostage for his fidelity.

Three years afterwards the superiority of the English king was threatened by a more formidable confederacy. In 937 a fleet of six hundred and fifteen sail cast anchor in the Humber. It obeyed the commands of Olaf, who was come with an army of Irish and northern adventurers to reconquer the dominions of his father. His arrival was the signal of war to his confederates, the Scots and Britons, who under their respective princes directed their march to the same spot. Negotiations were opened to gain time for the arrival of Æthelstan, who, not content with his own forces, had purchased the aid of several sea-kings. The armies were soon in the neighbourhood of each other, when Olaf planned a midnight attack, in the hope of surprising and killing his adversary. To discover the quarters of Æthelstan, he is said to have adopted an artifice familiar to the Northmen. The minstrel was in that age a sacred character: and Olaf with his harp in his hands fearlessly entered the English camp, mixed without suspicion among the troops, and was at last conducted to the royal pavilion. The king, who was at dinner, bade the stranger strike his harp, and rewarded him for his song. But the disguise of the pretended minstrel could not conceal him from the eye of a soldier who had once served under his standard, but who disdained to betray his former leader. As soon as Olaf was out of danger, this man related the circumstance to Æthelstan, and to the charge of perfidy, indignantly replied:

[<sup>1</sup> Knight says: "The monkish romancers told a similar story of the wife of Offa; and the same interesting fable will always speak to the heart in the Custance of Chaucer and the Prospero of Shakspeare."]

"No; I have shown that my honour is above temptation; and remember that if I had been perfidious to him, I might also have proved perfidious to you." The king accepted the apology, and by his advice removed to a distant part of the field. The ground which he had left was afterwards occupied by the bishop of Sherborne. In the dead of the night the alarm was given: Olaf with a body of chosen followers was in the midst of the camp, and a bloody and doubtful conflict ensued. In the morning, when he retired, it was discovered that the prelate had perished with all his attendants.<sup>1</sup>

### *The Battle of Brunanburh (937 A.D.)*

Two days after this occurrence was fought the battle of Brunanburh [937], in Northumbria;<sup>2</sup> a battle celebrated in the relics of Saxon and Scandinavian poetry. The confederates consisted of five nations, Norwegians, Danes, Irish, Scots, and Britons; in the English army waved a hundred banners, and round each banner, if we may believe the exaggeration of a contemporary, were ranged a thousand warriors. The contest lasted till sunset. A northern sea-king, in the pay of Æthelstan, was opposed to the Irish, and after an obstinate struggle drove them into a wood at no great distance. Thureytel with the citizens of London, and Singin with the men of Worcestershire, penetrated into the midst of the Scots, killed the son of their king, and compelled Constantine to save himself by a precipitate flight. Olaf still maintained his position against all the efforts of Æthelstan and his West Saxons; but the victors, returning from the pursuit, fell on his rear, and decided the fortune of battle. The Northman escaped the sword of his enemies; but he left five confederate sea-kings, seven jarls, and many thousands of his followers on the field of battle. "Never," says the native poet, "since the arrival of the Saxons and Angles, those artists of war, was such a carnage known in England."

This splendid victory crushed the enemies, and confirmed the ascendancy of Æthelstan. By the Northmen he was distinguished with the appellation of "the conqueror." The British princes no longer disputed his authority; the chieftains of the East Anglian and Northumbrian Danes, who under a nominal vassalage had so often maintained a real independence, entirely disappeared; and all the countries originally conquered and colonised by the different Saxon tribes became united under the same Crown. To Æthelstan belongs the glory of having established what has ever since been called the kingdom of England. His predecessors, till the reign of Alfred, had been styled kings of Wessex. That monarch and his son Eadward assumed the title of kings of the Anglo-Saxons. Æthelstan sometimes called himself king of the English; at other times claimed the more pompous designation of king of all Britain.<sup>e</sup>

The power which Æthelstan had won by his sword gave him European influence, at a time which we are little accustomed to consider as one of international amity. When the Normans expelled the Duke of Brittany from his dominions, Æthelstan welcomed and educated his son Alan; who finally

[<sup>1</sup>The similarity of this exploit of Olaf with that of Alfred before the battle of Ethandune will at once be suggested. Ramsay<sup>1</sup> disposes of the story without mentioning it. He says: "Bishop Werstan of Sherborne was said to have fallen a victim to his own imprudence in pitching his camp before the action on a spot condemned by the king as too much exposed to attack."]

[<sup>2</sup>The site of Brunanburh is doubtful. Skene,<sup>v</sup> in his *Celtic Scotland*, places it at Aldborough. Ramsay,<sup>l</sup> to whom we are indebted for solving many problems of locality, is satisfied that the battle was fought at Bourne (anciently Brunne) in Lincolnshire.]

[925-940 A.D.]

drove out the Normans with the Saxon's aid. Hakon, the son of the king of Norway, was also welcomed and educated in England, and was assisted by Æthelstan in obtaining his throne. Louis IV of France, in his earlier years, had sought refuge with his maternal uncle, Æthelstan, and hence he was called *D'outre Mer*, "from beyond the sea," during the usurpation of Rudolf. Summoned to the throne from his English exile, he was finally protected in his dominion by the English king. The states of France sent deputies to Æthelstan, on the death of Rudolf, who took the oath of allegiance to Louis in the presence of Æthelstan and his queen; and when the rule of the young Frank was disturbed by his great vassals, another treaty of alliance between the countries was entered into. Daniel, the French historian, has this comment on the event: "This is the first example which we have in our history, not only of an offensive league between France and England, but it is also the first treaty by which these two kingdoms concerned themselves about each other's welfare. Until this event the two nations considered themselves as two worlds, which had no connection but that of commerce to maintain, and had no interest to cultivate either friendship or enmity in other concerns." Æthelstan had a difficult policy to pursue. Hugh, who married Æthelstan's sister, Eadgitha (then dead), was one of the great vassals who was opposed to Louis IV; and the German king, Otto, who had married Eadgyth, another sister, had invaded the French dominions. But Æthelstan held firmly to the interests of his nephew. The position of England and France at this period was certainly a memorable one. The continental alliances of Æthelstan, and especially the marriages of his sisters, are indications of a genius for statecraft, such as we scarcely expect in those times. In the personal character of the Saxon we trace "the pride of kings," and the barbaric pomp of self-asserting power. The kings who sought his alliance approached him with presents, such as would propitiate his love of magnificent display. Norway sent him a ship with golden beak, and purple sail, and gilded shields. Hugh, the great duke of the Franks, demanded his sister in marriage, with "presents such as might gratify the most boundless avarice"—perfumes, jewels, diadems, caparisoned horses, the sword of Constantine the Great, and the spear of Charlemagne.<sup>d</sup>

In the year 940, October 27th, Æthelstan died, regretted by his subjects and admired by the surrounding nations. He was of a slender habit and middling stature. His hair, which was yellow, he wore in ringlets entwined with thread of gold. Among the higher orders of the nobility he maintained that reserve which became his superior station; to the lower classes of his subjects he was affable and condescending. From his father he had inherited a considerable treasure; but his liberality was not inferior to his opulence, and the principal use which he made of money was to enrich others. To his vassals he was accustomed to make valuable presents; the spoil collected in his military expeditions was always divided among his followers; and his munificence to the clergy was proved by the churches which he erected or repaired. Neither ought his charities to be left unnoticed. He annually redeemed at his private expense a certain number of convicts, who had forfeited their liberty for their crimes; and his bailiffs were ordered, under severe penalties, to support a pauper of English extraction on every two of his farms. As a legislator he was anxious to suppress offences, to secure an impartial administration of justice, and to preserve the standard coin of the realm in a state of purity. With this view he held assemblies of the witan at Grately, Faversham, Exeter, and Thundersfield: associations were formed under his auspices for the protection of property; and regulations were enacted respect-



ing the apprehension, the trial, and the punishment of malefactors. Negligence in the execution of the laws was severely chastised. A thane paid to the crown a fine of sixty shillings; a superior magistrate was amerced in double that sum, with the forfeiture of his office.<sup>e</sup>

## DUNSTAN

At the court of Æthelstan was a precocious youth of a noble race, who had been educated at the monastery of Glastonbury. His acquirements were far above those of his time, and he made pretensions to supernatural communications. His musical skill, and his other various accomplishments, rendered him a favourite, but his boasted visions, and his superior talents and knowledge, caused him to be regarded as a sorcerer. This youth was Dunstan, for thirty years the real governor of England. Driven from the favour of Æthelstan, under the rude belief which denounced arts called mag-



DEERHURST CHURCH, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

(Dating from eighth or ninth century.)

ical as the greatest of crimes, he was forced into another mode of life. The seductions of the court were to be exchanged for the severities of the cloister. The contest was a hard one; Dunstan was passionately in love with a maiden suited to him in rank. His uncle Æthelm was archbishop of Canterbury; and to him the attachment was confided. The stern prelate saw that the great talents of his relative would open a career of ambition to him, by which the Church would be powerfully upheld. The dictates of our common nature were represented as unholy feelings. Threats and blandishments were opposed to the strong will of the young man, who could only see misery in the monastic system. Illness came; and the enfeebled mind was bowed to submission. Then Dunstan renounced the world in the monkish sense of renunciation. But he was bent upon subduing the world far more completely by the cowl than by the spear. In the ardour which some call insanity, and others genius, he spurned the tame privations of the ordinary cell; and by the side of the

[940-942 A.D.]

church of Glastonbury he lived in a wretched hut, or cave, in which he could not stand upright. As his groans under the self-inflicted scourge broke the midnight silence, the rumour went forth that he was struggling with the evil one. The saintly monk soon had votaries. A noble lady poured her fortune into his lap. Crowds came to gaze upon him when he emerged from his den to do the service of the altar. His harp sometimes sounded in the intervals of his prayers and penances; and the tap of his hammer at his forge showed that he was engaged in some smith's work of utility or ornament. Out of that miserable hut came the sagacious ruler of two kings, and the tyrannous oppressor of a third. Under Eadmund, Dunstan was simple abbot of Glastonbury. It was a proud step over the heads of his brethren, who held their easy way, untempted by any fiend, and not at all covetous of saintly honours through bodily mortifications. But the abbot of Glastonbury, with all his chartered power, "as well in causes known as unknown, in small as in great, and even in those which are above and under the earth, on dry land and on the water, on woods and on plains";<sup>1</sup> this abbot was a humble man, compared with the greatness to which a boundless ambition might aspire. The narrative of his career is, for some time, the history of England.<sup>d</sup>

## EADMUND

Northumbria, after the extinction of its native kings, continued to present scenes of anarchy and bloodshed. Its chieftains were partly of Saxon, partly of Danish origin. Sometimes a fortunate adventurer extended his authority over the whole nation: sometimes two or more shared the sovereign power among them. But they were no better than flitting shadows of royalty, following each other in rapid succession. After a year or two many of them perished by the treachery of their friends or the swords of their enemies; many were compelled to abandon the country, and revert to the pursuits of piracy; hardly one transmitted the inheritance of his authority to his children.

Occasionally necessity extorted from them an acknowledgment of the superiority claimed by the kings of Wessex: but the moment the danger was removed, they uniformly forgot their oaths, and resumed the exercise of their independence. It seems to have mattered little whether these princes were natives or foreigners.

After the battle of Brunanburh the terror of Æthelstan had kept this turbulent people under some restraint: but at his death their ancient spirit revived; Olaf was invited to hazard a third time the fortune of war; and within a few weeks the Humber was covered by a numerous fleet of foreign adventurers. The sea-king rested his hope of success on the rapidity of his motions, and, marching into Mercia, obtained possession of Tamworth. Eadmund, the brother of Æthelstan, about eighteen years of age, had been crowned at Kingston, and hastened to oppose the invaders. The operations of the campaign are involved in much obscurity. The success which attended the first efforts of Eadmund seem to have been balanced by a subsequent defeat; and the respective losses of the two princes induced them to listen to the suggestions of the archbishops Odo and Wulfstan, who laboured to effect a pacification. The vanity of the chroniclers has exhibited the transaction in partial colours: but the conditions of the treaty prove the superiority of Olaf. Eadmund ceded in full sovereignty to the Dane all the provinces on the north of the Watling Street.

[<sup>1</sup> These words are in the charter to Dunstan, as given in William of Malmesbury.<sup>h</sup>]

The sea-king did not long enjoy his good fortune. He died the next year, and Eadmund improved the opportunity to recover the dominions which he had lost. His measures were planned with foresight, and executed with vigour. The "Five Burghs," as they were called, of Derby, Leicester, Nottingham, Stamford, and Lincoln, had long been inhabited by the descendants of Danes, who, though they made a profession of obedience to the English monarchs, considered it a duty to favour the enterprises of their kinsmen. These towns formed as it were a chain of fortresses running through Mercia and garrisoned by enemies. The king began his operations by reducing them in succession. Their inhabitants were expelled, and replaced by English colonies. Eadmund next proceeded into Northumbria. That country was already divided between two princes, one of whom, like his predecessor, was called Olaf; the other styled himself Reingwald, king of York. They submitted without resistance to the superior power of Eadmund, acknowledged themselves his vassals, and embraced Christianity (943). The king stood sponsor to Olaf at his baptism, and adopted Reingwald for a son when he received confirmation. Yet he had hardly left the country, when they again asserted their independence. Their perfidy soon met with its punishment. The archbishop of York and the ealdorman of Mercia united their forces and drove the two rebels out of the country.

A sense of their own danger had hitherto taught the Britons of Cumbria to assist their neighbours in these struggles to maintain their independence. It was against them that Eadmund next directed his arms (945). Every effort which they could make was hopeless: the two sons of Donald (Domnail), their king, fell into the hands of the conqueror, and were deprived of sight, and the country was bestowed on Malcolm (Mailcolum), king of Scots, on the condition that he should become the vassal of the English crown, and should unite with Eadmund in opposing the attempts of the sea-kings.

The reign of Eadmund lasted only six years. He was celebrating at Pucklechurch in Gloucestershire the feast of St. Augustine, the apostle of the Saxons, when he perceived Leofa, a noted outlaw, enter the hall. This man had been banished on account of his crimes some years before, and now had the audacity to seat himself at the royal table, and to offer resistance when the cup-bearer ordered him to depart. Passion hurried Eadmund to the spot, where he received a wound in the breast from a dagger which Leofa had concealed under his clothes. The king immediately expired: the assassin was cut in pieces by the royal attendants.

Eadmund had been married to Ælfgifu, a princess of exemplary virtue, whose solicitude for the relief of the indigent, and charity in purchasing the liberty of slaves, have been highly extolled by our ancient writers.<sup>1</sup> She bore him two sons, Eadwig and Eadgar, of whom the eldest could not be more than nine years of age. Their childhood rendered them incapable of directing the government; and in an assembly of the prelates, thanes, and vassal princes of Wales, their uncle Eadred, the only surviving son of Eadward, was chosen king; and, to use the inflated language of a charter given on the occasion, was "consecrated at Kingston to the quadripartite government of the Anglo-Saxons, Northumbrians, pagans, and Britons."

<sup>1</sup> Ælfgifu has been sometimes said to have been only the king's mistress, because in a charter she calls herself *concubina regis*. But *concubina* in the Latin of that age had the same meaning as *conlaterana* and *consors*. Most certainly the king's mistress would not be called upon to sign his charters. By the chroniclers she is styled "the holy queen," and Æthelweard, who could not be ignorant, terms her Eadmund's wife and queen.



[940-955 A.D.]

## EADRED

The reign of Eadred was principally distinguished by the final subjugation of Northumbria. Immediately after his coronation,<sup>1</sup> he proceeded to that country, and received first from the natives, afterwards from the Scots, and lastly from the Cumbrians, the usual oaths of fidelity. But the obedience of the Northumbrians lasted only as long as they were overawed by his presence: he was no sooner departed than they expelled his officers and set his authority at defiance. Eric, who had been driven from Norway by his brother Hakon, and had wandered for years a pirate on the ocean, landed on their coast, and was immediately saluted king. The news excited the indignation of Eadred. His first object was to secure the city of York; and with that view he despatched his chancellor Thureytel to Archbishop Wulfstan, to confirm the wavering fidelity of that prelate and the citizens. The king soon afterwards entered Northumbria at the head of the men of Wessex and Mercia, and by ravaging the lands severely punished the perfidy of the rebels. But as he led back his followers, laden with pillage and unsuspecting of danger, the gates of York were thrown open in the night; a chosen band of adventurers silently followed his march; and a division of his army was surprised and destroyed. To avenge this insult he resumed the work of devastation: but his anger was appeased by presents, entreaties, and submission: and he returned in triumph with a long train of captives to London. Eric might still perhaps have maintained himself in the country, had he not been opposed by a new competitor, Olaf, one of the princes who had fled from the sword of Eadmund in the last reign. The two rivals assembled their forces: Olaf was victorious; and the Norwegian with his son and brother perished in the wilds of Stainmoor by the treachery of Osulf and the sword of Maceo, the son of Olaf.

This was the last struggle of Northumbrian independence. Eadred returned with a numerous army, and traversed the country without opposition. Large and fertile districts were laid desolate; the archbishop, whose conduct had greatly irritated the king, was immured for a year within the castle of Jedburgh (Judanbyrig); the principal noblemen were torn from their dependants, and carried by the king into captivity; the whole province, like the rest of England, was divided into shires, ridings, and wapentakes; and the government was intrusted to a number of officers appointed by Eadred under the superintendence of Osulf, who took the title of Earl of Northumberland.

Eadred was afflicted with a lingering and painful disease; and much of the merit of his reign must be attributed to the counsels of his favourite ministers, his chancellor, Thureytel, and Dunstan, abbot of Glastonbury. Thureytel was a clergyman of royal descent, the eldest son of Æthelweard, and the grandson of Alfred. He had refused preferment in the Church, but accepted and retained the office of chancellor or secretary to the king, under his cousins, Æthelstan, Eadmund, and Eadred. His abilities were honoured with the approbation of the prince and the applause of the people. He held the first place in the royal councils; the most important offices, both civil and ecclesiastical, were conferred by his advice; and his attendance on the sovereign

[Green *k* says: "The crowning of Eadred, indeed, was a fresh step forward toward a national kingship. His election was the first national election, the first election by a witenagemot, where Briton and Dane and Englishmen were alike represented, where Welsh underkings and Danish jarls sat side by side with English nobles and bishops. His coronation was in the same way the first national coronation, the first union of the primate of the north and the primate of the south in setting the crown on the head of one who was to rule from the Forth to the Channel."]

was required in every military expedition. The important part which he acted in the battle of Brunanburh has been already noticed.<sup>e</sup>

[Eadred, who was never married and left no issue, died after a reign of almost ten years, in 955.]

#### EADWIG THE FAIR,<sup>1</sup> EADGAR, AND EADWARD THE MARTYR

Eadwig (Edwy), called the Fair, succeeded to the crown of his uncle by the voice of the witan. The boy-king, who was sixteen or at most eighteen years of age at his accession, has been stigmatised by the monastic writers as the most weak, profligate, and tyrannous of unwise rulers. Henry of Huntingdon,<sup>2</sup> supported by others who had not the prejudices of the cloister,

says: "This king wore the diadem not unworthily; but after a prosperous and becoming commencement of his reign its happy promise was cut short by a premature death." In the destruction of that happy promise, and in that premature death, we have a tragedy over which many eyes have wept. The participation of Dunstan in that tragedy has made his name hateful to all by whom the piteous tale of "Eadwig and Ælfgifu (Elgiva)" has been received with undoubting faith. Disputed as the popular belief has been by polemical writers, the poetical aspect of the story will always supersede the fanatical. The one is natural and consistent; the other is unnatural and disingenuous. Nor is the evidence, taken altogether, insufficient to rebut the calumnies with which the lives of these poor victims of an unscrupulous policy have been overshadowed. We have carefully examined that evidence, and we shall tell the story as we collect it out of many contradictory narratives, most of them defiled by



EADWIG

From an ancient coin.  
(Ca 935-959.)

the prurient scandals of those who, in blackening Eadwig and his beloved one, endeavour to justify their oppressors.

The coronation of the young king followed quickly after his accession. His witan had taken the oath of allegiance to him, and before the altar he had himself taken the oath to his subjects. The coronation feast succeeds. The king sits at the banquet surrounded by timid friends and suspicious enemies. He has taken the oath that he will hold God's church, and all the Christian people of his realm, in true peace. But at that banquet there are ministers of God's church who bear towards each other the most deadly hostility. "He despised the advice of his counsellors," says Malmesbury.<sup>h</sup> The counsellors that he found in possession of power were Dunstan and his friends, the leaders

[<sup>1</sup> "In dealing with this unfortunate reign," writes Ramsay,<sup>l</sup> "the historian finds himself confronted not so much by conflicting evidence, as by one-sided evidence obviously tainted by party spirit. The king was involved at the very outset in a quarrel in which the leading clergy were arrayed against him. The chroniclers are practically all on the side of the clergy, and they spare no pains to blacken their adversary."]

[955-958 A.D.]

of one great party. Eadwig, who is accused with having considered Eadred a usurper, fell into the hands of the leaders of another party. At this coronation feast the king retired early. As was the invariable custom at these Saxon banquets, there was excessive use of wine, and the passions of men were proportionately excited. The assembly murmured, with some reason, at the absence of the king. Dunstan and another went forth; and bursting into Eadwig's private chamber, found him in the company of Ælfgifu and her mother Æthelgifu. The abbot seized the youth and forcibly dragged him back to the hall.<sup>d</sup>

Such an outrage—such a humiliation in the face of his assembled subjects—must have passed Eadwig's endurance. Nor was this all the wrong. While in the chamber, Dunstan addressed Ælfgifu and her mother in the most brutal language, and threatened the latter with infamy and the gallows. The king had a ready rod wherewith to scourge the monk. Dunstan, among other offices, filled that of treasurer to Eadred, the preceding sovereign, and Eadwig, it is said, had all along suspected him of having been guilty of peculation in his charge. If Eadwig had ever whispered these suspicions—and from his youth, imprudence, and hastiness of temper, he had probably done so often—this alone would account for Dunstan's ire. However this may be, the fiery abbot of Glastonbury, who returned from the festival to his abbey, was now questioned touching the moneys; his property was sequestered; his court places were taken from him; the monks who professed celibacy were driven out, and his monastery was given to the secular clergy, who still insisted on having wives like other men; and finally a sentence of banishment was hurled at Dunstan. He fled for the monastery of St. Peter's, in Ghent, but was scarcely three miles from the shore, on his way to Flanders, when messengers reached it, who, it is said, had orders to put out his eyes if they caught him in this country.<sup>e</sup>

Eadwig chose his side, perhaps, indiscreetly. A strong party of the aristocracy, a fanatical and therefore influential party of the clergy, combined against him. In such contests there is little moderation; and Christian charity is trodden under foot by what is called Christian zeal. Eadwig's new counsellors advised strong measures against their opponents; and their opponents revenged themselves by loading the king and his female friends with obloquy, such as Tacitus more justly bestowed upon the frightful profligacy of his time. Eadwig met the scandal as alone it could be met. Ælfgifu became his wife. No monkish abuse can rail away the fact that in a document of undoubted authority—an agreement for the exchange of lands between Bishop Byrthelm and Abbot Æthelwold—the following entry appears: "And this was by leave of King Eadwig; and these are the witnesses: Ælfgifu, the king's wife, and Æthelgifu, the king's wife's mother." Kemble says, "This, then, was not a thing done in a corner, and the testimony is conclusive that Ælfgifu was Eadwig's queen."<sup>d</sup>

The story of Eadwig and Ælfgifu has never been told twice alike. On it, as Stubbs<sup>r</sup> remarks, an amount of criticism has been spent "altogether out of proportion to the materials of its history." The apologists for Dunstan have accepted with scarcely a question the accounts left by contemporary writers and chroniclers, who were palpably writing to uphold the unscrupulous abbot and the things for which he stood, rather than to give the facts of the case. The characters of both Æthelgifu and her daughter have been dragged in the mire, and the startling declaration that both were mistresses of the boy king has been set forth. The story as here related is now pretty generally accepted, though so modern a writer as the learned Catholic authority



Lingard<sup>c</sup> has accepted the monkish stories, and has been severely criticised for his bias and lack of historical accuracy in so doing.<sup>a</sup>

Before this extreme rupture Eadwig had probably meddled with the then stormy politics of the church, or betrayed an inclination to favour the secular clergy in opposition to the monks; and this again would, and of itself, suffice to account for Dunstan's outrageous behaviour at the coronation feast. After Dunstan's flight the king certainly made himself the protector of the "married clerks"; for, expelling those who professed celibacy, he put the others in possession not only of Glastonbury and Malmesbury, but of several other abbeys. In so doing Eadwig, fatally for himself, espoused the weaker party and still further exasperated Odo, the archbishop of Canterbury, who entertained the same views in state matters and church discipline as his friend Dunstan.

Shortly after the departure of Dunstan, a general rising of the people, instigated by Odo, took place in Northumbria (the reader will bear in mind that the archbishop was a Dane), and a corresponding movement following, under the same influence or holy sanction, in Mercia, it was determined to set one brother in hostile array against the other; and, in brief time, Eadgar was declared independent sovereign of the whole of the island north of the Thames. Dunstan then returned in triumph from his brief exile, which had scarcely lasted a year.<sup>c</sup>

It was while the revolt in the north was rapidly gaining strength that an event took place that more nearly touched the king than the loss of half his kingdom. This was the forcible separation of the king and his young queen. The divorce was secured by Archbishop Odo, on the ground that the pair were too nearly related. The relationship cannot have been very close, but it is not unlikely that it was sufficient to constitute a bar under the extreme interpretation of the day when sponsorship or guardianship brought persons within the prohibited degree. The opposition of the archbishop and his party to the influence supposed to be exerted against them by the queen's mother was more than likely the real cause of the action. The fate alike of Lady Æthelgifu and her daughter, the queen, is shrouded in mystery. In connection with it there has come down to us an almost unbelievable story of cruelty and brutality. Happily, like all our records of this stormy reign, it rests on a not very reliable authority, and even this authority by reason of its ambiguity may be variously interpreted. It is Osbern<sup>t</sup> in his *Life of Odo*, written a century after the events recorded, who tells the horrible story. As it was repeated on his authority by both Eadmer<sup>s</sup> and Malmesbury,<sup>h</sup> and has been told since by other writers, it was as follows: Odo, finding that the king refused to give up his queen, even after the divorce had been decreed, planned to separate them by force. Ælfgyfu was seized, her face branded to destroy her beauty, and she was carried off to Ireland. There she fell into good hands, her wounds were healed and her beauty restored, and means were provided for her return to England. At Gloucester, presumably before she had rejoined the king, she was taken either by hirelings of the archbishop or a band of Mercian rebels, and hamstrung and otherwise mutilated, so that she died. In a life of Dunstan, which he also wrote, Osbern<sup>aa</sup> told another story which differs in some important particulars. In the *Life of Odo*<sup>t</sup> he does not mention either Ælfgyfu or her mother by name, but it is clear that it is to them he refers. In his *Life of Dunstan*<sup>aa</sup> he hopelessly confuses the two. All we really know is that at this time all traces of both Æthelgifu and Ælfgyfu are lost, and we hear of the return to court of Eadgyfu, Eadwig's mother, who had long been in disfavour. At any rate Eadwig did not long survive the separa-

[959-975 A.D.]

tion, but died in the following year, whether of grief or a broken heart, or by the hand of an assassin, or poison, it seems to be impossible to tell.<sup>a</sup>

Eadgar (Edgar) his brother, who had been put forward against him in his lifetime, now succeeded to all his dignities. As a boy of fifteen he could exercise little authority: he was long a passive instrument in the hands of Dunstan and his party, who used their power in establishing their cause, in enforcing the celibacy of the clergy, and in driving out, by main force, all such married clergymen as would not separate from their wives. At the same time, it cannot be denied that Dunstan and the monks ruled the kingdom with vigour and success, and consolidated the detached states into more compact integrity and union than had ever been known before. Several causes favoured this process. Among others, Eadgar, who had been brought up among the Danes of East Anglia and Northumbria, was endeared to that people, who, in consequence, allowed him to weaken their states by dividing them into several separate earldoms or governments, and to make other innovations, which they would have resented with arms in their hands under any of his predecessors. His fleet was also wisely increased to the number of 360 sail,<sup>1</sup> and these ships were so well disposed, and powerful squadrons kept so constantly in motion, that the sea-kings were held in check on their own element, and prevented from landing and troubling the country. At the same time, tutored by the indefatigable Dunstan, who soon was made, or rather who soon made himself, archbishop of Canterbury, the king accustomed himself to visit in person every part of his dominions annually.



EADGAR  
From an ancient coin.  
(Ca 944-975.)

In the land progresses he was attended by the primate, or by energetic ministers of Dunstan's appointing; and as he went from Wessex to Mercia, from Mercia to Northumbria, courts of justice were held in the different counties, audiences and feasts were given, appeals were heard, and the neighbouring princes—his vassals or allies—of Wales, Cumbria, and Scotland, were awed into respect or obedience, and on several occasions seem to have bowed before his throne. When he held his court at Chester, and had one day a wish to visit the monastery of St. John's, on the river Dee, eight crowned kings (so goes the story) plied the oars of his barge, while he guided the helm.<sup>c</sup>

Eadmund, after his conquest of Cumbria (945), had given it over to the Scottish king Malcolm, on condition that he acknowledged the sovereignty of the English crown. Dunstan saw the wisdom of a policy that bound to the English king in friendship the only other sovereign on the island whose hostility could prove a real menace to the continued peace of the realm. The policy of Eadmund was followed, therefore, by a cession of Lothian to Kenneth of Scotland, and it was to this cession very likely that Eadgar owed the freedom from wars which has given him the title of "the

[<sup>1</sup> Florence of Worcester *w* declares that his fleet consisted of 3,600 sail; the number here given is accepted by Ramsay *e* as more probably correct. The fleet was built and maintained, it appears, by assessments on the counties according to the number of their hundreds.]

Peaceful." Exactly what Kenneth undertook in return for the cession it is impossible to say, but probably no more was required of him than a promise of faithful friendship and a general recognition of the paramountcy of Eadgar's authority in the island. "Eadgar, like Alfred," says Freeman,<sup>i</sup> "knew how to guard his empire, and a fleet which yearly sailed around the whole island, and which often carried the king in person, was a sufficient safeguard of Britain against a foreign foe. And no West-Saxon emperor ever made his supremacy so fully felt by all the races of the island as the one who never drew his sword against a Scottish or Northumbrian enemy."<sup>a</sup>



PART OF WARWICK OR BEAUCHAMP  
CHANCERY

(Tewkesbury abbey, founded in 715 A.D.)

Eadgar certainly bore prouder and more sounding titles than any of his predecessors. He was styled basileus or emperor of Albion, king of the English and of all the nations and islands around. During his whole reign, his kingdom was not troubled by a single war. He commuted a tribute he received from a part or the whole of Wales into three hundred wolves' heads annually, in order to extirpate those ravenous animals; and, according to William of Malmesbury,<sup>h</sup> this tribute ceased in the fourth year, for want of wolves to kill. The currency had been so diminished in weight by the fraudulent practice of clipping, that the actual value was far inferior to the nominal. He therefore reformed the coinage, and had new coins issued all over the kingdom. Though Eadgar was now in mature manhood, there is pretty good evidence to show that these measures, with others, generally of a beneficial nature, were suggested and carried into effect by Dunstan, who, most indubitably, had his full share in the next operations, which are mentioned with especial laud and triumph by the monkish writers. He made married priests

so scarce or so timid that their faces were nowhere to be seen; and he founded or restored no fewer than fifty monasteries, which were all subjected to the rigid rules of the Benedictine order. It is curious that the monks, who had a debt of gratitude to pay, and who, in their summary of his whole character, indeed, uphold Eadgar as a godly, virtuous prince, should have recorded actions which prove him to have been one of the most viciously profligate of the Saxon kings. The court of this promoter of celibacy and chastity swarmed at all times with concubines, some of whom were obtained in the most violent or flagitious manner. During the life of his first wife he carried off from the monastery of Wilton a beautiful young lady of noble birth, named Wulfrith, who was either a professed nun, or receiving her education under the sacred covering of the veil. It has been said that Dunstan here interfered with a courage which absolves him from the charge of reserving his reproofs for those who stood, like the unfortunate Eadwig, in the position of enemies. But what was the amount of his interference in this extreme case, where the sanctity of the cloister itself was violated? He condemned the king to lay aside an empty, inconvenient bauble—not to wear his crown on his head for seven



[959-975 A.D.]

years—and to a penance of fasting, which was probably in good part performed by deputy.<sup>1</sup> For all that we can learn to the contrary, Eadgar was allowed to retain Wulfrith as his mistress. On another occasion, when the guest of one of his nobles at Andover, he ordered that the fair and honourable daughter of his host should be sent to his bed. The young lady's mother artfully substituted a handsome slave or servant; and this menial was added to his harem, or taken to court, where, according to William of Malmesbury,<sup>h</sup> she enjoyed his exceeding great favour, until he became enamoured of Ælfthryth (Elfrida), his second lawful wife. Romantic as are its incidents, the story of his marriage with the execrable Ælfthryth rests on about as good authority as we can find for any of the events of the time. The fame of this young lady's beauty reached the ears of Eadgar, ever hungry of such reports. To ascertain whether her charms were not exaggerated, the royal voluptuary despatched Æthelwold, his favourite courtier, to the distant castle of her father, Ordgar, earl of Devonshire. Æthelwold became himself enamoured of the beauty, wedded her, and then represented her to the king as being rich, indeed, but not otherwise commendable. Eadgar suspected, or was told, the real truth. He insisted on paying her a visit. The unlucky husband was allowed to precede him, that he might put his house in order; but he failed in his real object, which was to obtain his wife's forgiveness for having stepped between her and a throne, and to induce her to disguise or conceal the brilliancy of her charms by homely attire and rustic demeanour. The visit was made: the king was captivated, as she intended he should be. Soon after Æthelwold was found murdered in a wood, and Eadgar married his widow. This union, begun in crime, led to the foul murder of Eadgar's eldest son: and under Æthelred, the only son he had by Ælfthryth, the glory of the house of Alfred was eclipsed for ever. He himself did not survive the marriage more than six or seven years, when he died, at the early age of thirty-two, and was buried in the abbey of Glastonbury, which he had made magnificent by vast outlays of money and donations of land.<sup>c</sup>

Eadgar's reign has been celebrated as the most glorious of all the Anglo-Saxon kings. No other sovereign, indeed, converted his prosperity into such personal pomp, and no other sovereign was more degraded in his posterity. With his short life the gaudy pagantry ceased, and all the vast dominion in which he had so ostentatiously exulted, vanished from his children's grasp. His



EADWARD THE MARTYR  
(963-979)

[Eadgar was not crowned until 973, or fourteen years after his elevation to the throne. The cause of this delay is quite uncertain. The well-known story of the penance imposed by Dunstan for the abduction of Wulfrith is not to be taken as an explanation, according to Ramsay,<sup>l</sup> for that penance covered a period of only seven years, while the period here to be accounted for is twice that. It has been suggested that he may have been already crowned king of Mercia and have felt that his coronation as king of all England might well be postponed until some event should have occurred to emphasise or draw attention to the broader extent of his sovereignty.]

eldest son perished by the scheme of his beloved Ælfthryth; his youngest reigned only to show that one weak reign is sufficient to ruin even a brave and great people. Eadgar made kings his watermen; the son of his love five times bought his kingdom from Danish rovers, was the fool of traitors, and surrendered his throne to a foreign invader. Of Eadgar's grandsons, one perished violently soon after his accession. The other was the last of his race who ruled the Anglo-Saxon nation.<sup>u</sup>

Eadward, commonly called the Martyr, who succeeded (975), was Eadgar's son by his first marriage. Like all the kings since Æthelstan, he was a mere boy at his accession, being not more than fourteen or fifteen years old. His rights were disputed in favour of her own son, Æthelred, who was only

six years old, by the ambitious and remorseless Ælfthryth, who boldly maintained that Eadward, though the elder brother, and named king in his father's will, was excluded by the illegitimacy of his birth.

The legitimacy of several of the Saxon princes who had worn the crown was more than doubtful; but in the case of Eadward the challenge seems to have been unfounded. The cause of Eadward and his half-brother was decided on far



CORFE CASTLE

(Scene of the murder of Eadward the Martyr in 979)

different grounds. As soon as Eadgar was dead the church war was renewed, and Dunstan, after a long and unopposed triumph, was compelled once more to descend to the arena with his old opponents, the "married clerks," or secular clergy, who again showed themselves in force in many parts of the kingdom and claimed the abbeys and churches of which they had been dispossessed. The nobles and the governors of provinces chose different sides. Ælfhere, the powerful ealdorman of Mercia, declared for the secular clergy, and drove the monks from every part of his extensive dominions. Æthelwine, of East Anglia, on the contrary, stood by Dunstan and the monks. Ælfthryth, no doubt because Dunstan and his friends had got possession of Eadward, gave the weight of her son Æthelred's name and herself to the party of Ælfhere and the seculars, which soon proved again to be the weaker of the two factions. Had it been the stronger, Æthelred would have been crowned; as it turned out, Dunstan was enabled to place Eadward upon the throne. The perfidious Ælfthryth continued her intrigues with the secular party; she united herself more closely than ever with Ælfhere, the ealdorman of Mercia, and soon saw herself at the head of a powerful confederacy of nobles, who were resolved her son should reign and Dunstan be deprived of that immense power he had so long held. But not even this resolution would prepare us for the horrible catastrophe that followed. About three years after his accession, as Eadward was hunting one day in Dorsetshire, he quitted his company and attendants to visit his half-brother, Æthelred, who was living with his mother, hard by,

[975-979 A.D.]

in Corfe castle. Ælfthryth came forth with her son to meet him at the outer gate: she bade him welcome with a smiling face, and invited him to dismount; but the young king, with thanks, declined, fearing he should be missed by his company, and craved only a cup of wine, which he might drink in his saddle to her and his brother, and so be gone. The wine was brought, and as Eadward was carrying the cup to his lips, one of Ælfthryth's attendants stabbed him in the back. The wounded king put spurs to his horse, but soon, fainting from loss of blood, he fell out of the saddle, and was dragged by one foot in the stirrup through woods and rugged ways until he was dead. His companions in the chase traced him by his blood, and at last found his disfigured corpse, which they burned, and then buried the ashes of it at Wareham, without any pomp or regal ceremonies. "No worse deed than this," says the *Saxon Chronicle*,<sup>x</sup> "had been committed among the people of the Angles since they first came to the land of Britain." It is believed that Ælfhere, the ealdorman of Mercia, with other nobles, opposed to Dunstan and the monks, was engaged with the queen-dowager in a plot to assassinate Eadward, but that Ælfthryth, impatiently seizing an unlooked-for opportunity, took the bloody execution instantly and wholly upon herself.

#### ÆTHELRED THE UNREADY

The boy Æthelred, who was not ten years old, had no part in the guilt which gave him a crown, though that crown certainly sat upon him like a curse. It is related of him that he dearly loved his half brother Eadward, and wept his death, for which his virago mother, seizing a large torch, beat him with it until he was almost dead himself. Such, however, was the popular odium that fell both on son and mother, that an attempt was made to exclude him from the throne, by substituting Eadgyth, Eadgar's natural daughter by the lady he had stolen from the nunnery of Wilton. This Eadgyth was herself at the time a professed nun in the same monastery from which her mother had been torn; and it is said that nothing but her timidity, and the dread inspired by her brother Eadward's murder, and her firm refusal to exchange the tranquillity of the cell for the dangers of the throne, prevented Dunstan from causing her to be proclaimed queen of all England. There was no other prince of the blood royal—no other pretender to set up; so the prelates and thanes, with no small repugnance, were compelled to bestow the crown on the son of the murderess; and Dunstan, as primate, at the festival of Easter (979) put it on his weak head in the old chapel of Kingston, at this time the usual crowning place of the Saxon monarchs. The vehement monk, who was now soured by age and exasperated at the temporary triumph of his enemies, is said to have pronounced a malediction on Æthelred, even in the act of crowning him, and to have given public vent to a prophecy of woe and misery, which some think was well calculated to insure its own fulfilment; for Dunstan already enjoyed among the nation the reputation of being both a seer and a saint, and the words he dropped could hardly fail of being treasured in the memory of the people, and of depressing their spirits at the approach of danger. Æthelred, moreover, began his reign with an unlucky nickname, which it is believed was given him by Dunstan—he was called the Unready.<sup>1</sup> His personal and moral qualities were not calculated to

[<sup>1</sup> The title "Unready," which is applied to Æthelred, does not mean unready in our sense of the word. Green & says that it was his stubborn opposition throughout his reign to the



overcome a bad prestige, and the unpopular circumstances attending his succession: in him the people lost their warm affection for the blood of Alfred, and by degrees many of them contemplated with indifference, if not with pleasure, the transfer of the crown to a prince of Danish race. This latter feeling more than half explains the events of his reign. During the first part of the minority the infamous Ælfthryth enjoyed great authority, but as the king advanced in years her influence declined, and, followed by the execrations of nobles and people (even by those of her own party), she at last retired to expiate her sins, according to the fashion of the times, in building and endowing monasteries.

#### RENEWAL OF THE DANISH INVASIONS

Although the Northmen settled in the Danelagh had so frequently troubled the peace of the kingdom, and had probably at no period renounced the hope of gaining an ascendancy over the Saxons of the island, and placing a king of their own race on the throne of England, the Danes beyond sea had certainly made no formidable attacks since the time of Æthelstan, and of late years had scarcely been heard of. This suspension of hostility on their part is not to be attributed solely to the wisdom and valour of the intermediate Saxon kings. There were great political causes connected with the histories of Norway and Denmark, and France and Normandy; and circumstances which, by giving the Danes employment and settlement in other countries, kept them away from England. But now, unfortunately, there was neither wisdom nor valour in the king and council, nor spirit in the people.

Sweyn, a son of the king of Denmark, had quarrelled with his father, and been banished from his home. Young, brave, and enterprising, he soon collected a host of mariners and adventurers round his standard, with whom he resolved to obtain wealth, if not a home in England. His first operations were on a small scale, intended merely to try the state of defence of the island, and were probably not conducted by himself.

In the third year of Æthelred's reign (981) the Danish raven was seen floating in Southampton Water, and that city was plundered and its inhabitants carried into slavery. In the course of a few months Chester and London partook of the fate of Southampton, and attacks were multiplied on different points—in the north, in the south, and in the west—as far as the extremity of Cornwall. These operations were continued for some years, during which Æthelred seems to have been much occupied by quarrels with his bishops and nobles. Ælfhere, the Mercian, who had conspired with Ælfthryth against Eadward the Martyr, was dead, and his extensive earldom had fallen to his son Ælfrie, a notorious name in these annals. In consequence of a conspiracy, real or alleged, Ælfrie was banished. The weak king was soon obliged to recall him, but the revengeful nobleman never forgot the past. In the year 991 a more formidable host of the sea-kings ravaged all that part of East Anglia that lay between Ipswich and Maldon, and won a great battle, in which Earl Brithnoth was slain. Æthelred then, for the first time, had recourse

efforts of the great ealdormen to control him, and his persistence in setting aside their *rede* or counsel, that earned him the title of Unrædig, or the counsel-lacking king, which a later blunder turned into the title of Unready. "Unready, shiftless, without resource, Æthelred never was. His difficulties indeed sprang in no small degree from the quickness and ingenuity with which he met one danger by measures that created another."]

[991-1001 A.D.]

to the fatal expedient of purchasing their forbearance with money. Ten thousand pounds of silver were paid down, and the sea-kings departed for a while, carrying with them the head of Earl Brithnoth as a trophy. In the course of the following year the witenagemot adopted a wiser plan of defence. A formidable fleet was collected at London, and well manned and supplied with arms. But this wise measure was defeated by Ælfrie the Mercian, who, in his hatred to the king, had opened a correspondence with the Danes, and being intrusted with a principal command in the fleet, he went over to them on the eve of a battle, with many of his ships. The traitor escaped, and Æthelred wreaked his savage vengeance on Ælfgar, the son of Ælfrie, whose eyes he put out. In 993 a Danish host landed in the north, and took Bamborough castle by storm. Three chiefs, of Danish origin, who had been appointed to command the natives, threw down the standard of Æthelred and ranged themselves under the Danish raven. All through Northumbria, and the rest of the Danelagh, the Danish settlers either joined their still pagan brethren from the Baltic, or offered them no resistance. In the mean time the fortunes of Sweyn the exile had undergone a change. By the murder of his father he had ascended the throne of Denmark, and, formidable himself, he had gained a powerful ally in Olaf, king of Norway. In 994 the two North kings ravaged all the southern provinces of the island. It was again agreed to treat, and buy them off with money. Their pretensions of course rose, and this time sixteen thousand pounds of silver were exacted and paid. By a clause in the treaty, Olaf and some chiefs were bound to embrace the Christian religion. Sweyn had been baptised already more than once, and had relapsed to idolatry. One of the chiefs boasted that he had been washed twenty times in the water of baptism, by which we are to understand that the marauder had submitted to what he considered an idle ceremony, whenever it suited his convenience. Olaf, the Norwegian king, however, stood at the font with a better spirit; his conversion was sincere; and an oath he there took, never again to molest the English, was honourably kept. During the four following years the Danes continued their desultory invasions; and when (in 998) Æthelred had got ready a strong fleet and army to oppose them, some of his own officers gave the plunderers timely warning, and they retreated unhurt. On their next returning in force (1001), Æthelred seems to have had neither fleet nor army in a condition to meet them; for, after two conflicts by land, they were allowed to ravage the whole kingdom from the Isle of Wight to the Bristol Channel, and then they were stayed, not by steel, but by gold. Their price of course still rose; this time twenty-four thousand pounds were paid to purchase their departure. These large sums were raised by direct taxation upon land; and the "Dane-geld," as it was called, was an oppressive and humiliating burden that became permanent. Nor was this all. The treaties of peace or truce generally allowed bands of the marauders to winter in the island, at Southampton or some other town; and during their stay the English people, whom they had plundered and beggared, were obliged to feed them. Their appetites had not decreased since the days of Guthrum and Hasting.

As if the Danes were not enemies enough, Æthelred had engaged in hostilities with Richard II, duke of Normandy, and had even, at one time, prepared an armament to invade his dominions. The quarrel was made up by the mediation of the pope; and then the English king, who was a widower, thought of strengthening his hands by marrying Emma, the duke of Normandy's sister. The alliance, which laid the first grounds for the pretext of Norman claims on England afterwards pressed by William the Conqueror, was

readily accepted by Duke Richard, and in the spring of 1002 Emma, "the Flower of Normandy," as she was styled, arrived at the court of Æthelred, where she was received with great pomp.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE MASSACRE OF ST. BRICE'S DAY

The long rejoicings for this marriage were scarcely over, when a memorable atrocity covered the land with amazement, blood, and horror. This was the sudden massacre of the Danes, perpetrated by the people with whom they were living intermixed as fellow subjects. It is universally asserted that the plot was laid beforehand, the fatal order given by the king himself; and there is little in Æthelred's general conduct and character to awaken a doubt in his favour. At the same time, be it observed, the people must have been as guilty, as secret, as treacherous, as cruel as the king, and must have entered fully into the spirit which dictated the bloody order of which they were to be the executioners. Such being the case, we think they were fully equal to the conception of the plot themselves, and that, from the loose, unguarded manner in which the Danes lived scattered among them, such a mode of disposing of them would naturally suggest itself to a very imperfectly civilised people, maddened by the harsh treatment and insults of their invaders. In the simultaneous massacre of the French invaders all over Sicily, in 1282, the same mystery was observed; but it is still a matter of doubt whether the "Sicilian Vespers" were ordered by John da Procida, or sprung spontaneously from the people. These two cases, which belong alike to the class of the terrible acts of vengeance that signalise a nation's despair, are nearly parallel in their circumstances; and in England, as afterwards in Sicily, it was the insults offered by the invaders to their women that extinguished the last sentiments of humanity in the hearts of the people. The outrages of the Danish pagans were extreme. According to the old chroniclers, they made the English yeomanry among whom they were settled perform the most menial offices for them; they held their houses as their own, and, eating and drinking of the best, scantily left the real proprietor his fill of the worst; the peasantry were so sorely oppressed that, out of fear and dread, they called them, in every house where they had rule, "Lord Danes." Their wives and daughters were everywhere a prey to their lust, and when the English made resistance or remonstrance, they were killed, or beaten and laughed at. All this description seems to point at soldiers and adventurers, and men recently settled in the land, and not to the converted married Danes, who had been living a long time in different parts of the country (as well as in the Danelagh, where they were too numerous to be touched), who had contracted quiet, orderly habits, and successfully cultivated the friendship of the English. It was resolved, however, to destroy them all at one blow; the good with the bad, the innocent infant at the breast with the hardened ruffian, the neighbour of years with the intruder of yesterday. As the story is told, Æthelred sent secretly to all his good burghs, cities, and towns, charging the rulers thereof to rise, all on a fixed day and hour, and, by falling suddenly on the Danes, exterminate them from the land by sword and fire. By what

[<sup>1</sup> "Here," says Freeman, *i* "was the beginning of the causes which led to the Norman Conquest. Emma brought with her Norman followers, some of whom were trusted with commands in England. The kindred between the ruling families of the two lands which came of the marriage of Emma led to increased intercourse between Normandy and England, to Norman interference with English affairs, to the settlement of Normans in England, to the claims of Duke William, and to the Norman Conquest."]



[1002-1004 A.D.]

ever means this simultaneous movement was arranged, it certainly took place. On November 13, 1002 (the holy festival of St. Brice), the Danes, dispersed through a great part of England, were attacked by surprise, and massacred, without distinction of quality, age, or sex, by their hosts and neighbours. Gunhild, the sister of Sweyn, king of Denmark, who had embraced Christianity and married an English earl of Danish descent, after being made to witness the murder of her husband and child, was barbarously murdered herself.

## SWEYN'S CONQUEST

This tale of horror was soon wafted across the ocean, where Sweyn prepared for a deadly revenge. He assembled a fleet more numerous than any that had hitherto invaded England. The Danish warriors considered the cause a national and sacred one; and in the assembled host there was not a slave, or an emancipated slave, or a single old man, but every combatant was a freeman, the son of a freeman, and in the prime of life. These warriors embarked in lofty ships, every one of which bore the ensign or standard of its separate commander. Some carried at their prow such figures as lions, bulls, dolphins, dragons, or armed men, all made of metal, and gaily gilded; others carried on their topmast-head the figures of eagles and ravens, that stretched out their wings and turned with the wind; the sides of the ships were painted with different bright colours, and, larboard and starboard, from stem to stern, shields of burnished steel were suspended in even lines, and glittered in the sun. Gold, silver, and embroidered banners were profusely displayed, and the whole wealth of the pirates of the Baltic was made to contribute to this barbaric pomp. The ship that bore the royal standard of Sweyn was moulded in the form of an enormous serpent, the sharp head of which formed the prow, while the lengthening tail coiled over the poop. It was called "The Great Dragon."

The first place where the avengers landed was near Exeter, and that important city was presently surrendered to them, through the treachery of Æthelred's governor, a Norman nobleman, and one of the train of favourites and dependents that had followed Queen Emma. After plundering and dismantling Exeter, the Danes marched into Wiltshire. In all the towns and villages through which they passed, after gaily eating the repasts the Saxons were forced to prepare for them, they slew their hosts, and, departing, set fire to their houses. At last an Anglo-Saxon army was brought up to oppose their destructive progress; but this force was commanded by another traitor—by Ælfrie the Mercian. He had been restored to favour and employment, but now took the opportunity offered him for further revenge on the king. He pretended to be seized with a sudden illness, called off his men when they were about to join battle, and permitted Sweyn to retire with his army and his immense booty through Salisbury to the seacoast. In the following year Norwich was taken, plundered, and burned, and the same fate befell nearly every town in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, and Lincolnshire. The Danes then (1004) returned to the Baltic, retreating from a famine which their devastations had caused in England.

By marrying the Norman princess Emma, Æthelred had hoped to secure the assistance of her brother, Duke Richard, against the Danes; but it was soon found that the only Normans who crossed the channel were a set of intriguing, ambitious courtiers, hungry for English places and honours; and by his inconstancy and neglect of his wife, Æthelred so irritated that princess that she made bitter complaints to her brother, and caused a fresh quarrel

between England and Normandy. Duke Richard seized all the native English who chanced to be in his dominions, and after shamefully killing some, threw the rest into prison.

In 1006 Sweyn returned, and carried fire and sword over a great part of the kingdom; and when it was resolved in the great council to buy him off with gold, £36,000 was the sum demanded. The frequent raising of these large sums utterly exhausted the people, whose doors were almost constantly beset either by the king's tax-gatherers or the Danish marauders. Those few who had, as yet, the good fortune of escaping the pillage of the Danes, could not now escape the exactions of Æthelred, and, under one form or another, they were sure of being plundered of all they possessed.

In 1008 the people were oppressed with a new burden. Every 310 hides of land were charged with the building and equipping of one ship for the defence of the kingdom; and in addition to this, every nine hides of land were bound to provide one man, armed with a helmet and iron breastplate. If all the land had supplied its proper contingent, more than 800 ships and about 35,000 armed men would have been provided. The force actually raised appears to have been large; some of the old writers stating, particularly as to the marine, that there never were so many ships got together in England before. This fleet, however, was soon rendered valueless by dissensions and treachery at home, and thus perished the last hope of England.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as the intelligence of this disaster reached the mouth of the Baltic, a large army of Danes, called, from their leader, "Thurkill's host," set sail for England, where, during the three following years, they committed incalculable mischief, and by the end of that period had made themselves masters of a large part of the kingdom. They now and then sold short and uncertain truces to the Saxons, but they never evinced an intention of leaving the island, as Sweyn had left it on former occasions. As Æthelred's difficulties increased, he seems, at last, not to have had a single officer on whom he could depend. During this lamentable period, a noble instance of courage and firmness occurred in the person of a churchman. Ælfheah (Alphege), archbishop of Canterbury, defended that city for twenty days, and when a traitor opened its gates to the Danes, and he was made prisoner and loaded with chains, he refused to purchase liberty and life with gold, which he knew must be wrung from the people. The Danes, more covetous of money than desirous of his blood, frequently renewed their demands. "You press me in vain," said Ælfheah; "I am not the man to provide Christian flesh for pagan teeth, by robbing my poor countrymen to enrich their enemies." The Danes at length lost patience, and one day, when they were assembled at a drunken banquet, they caused him to be dragged into their presence. "Gold, bishop! give us gold! gold!" was their cry, as they gathered about him in menacing attitudes. Still unmoved, he looked round that circle of fierce men, who presently broke up in rage and disorder, and running to a heap of bones, horns, and jawbones, the remains of their gross feast, they threw these things at him, until he fell to the ground half dead. A Danish pirate, whom he had previously baptised with his own hands, then took his battle-axe and put an end to the agony and life of Archbishop Ælfheah.

This heroic example had no effect upon King Æthelred, who continued to pay gold as before. After receiving £48,000, and the formal cession of several

[<sup>1</sup> The stories accounting for its loss differ. It seems to have been due to a rivalry between Earl Wulfnoth and Brihtric, one of Æthelred's favourites, who placed their personal quarrels above the necessity of their country, and after deserting with a great part of the ships, fell to fighting each other.]

[1012-1016 A.D.]

counties Thurkill took the oaths of peace, and became, with many of his chiefs and a large detachment of his host, the ally and soldier of the weak Saxon monarch. It is probable that Earl Thurkill entered the service of Æthelred for the purpose of betraying him, and acted all along in concert with Sweyn; but the Danish king affected to consider the compact as treason to himself, and, with a show of jealousy towards Thurkill, prepared a fresh expedition, which he gave out was equally directed against Æthelred and his vassal Thurkill. The fact, at all events, was that Sweyn, who had so often swept the land from east to west, from north to south, had now resolved to attempt the permanent conquest of the land. He sailed up the Humber with a numerous and splendid fleet, and landed as near as he could to the city of York. As the Danes advanced into the country they stuck their lances into the soil, or threw them into the current of the rivers, in sign of their entire domination over England. Nearly all the inhabitants of the Danelagh joined them at once: the men of Northumbria, Lindsey, and the Five Burghs welcomed the banner of Sweyn, and finally all the "host" north of Watling Street took up arms in his favour. Even the provinces in the centre of England, where the Danish settlers or troops were far less numerous, prepared themselves for a quiet surrender. Leaving his fleet to the care of his son Canute, Sweyn conducted the main body of his army to the south. Oxford, Winchester, and other important towns threw open their gates at his approach; but he was obliged to retire from before the walls of London and the determined valour of its citizens, among whom the king had taken refuge. Sweyn then turned to the west, where he was received with open arms. The ealdormen of Devonshire and nearly every other thane in that part of the kingdom repaired to his headquarters at Bath, and did homage to him as their lawful or chosen sovereign. Seeing the whole kingdom falling from him, Æthelred abandoned London, which soon followed the general example and submitted to the Danes. This unready king then fled to the Isle of Wight, whence he secretly sent his children with Emma, his Norman wife, to the court of her brother at Rouen. The duke of Normandy not only received Emma and her children with great kindness, but offered a safe asylum to Æthelred, which that luckless prince was fain to accept as his only resource.

Sweyn was now (1013) acknowledged as "full king of England"; but the power which had been obtained with so much labour, and at the expense of so much bloodshed and wretchedness, remained to the conqueror a very short time. He died suddenly at Gainsborough; and, only six weeks after the time when he had been allowed to depart for Normandy, "abandoned, deserted, and betrayed" by all, Æthelred was invited by the Saxon nobles and prelates to return and take possession of his kingdom, which was pledged to his defence and support—provided only that he would govern them better than he had done before. Pledges were exchanged for the faithful performance of the new compact between king and people. Before the end of Lent, Æthelred was restored to those dominions which he had already misgoverned thirty-five years. In the meantime the Danish army in England had proclaimed Canute, the son of Sweyn, as king of the whole land, and in the northern provinces they and their adherents were in a condition to maintain the election they had made. Indeed, north of Watling Street the Danes were all-powerful; and Canute, though beset by some difficulties, was not of a character to relinquish his hold of the kingdom without a hard struggle. A sanguinary warfare was renewed, and murdering and bribing, betraying and betrayed, Æthelred was fast losing ground, when he died of disease, about three years after his return from Normandy.

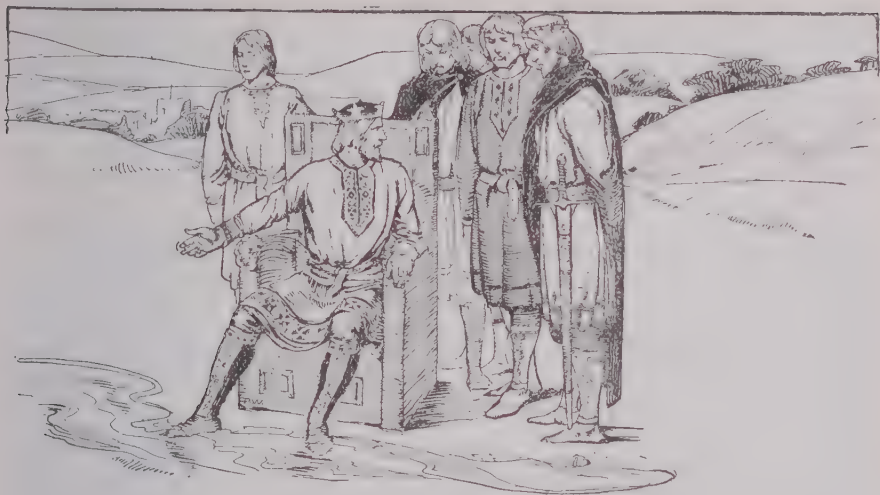


## EADMUND IRONSIDE

The law of succession continued as loose as ever; and in seasons of extreme difficulty like the present, when so much depended on the personal character and valour of the sovereign, it was altogether neglected or despised. Setting aside Æthelred's legitimate children, the Saxons chose for their king a natural son, Eadmund, surnamed Ironside, who had already given many proofs of courage in the field and wisdom in the council. By general consent, indeed, Eadmund was a hero; but the country was too much worn out and divided, and the treasons that had torn his father's court and camp were too prevalent in his own to permit of his restoring Saxon independence throughout the kingdom. After twice relieving London, when besieged by Canute and all his host, and fighting five pitched battles with unvarying valour, but with various success, Ironside proposed that he and his rival should decide their claims in a single combat, saying "it was pity so many lives should be lost and perilled for their ambition." Canute declined the duel, saying that he, as a man of slender make, would stand no chance with the stalwart Eadmund; and he added, that it would be wiser and better for them both to divide England between them, even as their forefathers had done in other times. This proposal is said to have been received with enthusiastic joy by both armies; and however the negotiation may have been conducted, and whatever was the precise line of demarcation settled between them, it was certainly agreed that Canute should reign over the north, and Eadmund Ironside over the south, with a nominal superiority over the Dane's portion. The brave Eadmund did not survive the treaty more than two months. His death, which took place on the feast of St. Andrew, was sudden and mysterious. As Canute profited so much by it as to become sole monarch of England immediately after, it is generally believed he planned his assassination; but judging from the old chroniclers who lived at or near the time, it is not clear who were the contrivers and actual perpetrators of the deed, or whether he was killed at all. There is even a doubt as to the place of his death, whether it was London or Oxford.<sup>c</sup>



STONEHENGE, LOOKING WEST



## CHAPTER IV

### THE DANISH AND LATER ENGLISH KINGS

[1017-1066 A.D.]

WHEN in November, 1016, the death of Eadmund removed the one strong obstacle to Canute's assumption of the rule of all England, the Danish king was only about twenty-one years old. But, as has been often remarked, he was one of those men who are never young. From our very first knowledge of him his sagacity and far-seeing mark him as a man of mature judgment. And nowhere in his career is this trait shown more clearly than in his action on learning of the death of Eadmund. His own armies possessed the north of England; the south, without a leader, lay prostrate before him. He could have made good his conquest by force of arms. But to one as completely guided by motives of policy as was Canute such a move did not appeal. "He was fully impressed," says Freeman, "with the value of constitutional forms. He was determined to be king of all England; he was equally determined not to parade the right of conquest offensively before the eyes of his subjects, but to rest his claim to the crown on an authority which no man could gainsay."

#### CANUTE CHOSEN KING (1017 A.D.)

His first act, therefore, was one typical of the man. He issued a summons for a grand witenagemot of all England to meet him in London. Before this assembly he placed frankly the question of the succession, in a way that could not fail to dispose in his favour men whose cherished and long-exercised rights in regard to the choice of their king he thus apparently recognised. First he asked those who had been present at the convention, in which the partition treaty between Eadmund and himself had been arranged, whether

at that time any rights had been reserved to the sons or brothers of Eadmund. Without a single dissenting voice the reply came that the question of succession had not been touched upon. Furthermore, it was declared that Canute had been named as the guardian of Eadmund's children during their minority. We do not know how far the members of the witan acted without constraint or how much they were influenced by promises or personal interest. But nothing could have been more favourable to Canute, and he was at once declared the lawful sovereign of all England.<sup>a</sup>

The most imperfect and faint semblance of a right being thus established, the Saxon chiefs took an oath of fidelity to Canute as king; and Canute, in return, swore to be just and benevolent, and clasped their hands with his naked hand, in sign of sincerity. A full amnesty was promised; but the promise had scarcely passed the royal lips ere Canute began to proscribe those whom he had promised to love. The principal of the Saxon chiefs who had formerly opposed him and the relations of Eadmund and Æthelred were banished or put to death. The witenagemot or parliament, which had so recently passed the same sentence against the Danish princes, now excluded all the descendants of Æthelred from the throne. They declared Eadwig, a grown-up brother of Ironside, an outlaw, and when he was pursued and murdered by Canute, they tacitly acknowledged the justice of that execution.

Eadmund and Eadward, the two infant sons of the deceased king, Eadmund Ironside, were seized, and a feeling of shame, mingled perhaps with some fear of the popular odium, preventing him from murdering them in England, Canute sent them over sea to his ally and vassal, the king of Sweden, whom he requested to dispose of them in such a manner as should remove his uneasiness on their account. He meant that they should be murdered; but the Swedish king, moved by the innocence of the little children, instead of executing the horrid commission, sent them to the distant court of the king of Hungary, where they were affectionately and honourably entertained, beyond the reach of Canute. Of these two orphans, Eadmund died without issue, but Eadward married a daughter of the German emperor, by whom he became father to Eadgar Ætheling, Christina, and Margaret. Eadgar will be frequently mentioned in our subsequent pages; Margaret became the wife of Malcolm, king of Scotland, and through her the rights of the line of Alfred and Cerdic were transmitted to Malcolm's progeny, after the Norman conquest of England.

There were still two princes whose claims to the crown might some day disquiet Canute, but they were out of his reach, in Normandy. These were Eadward and Ælfred, the sons of King Æthelred by Emma. Their uncle Richard, the Norman duke, at first sent an embassy to the Dane, demanding, on their behalf, the restitution of the kingdom; but, though his power was great, he adopted no measures likely to induce Canute to a surrender or partition of the territories he was actually possessed of: and very soon after he entered into close and friendly negotiations with that enemy of his nephews, and even offered him their own mother and his sister in marriage. According to some historians, the first overtures to this unnatural marriage, which was followed by most unnatural consequences, proceeded from Canute. However this may be, the Dane wooed the widowed "Flower of Normandy"; and the heartless Emma, forgetful of the children she had borne, and only anxious to become again the wife of a king, readily gave her hand to the man who had caused the ruin and hastened the death of her husband Æthelred.

Having soon become the mother of another son, by Canute, this Norman woman neglected and despised her first-born; and those two princes, being



[1017-1030 A.D.]

detained at a distance from England, became by degrees strangers to their own country, forgot its language and its manners, and grew up Normans instead of Saxons. The Danish dynasty of Canute was not destined to take root; but the circumstance just alluded to most essentially contributed to place a long line of Norman princes upon the throne of England.<sup>b</sup>

## CANUTE'S PEACEFUL REIGN

The personal character of Canute, his gradual change from a barbarian conqueror into a king who stood beside Alfred in the memory of his people, makes him one of the most interesting studies in our whole history. But we have here to deal mainly with the political results of his accession. England was now brought more closely than ever into relations with other parts of the world. But those relations took a shape which was altogether new and unexpected. Canute was a conqueror, and his establishment in England was a conquest, so far as that a foreign king made his way to the English crown at the sword's point. But, when he had once made himself safe on the throne, there was nothing more of the conqueror about him. England was neither oppressed nor degraded under his rule. His government, his laws, were framed after the pattern of those of the ancient kings. He sent home his Danish army, keeping only a body of chosen guards, the famous housecarls. These were the first standing army known in England, a body of picked men, Danes, Englishmen, or brave men from any quarter. Canute gradually displaced the Danes, whom he had at first placed in high offices, and gave them English successors. He raised an Englishman, the renowned Godwin, to a place second only to kingship, with the new title of Earl of the West-Saxons. In her foreign relations England under her Danish king was in no sense a dependency of Denmark. England was the centre, Winchester was the imperial city, of a northern empire which rivalled those of the East and the West. Canute, it must be remembered, was chosen to the crown of England first of all while still very young. To that crown he added the crown of Denmark, on the death or deposition of his brother Harold. He won Norway, which had revolted against his father, from its king, Olaf; and he seems to have established his power over part of Sweden and other parts of the Baltic lands. But all these were acquisitions made by one who was already "king of all England"; they were largely won by English valour, and the complaint in Denmark and elsewhere was that Canute made his northern kingdoms subordinate to England, and preferred Englishmen rather than natives to high offices in them.<sup>i</sup>

Canute's last military expedition (1017-1019) was against the Cumbrians and Scots. Duncan, the regulus or under-king of Cumbria, refused homage and allegiance to the Dane, on the ground that he was a usurper; and Malcolm, king of Scotland, equally maintained that the English throne belonged of right to the legitimate heir of King Æthelred. Had the powerful duke of Normandy seconded these demonstrations in favour of his nephews, Canute's crown might have been put in jeopardy; but the Cumbrians and Scots were left to themselves, and compelled to submit, in the face of a most formidable army which the Dane had collected.

These constant successes and the enjoyment of peace which followed them, together with the sobering influence of increasing years, though he was yet in the prime of manhood, softened the conqueror's heart; and though he continued to rule despotically, the latter part of his reign was marked with no

acts of cruelty, and was probably, on the whole, a happier time than the English had known since the days of Alfred and Æthelstan. He was cheerful and accessible to all his subjects, without distinction of race or nation. He took pleasure in old songs and ballads of which both Danes and Saxons were passionately fond; he most liberally patronised the skalds, minstrels, and glee-men, the poets and musicians of the time, and occasionally wrote verses himself, which were orally circulated among the common people, and taken up and sung by them. He could scarcely have hit upon a surer road to popularity. A ballad of his composition continued long after to be a special favourite with the English peasantry. All of it is lost except the first verse, which has been preserved in the *Historia Eliensis*,<sup>aa</sup> or *History of Ely*. The interesting royal fragment is simply this:

Merrily sung the monks within Ely,  
When Canute king rowed thereby,  
Row, my knights, row near the land,  
And hear we these monks' song.

In his days of quiet, the devotion of the times had also its full influence on the character of Canute. This son of an apostate Christian showed himself a zealous believer, a friend to the monks, a visitor and collector of relics, a founder of churches and monasteries. His soul was assailed with remorse for the blood he had shed and the other crimes he had committed; and, in the year 1030, he determined to make a pilgrimage to Rome.

He started on his journey to the Holy City with a wallet on his back and a pilgrim's staff in his hand. He visited all the most celebrated churches on the road between the Low Countries and Rome, leaving at every one of them some proof of his liberality. According to a foreign chronicler, all the people on his way had reason to exclaim, "The blessing of God be upon the king of the English!" But no one tells us how dearly this munificence cost the English people. Returning from Rome, where he resided a considerable time, he purchased, in the city of Pavia, the arm of St. Augustine, "the Great Doctor." This precious relic, for which he paid 100 talents of gold and 100 talents of silver, he afterwards presented to the church of Coventry—an act of liberality by which, no doubt, he gained many friends and many prayers. On recrossing the Alps, Canute did not make his way direct to England, but went to his other kingdom of Denmark, where he remained some months. He, however, despatched the abbot of Tavistock to England with a long letter of explanation, command, and advice, addressed "to all the nation of the English, both nobles and commoners." This curious letter begins with explaining the motives of his pilgrimage, and the nature of the sacred omnipotence of the Church of Rome. It concludes:

And now, therefore, be it known to you all, that I have dedicated my life to God, to govern my kingdoms with justice, and to observe the right in all things. If, in the time that is passed, and in the violence and carelessness of youth, I have violated justice, it is my intention, by the help of God, to make full compensation. Therefore I beg and command those unto whom I have intrusted the government, as they wish to preserve my good-will, and save their own souls, to do no injustice either to rich or poor. Let those who are noble, and those who are not, equally obtain their rights, according to the laws—from which no deviation shall be allowed, either from fear of me, or through favour to the powerful, or for the purpose of supplying my treasury. I want no money raised by injustice.

It does not clearly appear whether the old writers refer the following oft-repeated incident to a period preceding or one subsequent to this Roman pilgrimage. When at the height of his power, and when all things seemed

[1030-1035 A.D.]

to bend to his lordly will (so goes the story), Canute, disgusted one day with the extravagant flatteries of his courtiers, determined to read them a practical lesson. He caused his throne to be placed on the verge of the sands on the seashore, as the tide was rolling in with its resistless might, and seating himself, he addressed the ocean, and said: "Ocean! the land on which I sit is mine, and thou art a part of my dominion, therefore rise not—obey my commands, nor presume to wet the edge of my robe." He sat for some time as if expecting obedience, but the sea rolled on in its immutable course, succeeding waves broke nearer and nearer to his feet, till at length the skirts of his garments and his legs were bathed by the waters. Then, turning to his courtiers and captains, Canute said: "Confess ye now how frivolous and vain is the might of an earthly king compared to that great Power who rules the elements, and can say unto the ocean, 'Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther.'" The chroniclers conclude the apologue by adding that he immediately took off his crown, and depositing it in the cathedral of Winchester never wore it again. This great Danish sovereign died in 1035, at Shaftesbury, about three years after his return from Rome, and was buried at Winchester.<sup>b</sup>

## THE DANISH SUCCESSION

From this period indeed it would be useless to draw distinctions between the Saxon and Danish races. In regard to language we may believe that the dialect of the later settlers of Northumbria and East Anglia became blended with that of the earlier settlers of Wessex and Mercia. In the same way the several races became gradually intermixed. We may accept the statement [of Worsæ,<sup>c</sup> the famous Danish antiquary] of a striking fact "that the inhabitants of the north of England bear, on the whole, more than those of any other part of that country, an unmistakable personal resemblance to the Danes and Norwegians." Still the conclusion is tolerably clear that the main bulk and body of the English nation is Saxon. From this period, therefore, when the contest of two centuries between Saxon and Dane came to an end, we shall consider the Danish population as a part of the great Anglo-Saxon family, with whom they had at last become identical in the possession of a common country and a common religion.<sup>h</sup>

On Canute's demise there was the usual difficulty and contention respecting the succession. He left but one legitimate son, Harthacnut, whom he had by Æthelred's widow, the lady Emma of Normandy. He had two illegitimate sons, Svend and Harold. In royal families bastardy was a very slight objection in those days; but according to the contemporary writers, it was the prevalent belief, or popular scandal, that these two young men were not the children of Canute, even illegitimately, but were imposed upon him as such by his acknowledged concubine Alfgiva, daughter of the ealdorman of Southampton, who, according to this gossip, knew full well that Svend was the son of a priest by another woman, and Harold the offspring of a cobbler and his wife. Whoever were their fathers and mothers, it is certain that Canute intended that his dominions should be divided among the three young men, and this without any apparent prejudice in favour of legitimacy; for Harold, and not Harthacnut, the lawful son, was to have England, which was esteemed by far the best portion. Denmark was to fall to Harthacnut, and Norway to Svend. Both these princes were in the north of Europe, and apparently in possession of power there, when Canute died. The powerful Earl Godwin, and the Saxons of the south generally, wished rather to choose for king of England either one



of the sons of Æthelred, who were still in Normandy, or Harthacnut, the son of Emma, who was at least connected with the old Saxon line. But Earl Leofric of Mercia, with the thanes north of the Thames, and all the Danes, supported the claims of the illegitimate Harold; and when the influential city of London<sup>1</sup> took this side, the cause of Harthacnut seemed almost hopeless. But still all the men of the south and the great Earl Godwin adhered to the latter, and a civil war was imminent, when it was wisely determined to effect a compromise by means of the witenagemot. This assembly met at Oxford, and there decided that Harold should have all the provinces north of the Thames, with London for his capital, while all the country south of that river should remain to Harthacnut.

Harthacnut, showing no anxiety for his dominions in England, lingered in Denmark, where the habits of the Scandinavian chiefs, and their hard drinking, were to his taste; but his mother Emma and Earl Godwin governed in the south on his behalf, and held a court at Winchester. Harold, however, who saw his superiority over his absent half-brother, took his measures for attaching the provinces of the south to his dominions, and two fruitless invasions from Normandy only tended to increase his power and facilitate that aggrandisement.

Soon after the news of Canute's death reached Normandy, Edward, the eldest of the surviving sons of Æthelred by Emma, who eventually became king of England under the title of Edward the Confessor, made sail for England with a few ships, and landed at Southampton, in the intention of claiming the crown. He threw himself in the midst of his mother's retainers, and was within a few miles of her residence at Winchester. But Emma had no affection for her children by Æthelred; she was at the moment making every exertion to secure the English throne for her son by Canute, and, instead of aiding Edward, she set the whole country in hostile array against him. He escaped with some difficulty from a formidable force, and fled back to Normandy, determined, it is said, never again to touch the soil of his fathers.

The second invasion from Normandy was attended with more tragical results, and part of the history of it is enveloped in an impenetrable mystery. An affectionate letter, purporting to be written by the queen-mother, Emma, was conveyed to her sons Edward and Ælired, reproaching them with their apathy, and urging that one of them at least should return to England and assert his right against the tyrant Harold. This letter is pronounced a forgery by the old writer who preserves it; but those who are disposed to take the darkest view of Emma's character may object that this writer was a paid encomiast of that queen, and therefore not likely to confess her guilty of being a participator in her own son's murder, even if such were the fact.

For ourselves, although she did not escape the strong suspicion of her contemporaries, any more than Earl Godwin, who was then in close alliance with her, we rather incline to the belief that the letter was forged by the order of Harold, though, again, there is a possibility that it may have been actually the production of the queen, who may have meant no harm to her son, and that the harm he suffered may have fallen upon him through Godwin, on that chief's seeing how he came attended. However this may be, Ælfred, the younger of the two brothers, accepted the invitation. The instructions of

[<sup>1</sup> The importance of the city of London as a political power that was so often in the succeeding centuries to decide the fates of kings and lines of kings, here for the first time manifested itself. "The new attitude of London," remarks Green,<sup>9</sup> "marked a decisive and important change. From the moment that London sided not with Wessex but with England, the relation of parties was altered, and the ultimate victory of the national will over provincial jealousies could be no longer doubtful."]

[1036 A.D.]

Emma's letter were to come without any armament; but he raised a considerable force in Normandy and Boulogne. When he appeared off Sandwich there was a far superior force there, which rendered his landing hopeless. He therefore bore round the North Foreland, and disembarked "opposite to Canterbury."

Having advanced some distance up the country without any opposition, he was met by Earl Godwin, who is said to have sworn faith to him, and to have undertaken to conduct him to his mother Emma. Avoiding London, where the party of Harold was predominant, they marched to Guildford, where Godwin billeted the strangers, in small parties of tens and scores, in different houses of the town. There was plenty of meat and drink prepared in every lodging, and Earl Godwin, taking his leave for the night, promised his dutiful attendance on Ælfred for the following morning. Tired with the day's journey, and filled with meat and wine, the separated company went to bed suspecting no wrong; but in the dead of night, when disarmed and buried in sleep, they were suddenly set upon by King Harold's forces, who seized and bound them all with chains and gyves. On the following morning they were ranged in a line before the executioners. There are said to have been six hundred victims, and, with the exception of every tenth man, they were all barbarously tortured and massacred. Prince Ælfred was reserved for a still more cruel fate. He was hurried away to London, where Harold personally insulted him; and from London he was sent to the isle of Ely. He made the sad journey mounted on



HAROLD HAREFOOT

(From ancient coin)

a wretched horse, naked, and with his feet tied beneath the animal's belly. At Ely he was arraigned before a mock court of Danish miscreants as a disturber of the country's peace, and was condemned to lose his eyes. His eyes were instantly torn out by main force, and he died a few days after. Some believe that Earl Godwin was guilty of betraying, or at least deserting the prince after he had landed in England, without having premeditated treachery in inviting him over; and they say his change of sentiment took place the instant he saw that Ælfred, instead of coming alone to throw himself on the affections of the Saxon people, had surrounded himself with a host of ambitious foreigners, all eager to share in the wealth and honours of the land. Henry of Huntingdon,<sup>e</sup> a writer of the twelfth century, supports this not irrational view of the case, and says that Godwin told his Saxon followers that Ælfred came escorted by too many Normans, and that it would be an act of imprudence to permit this race of foreigners to gain a footing in England. Shortly after the murder of Ælfred, Emma was either sent out of England by Harold, or retired a voluntary exile. It is to be remarked that she did not fix her residence in Normandy, where her son Edward, brother of Ælfred, was living, but went to the court of Baldwin, earl of Flanders.

Harold had now little difficulty in getting himself proclaimed "full king" over all the island. The election, indeed, was not sanctioned by legislative authority; but this authority, always fluctuating and uncertain, was at present almost worthless. A more important opposition was that offered by the church, in whose ranks the Saxons were far more numerous than the Danes, or priests of Danish descent. Æthelnoth, the archbishop of Canterbury, who was a Saxon, refused to perform the ceremonies of the coronation. Taking the crown and sceptre, which it appears had been intrusted to his charge by Canute, he laid them on the altar, and said, "Harold, I will neither give them to thee, nor prevent thee from taking the ensigns of royalty; but I will not bless thee, nor shall any bishop consecrate thee on the throne." It is said that on this, like a modern conqueror, the Dane put the crown on his head with his own hands. His chief amusement was hunting; and, from the fleetness with which he could follow the game on foot, he acquired the name of Harold Harefoot. Little more is known about him, except that he died after a short reign of four years, in 1040, and was buried at Westminster.



HARTHACNUT  
(From ancient coin)

Harthacnut, his half-brother, was at Bruges, and on the point of invading England, when Harold died. After long delays in Denmark he listened to the urgent calls of his exiled mother, the still stirring and ambitious Emma; and, leaving a greater force ready at the mouth of the Baltic, he sailed to Flanders with nine ships to consult his parent. He had been but a short time at Bruges when a deputation of English and Danish thanes arrived there to invite him to ascend in peace the most brilliant of his father's thrones. The two great factions in England had come to this agreement, but according to the chroniclers they were soon made to repent of it by the exactions and rapacity of Harthacnut. Relying more on the Danes, among whom he had lived so long, than on the English, and being averse to part with the com-

panions of his revels and drinking-bouts, he brought with him a great number of Danish chiefs and courtiers, and retained an expensive Danish army and navy. This obliged him to have frequent recourse to *Danegelds*, the arbitrary levying of which by his *huscarles*, or household troops, who were all Danes, caused frequent insurrections. The people of Worcester resisted the *huscarles* with arms in their hands, and slew two of the king's collectors. In revenge for this contempt that city was burned to the ground, a great part of the surrounding country laid desolate, and the goods of the citizens put to the spoil "by such power of lords and men-of-war as the king sent against them." Not even the church was exempted from these oppressive levies of Danegeld, for a monkish writer complains that the clergy were forced to sell the very chalices from the altar in order to pay their assessments.

On his first arriving in England, Harthacnut showed his revenge for the injury done by Harold to himself and his relatives in a truly barbarous manner. By his order the body of Harold was dug up from the grave, its head was struck off, and then both body and head were thrown into the Thames. Some of the old writers say that Godwin was obliged to assist at the disinterment



[1040-1042 A.D.]

and decapitation of the corpse, the mutilated remains of which were soon after drawn out of the river by some Danish fishermen, who secretly interred them in the churchyard of St. Clement Danes. Earl Godwin, indeed, a very short time after, was formally accused of Ælfred's murder, but he cleared himself in law by his own oath and the oaths of many of his peers, and a rich and splendid present is generally supposed to have set the question at rest between him and Harthacnut, though it failed to quit him in popular opinion. This present was a ship of the first class, covered with gilded metal, and bearing a figurehead in solid gold; the crew, which formed an intrinsic part of the gift, were fourscore picked warriors, and each warrior was furnished with dress and appointments of the most costly description—a gilded helmet was on his head, a triple hauberk on his body, a sword with a hilt of gold hung by his side, a Danish battle-axe, damasked with silver, was on his shoulder, a gold-studded shield on his left arm, and in his right hand a gilded *alegar*.

During the remainder of Harthacnut's short reign, Earl Godwin and Emma, the queen-mother, who were again in friendly alliance, divided nearly all the authority of government between them, leaving the king to the tranquil enjoyment of the things he most prized in life—his banquets, which were spread four times a day, and his carousals at night. From many incidental passages in the old writers we should conclude that the Saxons themselves were sufficiently addicted to drinking and the pleasures of the table, and required no instructors in those particulars; yet it is pretty generally stated that hard drinking became fashionable under the Danes, and more than one chronicler laments that Englishmen learned from the example of Harthacnut "their excessive gormandising and unmeasurable filling of their bellies with meats and drinks."

This king's death was in keeping with the tenor of his life. When he had reigned two years all but ten days, he took part, with his usual zest, in the marriage feast of one of his Danish thanes, which was held at Clapham. At a late hour of the night, as he stood up to pledge that jovial company, he suddenly fell down speechless, with the wine-cup in his hand: he was removed to an inner chamber, but he spoke no more; and thus the last Danish king in England died drunk. He was buried in the church of Winchester, near his father Canute.

#### THE ACCESSION OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR: POWER OF EARL GODWIN

Harthacnut was scarcely in his grave when his half brother Edward, who was many years his senior, ascended the throne (1042) with no opposition, except such as he found from his own fears and scruples, which, had he been left to himself, would probably have induced him to prefer a monastery, or some other quiet retirement in Normandy. During his very brief reign, Harthacnut had recalled the exile to England, had received him with honour and affection, granted him a handsome allowance, and even proposed, it is said, to associate him in his government. Edward was, therefore, at hand, and in a favourable position at the moment of crisis; nor, according to the modern laws of hereditary succession, could anyone have established so good a right; for his half-nephew Edward, who was still far away in Hungary, was only illegitimately descended from the royal line of Cerdic and Alfred—his father, Eadmund Ironside, though older than Edward, being a natural son of their common father Æthelred. But, in truth, rules of succession had little to do with the settlement of the crown, which was affected by a variety of other and more potent

agencies. The connection between the Danish and English crowns was evidently breaking off; there was a prospect that the two parties in England would soon be left to decide their contest without any intervention from Denmark; and for some time the Saxon party had been gaining ground.

On their side, the Danes, having no descendant of the great Canute around whom to rally, became less vehement for the expulsion of the Saxon line, while many of them settled in the south of the island were won over by the reputed virtue and sanctity of Edward. If we may judge by the uncertain light of some of the chronicles, many leading Danes quitted England on Harthacnut's decease; and it seems quite certain that when the nobles and prelates of the Saxons assembled in London, with the resolution of electing Edward, they encountered no opposition from any Danish faction. But the great Earl Godwin, the still suspected murderer of the new king's brother Ælfred, had by far the greatest share in Edward's elevation. This veteran politician, of an age considered barbarous, and of a race (the Saxon) generally noted rather for stupidity and dulness than for acuteness and adroitness, trimmed his sails according to the winds that predominated, with a degree of skill which would stand a comparison with the manœuvres of the most celebrated political intriguers of the most modern times. In all the struggles that had taken place since the death of Canute, he had changed sides with astonishing facility and rapidity—going back more than once to the party he had deserted, then changing again, and always causing the faction he embraced to triumph just so long as he adhered to it, and no longer. Changes, ruinous to others, only brought him an accession of strength. At the death of Harthacnut he was earl of all Wessex and Kent; and by his alliances and intrigues he controlled nearly the whole of the southern and more Saxon part of England.

The parentage of the great earl is obscured by conflicting accounts of contemporary writers, but there is considerable evidence to point to the conclusion that his father's station in life was a lowly one. Some writers have accepted the tradition that he was a cowherd as proof that even in Saxon England it was possible for a man to rise from the humblest beginnings to a position of the greatest influence. According to this story while tending cattle for his father a well-to-do Sussex yeoman, he helped the Danish Earl Ulf to escape to his ships. For this he was rewarded by Canute, whose service he entered, and after whose accession he was created earl of Wessex. Other accounts of the earl's life make him the son of a Sussex thane, Wulfnoth, and a relative of the faithless Edric Streona. But there is no question of his power at Edward's accession.<sup>a</sup> He was a fluent speaker; but his eloquence, no doubt, owed much of its faculty of conveying conviction to the power or material means he had always at hand to enforce his arguments. When he rose in the assembly of thanes and bishops, and gave it as his opinion that Edward should be their king, there were but very few dissentient voices; and the earl carefully marked the weak minority, who seem all to have been Saxons, and drove them into exile shortly after. It is pretty generally stated that his relation, William, duke of Normandy, afterwards the Conqueror, materially aided Edward by his influence, having firmly announced to the Saxons that if they failed in their duty to the sons of Emma they should feel the weight of his vengeance; but we more than doubt the authenticity of this fact, from the simple circumstances of Duke William's being only fifteen years old at the time, and his states being in most lamentable confusion and anarchy, pressed from without by the French king and troubled within by factious nobles, who all wished to take advantage of his youth and inexperience.

[1042-1043 A.D.]

Edward hated the man who was serving him ; and while Godwin was placing him on the throne, he could not detach his eyes from the bloody grave to which, in his conviction, the earl had sent his brother Ælfred. Godwin was perfectly well aware of these feelings, and, like a practised politician, before he stirred in Edward's cause, and when the fate of that prince, even to his life or death, was in his hands, he made such stipulations as were best calculated to secure him against their effects. He obtained an extension of territories, honours, and commands for himself and his sons; a solemn assurance that the past was forgiven; and, as a pledge for future affection and family union, he made Edward consent to marry his daughter. The fair Eadgyth (Edith), the daughter of the fortunate earl, became queen of England; but the heart was not to be controlled, and Edward was never a husband to her. Yet, from contemporary accounts, Eadgyth was deserving of love, and possessed of such a union of good qualities as ought to have removed the deep-rooted antipathies of the king to herself and her race. Her person was beautiful; her manners graceful; her disposition cheerful, meek, pious, and generous, without a taint of her father's or brothers' pride and arrogance. Her mental accomplishments far surpassed the standard of that age; she was fond of reading, and had read many books.

If Edward neglected and afterwards persecuted his wife, he behaved in a still harsher and more summary manner to his mother Emma, who, though she has few claims on our sympathy, was, in spite of all her faults, entitled to some consideration from him. But he could not forgive past injuries; he could not forget that, while she lavished her affections and ill-gotten treasures on her children by Canute, she had left him and his brother to languish in poverty in Normandy, where they were forced to eat the bitter bread of other people; and he seems never to have relieved her from the horrid suspicion of having had part in Ælfred's murder. These feelings were probably exasperated by her refusing to advance him money at a moment of need, just before or at the date of his coronation. Shortly after his coronation he held a council at Gloucester, whence, accompanied by earls Godwin, Leofric, and Siward, he hurried to Winchester, where Emma had again established a sort of court, seized her treasures, and all the cattle, the corn, and the forage on the lands which she possessed as a dower, and behaved otherwise to her with great harshness. Some say she was committed to close custody in the abbey of Wearwell; but, according to the more generally received account, she was permitted to retain her lands, and to reside at large at Winchester, where, it appears, she died in 1052, the tenth year of Edward's reign.



EDWARD THE CONFESSOR

In the second year of Edward's reign (1043) a faint demonstration to



re-establish the Scandinavian supremacy in England was made by Magnus, king of Norway and Denmark; but the Saxons assembled a great fleet at Sandwich; the Danes in the land remained quiet; and, his last hopes expiring, Magnus was soon induced to declare that he thought it "right and most convenient" that he should let Edward enjoy his crown, and content himself with the kingdoms which God had given him.

But, though undisturbed by foreign invasions or the internal wars of a competitor for the crown, Edward was little more than a king in name. This abject condition arose in part, but certainly not wholly, from his easy, pacific disposition; for he not unfrequently showed himself capable of energy, and firm and sudden decisions; and although superstitious and monk-ridden, he was, when roused, neither deficient in talent nor in moral courage. A wider



SAXON CHAPEL, DEERHURST, GLOUCESTERSHIRE  
(Built by Earl Odda, early times of Edward the Confessor)

and deeper spring, that sapped the royal authority, was the enormous power of which Godwin and other earls had possessed themselves before his accession; and this power he himself was obliged to augment before he could put his foot on the lowest step of the throne. When he had kept his promises with the "great earl"—and he could not possibly evade them—what with the territories and commands of Godwin and of his six sons, Harold, Sweyn, Wulfnoth, Tostig, Gurth, and Leofwine, the whole of the south of England, from Lincolnshire to the end of Devonshire, was in the hands of one family. Nor had Edward's authority a better basis elsewhere, for the whole of the north was unequally divided between Leofric [of Mercia] and the greater Earl Siward, whose dominions extended from the Humber to the Scottish border. These earls possessed all that was valuable in sovereignty within the territories they held. They appointed their own judges, received fines, and levied what troops they chose.

The chief security of the king lay in the clashing interests and jealousies of these mighty vassals. As the king endeared himself to his people by reducing taxation and removing the odious Danegeld altogether, by reviving

[1043 A.D.]

the old Saxon laws, and administering them with justice and promptitude—as he gained their reverence by his mild virtues, and still more by his ascetic devotion, which eventually caused his canonisation, he might have been enabled to curb the family of Godwin and the rest, and raise his depressed throne by means of the popular will and affection; but unfortunately there were circumstances interwoven which neutralised Edward's advantages, and gave the favourable colour of nationality and patriotism to the cause of Godwin whenever he chose to quarrel with the king.

## GROWTH OF NORMAN INFLUENCE

It was perfectly natural that Edward should have an affection for the Normans, among whom the best years of his life had been passed and who had given him food and shelter when he was abandoned by all the rest of the world. He was only thirteen years old when he was first sent into Normandy; he was somewhat past forty when he ascended the English throne; so that for twenty-seven years he had been accustomed to foreign manners and habits, and to convey all his thoughts and feelings through the medium of a foreign language. He was accused of a predilection for the French or "Romance," which by this time had superseded their Scandinavian dialect, and become the vernacular language of the Normans; but it is more than probable he had forgotten his Saxon. Relying on Edward's gratitude and friendship, several Normans came over with him when he was invited to England by Harthacnut; this number was augmented after his accession to the throne; and as the king provided for them all, or gave them constant entertainment at his court, fresh adventurers continued to cross the Channel.

It was chiefly in the church that Edward provided for his foreign favourites. Robert of Jumièges, a Norman, and, like most of his race, a personal enemy to Earl Godwin, was promoted to be archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all England; and crosiers and abbots' staffs were liberally distributed to the king's exotic chaplains and house clerks, who are said to have closed all the avenues of access to his person and favour against the English-born. Those Saxon nobles, who yet hoped to prosper at court, learned to speak French, and imitated the dress, fashions, and manner of living of the Normans. Edward adopted, in all documents and charters, the handwriting of the Normans, which he thought handsomer than that of the English; he introduced the use of the "great seal," which he appended to his parchments, in addition to the simple mark of the cross, which had been used by the Anglo-Saxon kings; and as his chancellor, secretaries of state, and legal advisers were all foreigners, the English lawyers were obliged to study French, and to employ a foreign language in their deeds and papers. The study of the French language, to the neglect of the Saxon, became very general; and the rich, the young, and the gay of both sexes were not satisfied unless their tunics, their *chaussés*, their streamers, and mufflers were cut after the latest Norman pattern. Not one of these things was trifling in its influence—united, their effect must have been most important as a prelude to the great drama of the Norman conquest.

All this, however, was distasteful to the great body of the Saxon people, and highly irritating to Earl Godwin, who is said to have exacted an express and solemn promise from the king not to inundate the land with Normans, ere he consented to raise him to the throne. The earl could scarcely take up a more popular ground; and he made his more private wrongs—the king's treatment of his daughter, and disinclination to the society of himself and

his sons—all close and revolve round this centre. Even personally the sympathy of the people went with him. "Is it astonishing," they said, "that the author and supporter of Edward's reign should be wroth to see new men, of a foreign nation, preferred to himself?"

But in 1051 an event occurred which exasperated the whole nation against the Normans, and gave Godwin the opportunity of recovering all his reputation and influence with the Saxon people. Among the many foreigners that came over to visit the king was Eustace, count of Boulogne, who had married the lady Goda, a daughter of Æthelred, and sister to Edward. This loving brother-in-law, with rather a numerous retinue of warriors and men-at-arms, was hospitably entertained at the court of Edward, where he saw Frenchmen, and Normans, and everything that was French and foreign so completely in the ascendant that he was led to despise the Saxons as a people already conquered. On his return homewards Eustace slept one night at Canterbury. The next morning he continued his route for Dover, and when he was within a mile of that town he ordered a halt, left his travelling palfrey, and mounted his war-horse, which a page led in his right hand. He also put on his coat of mail; all his people did the same; and in this warlike harness they entered Dover. The foreigners marched insolently through the town, choosing the best houses in which to pass the night, and taking free quarters on the citizens without asking permission, which was contrary to the laws and customs of the Saxons. One of the townsmen boldly repelled from his threshold a retainer who pretended to take up his quarters in his house. The stranger drew his sword and wounded the Englishman; the Englishman armed in haste, and he, or one of his house, slew the Frenchman. At this intelligence, Count Eustace and all his troop mounted on horseback, and, surrounding the house of the Englishman, some of them forced their way in, and murdered him on his own hearth-stone. This done, they galloped through the streets with their naked swords in their hands, striking men and women, and crushing several children under their horses' hoofs.

This outrage roused the spirit of the burghers, who armed themselves with such weapons as they had and met the mailed warriors in a mass. After a fierce conflict, in which nineteen of the foreigners were slain and many more wounded, Eustace, with the rest, being unable to reach the port and embark, retreated out of Dover, and then galloped with loose rein towards Gloucester, to lay his complaints before the king. Edward, who was, as usual, surrounded by his Norman favourites, gave his peace to Eustace and his companions; and believing, on the simple assertion of his brother-in-law, that the inhabitants of Dover were in the wrong and had begun the affray, he sent immediately to Earl Godwin, in whose government the city lay. "Set out forthwith," said the king's order; "go and chastise with a military execution those who attack my relations with the sword, and trouble the peace of the country." "It ill becomes you," replied Godwin, "to condemn, without a hearing, the men whom it is your duty to protect." The circumstances of the fight at Dover were now known all over the country; the assault evidently had begun by a Frenchman's daring to violate the sanctity of an Englishman's house, and, right or wrong, the Saxon people would naturally espouse the cause of their countrymen. Instead, therefore, of chastising the burghers, the earl sided with them. Before proceeding to extremities, Godwin proposed that the magistrates of Dover should be cited in a legal manner to appear before the king and the royal judges, to give an account of their conduct. Edward would not listen to this just and reasonable proposition, but summoned Godwin to appear before his court at Gloucester; and, on his hesitating to put



[1051 A.D.]

himself in so much jeopardy, threatened him and his family with banishment and confiscation. Then the great earl armed; and though some of the chroniclers assert it was only to redress the popular grievances, and to make an appeal to the English against the courtiers from beyond sea, and that nothing was farther from his thoughts than to offer insult or violence to the king of his own creation, we are far from being convinced of the entire purity of his motives or the moderation of his objects.

## REVOLT AND FALL OF GODWIN

Godwin, who ruled the country south of the Thames, from one end to the other, gathered his forces together, and was joined by a large body of the people, who voluntarily took up arms. Harold, the eldest of his sons, collected many men all along the eastern coast between the Thames and the Wash; and Sweyn, his second son, arrayed his soldiers, and formed a patriotic association among the Saxons who dwelt on the banks of the Severn and along the frontiers of Wales. These three columns soon concentrated near Gloucester, then the royal residence; and, with means adequate to enforce his wish, Godwin demanded that the Count Eustace, his companions, and many other Normans and Frenchmen, should be given up to the justice of the nation. Edward, knowing he was wholly at the mercy of his irritated father-in-law, was still firm. To gain time he opened a negotiation; and so much was he still esteemed by the people that Godwin was obliged to save appearances, and to grant him that delay which, for a while, wholly overcast the earl's fortunes. Edward had secured the good-will of Godwin's great rivals—Siward, earl of Northumbria, and Leofric, earl of Mercia: to these chiefs he now applied for protection.

When these forces united and marched to the king's rescue, they were equal or superior in number to those of Godwin, who had thus lost his moment. The people, however, had improved in wisdom; and, on the two armies coming in front of each other, it was presently seen, by their respective leaders, that old animosities had in a great measure died away—that the Anglo-Danes from the north were by no means anxious to engage their brethren of the south for the cause of Normans, men equally alien to them both, and that the Saxons of the south were averse to shedding the blood of the Anglo-Danes of the north. An armistice was concluded between the king and Godwin, and it was agreed to refer all differences to an assembly to be held at London in the following autumn. Hostages and oaths were exchanged—both king and earl swearing "God's peace and full friendship" for one another. Edward employed the interval between the armistice and the meeting of the witenagemot in publishing a ban for the levying of a royal army all over the kingdom, in engaging troops, both foreign and domestic, and in strengthening himself by all the means he could command. In the same time the forces of Harold, which consisted in chief part of burghers and yeomen, who had armed under the first excitement of a popular quarrel, and who had neither pay nor quarters in the field, dwindled rapidly away. According to the *Saxon Chronicle*,<sup>s</sup> the king's army, which was cantoned within and about London, soon became the most numerous that had been seen in this reign. The chief and many of the subordinate commands in it were given to Norman favourites, who thirsted for the blood of Earl Godwin. At the appointed time the earl and his sons were summoned to appear before the witenagemot, without any military escort whatsoever.

Godwin, who before now had frequently both suffered and practised treachery, refused to attend the assembly unless proper securities were given that he and his sons should go thither and depart thence in safety. This reasonable demand was repeated, and twice refused; and then Edward and the great council pronounced a sentence of banishment, decreeing that the earl and all his family should quit the land forever within five days. There was no appeal; and Godwin and his sons, who, it appears, had marched to Southwark, on finding that even the small force they had brought with them was thinned by hourly



desertion, fled by night for their lives. The sudden fall of this great family confounded and stupefied the popular mind. "Wonderful would it have been thought," says the *Saxon Chronicle*,<sup>s</sup> "if anyone had said before that matters would come to such a pass." Before the expiration of the five days' grace a troop of horsemen was sent to pursue and seize the earl and his family; but these soldiers were wholly or chiefly Saxons, and either could not or would not overtake them. Godwin, with his wife and his three sons, Sweyn, Tostig, and Gurth, embarked on the east coast, and sailed to Flanders, where he was well received by Earl Baldwin; Harold and his brother Leofwine crossed the sea to Ireland. Their broad lands and houses, with everything upon them and within them, were confiscated; their governments and honours distributed, in part among foreigners; and scarcely a trace was left in the country of the warlike earl or his bold sons. But a fair daughter of that house remained; Eadgyth was still queen of England, and on her Edward determined to pour out the last vial of his wrath, and complete his vengeance on the obnoxious race that had given him the throne. He seized her dower, he took

from her her jewels and her money, "even to the uttermost farthing," and allowing her only the attendance of one maiden, he closely confined his virgin wife in the monastery of Wearwell, of which one of his sisters was lady abbess; and in this cheerless captivity she, in the language of one of the old chroniclers, "in tears and prayers expected the day of her release and comfort."

Delivered from the awe and timidity he had always felt in Earl Godwin's presence, the king now put no restraint on his affection for the Normans, who flocked over in greater shoals than ever to make their fortunes in England. A few months after Godwin's exile he expressed his anxious desire to have William, duke of Normandy, for his guest; and that ambitious and most crafty prince, who already began to entertain projects on England, readily accepted the invitation, and came over with a numerous retinue, in the fixed purpose of turning the visit to the best account by personally informing himself of the strength and condition of the country, and by influencing the councils of the king, who had no children to succeed him, and was said to be labouring under a vow of perpetual chastity, even as if he had been a cloistered monk.<sup>b</sup>

#### ROLLO

Among the most formidable of the sea-kings in the beginning of the tenth century was Rollo, who, from his activity, had acquired the surname of the Ganger. The north of France was the theatre of his exploits; and the mari-

[1027 A.D.]

time provinces which had already been ravaged by Hasting were laid desolate by the repeated invasions of this restless barbarian.<sup>o</sup> He tracked the course of his ruthless precursors. He defeated the French armies, besieged Paris for four years, took Bayeux and Evreux, and attacked Paris again.

At length, all hope of expelling him by force having expired, it was suggested by the counsellors of Charles the Simple to propose to him the cession of a country for himself and his companions, in full property and sovereignty, yielding only feudal homage to the crown of France. Rollo, after some hesitation, with the consent of the chieftains, acquiesced in the proposition: and that extensive district from the Epte to the sea, which was afterwards called Normandy, was ceded to his power, with the title of Duke and the hand of the fair Gisela, the French king's daughter. The pacification arranged, the ceremony of the homage only remained. It was necessary to kneel, and kiss the king's foot; and this the proud pagan disdained. The prelate who attended the king declared that a gift so magnificent deserved his compliance. "I will never," exclaimed Rollo, "bend my knees to the knees of any man, nor kiss any man's foot." Unfortunately, this was the ancient mode of feudal homage, and could not be dispensed with. The Frankish nobles solicited him in vain. At last, as a substitute, he ordered one of his knights to do the ceremony for him. The knight, revolting, like his master, at the degradation, murmured, and obeyed; but, instead of kneeling, he seized the royal foot, standing upright, and, carrying it suddenly to his mouth, threw the king on the floor—a contumelious indignity, which, on such an occasion, a haughty savage only could have offered, and only a defeated prince have endured.<sup>n</sup>

Rollo left his dominions to his posterity, a race of able and fortunate princes. The necessity of cultivating a desert introduced habits of industry and subordination among the colonists. Their numbers were repeatedly multiplied by the accession of new adventurers; and that spirit of enterprise and contempt of danger which had distinguished their fathers in the pursuit of plunder soon enabled them to reach and even to outstrip their neighbours in the career of civilisation. Within less than one hundred and fifty years from the baptism of Rollo, the Normans were ranked among the most polished as well as the most warlike nations of Europe.<sup>o</sup>

#### WILLIAM OF NORMANDY

William was the natural son of Robert II, duke of Normandy—the fifth in succession from Rollo, and the son of Duke Richard II. Richard II was a brother to Queen Emma, who was the mother by Æthelred of King Edward and of the murdered Ælfred, as also by her second husband, Canute the Great, of the preceding king, Harthacnut. On the mother's side William's descent was sufficiently obscure. One day, as the Duke Robert was returning from the chase, he met a fair girl, who, with companions of her own age, was washing clothes in a brook. Struck by her surpassing beauty, he sent one of his discreetest knights to make proposals to her family. Such a mode of proceeding is startling enough in our days, but in that age of barbarism and the license of power the wonder is he did not seize the lowly maiden by force, without treaty or negotiation. The father of the maiden, who was a currier or tanner, of the town of Falaise, at first received the proposals of Robert's love-ambassador with indignation; but on second thought he went to consult one of his brothers, a hermit in a neighbouring forest; and this religious man gave it as his opinion that one ought, in all things, to conform to



the will of the powerful man. The name of the maid of Falaise was Arlete, Harlotta, or Herleva—for she is indiscriminately called by these different appellations, which all seem to come from the old Norman or Danish compound, *Her-leve*, “the much-loved.” And the duke continued to love her dearly; and he brought up the boy William, he had by her, with as much care and honour as if he had been the son of a lawful spouse.

When William was only seven years old, his father, Duke Robert, resolved to go to Jerusalem as a pilgrim, to obtain the remission of his sins. The Norman chiefs, anxious to retain him among them, represented that it would be a bad thing for them to be left without a head. The native chroniclers put the following naïve reply into the mouth of Duke Robert: “By my faith, sirs, I will not leave you without a seigneur. I have a little bastard, who will grow big, if it please God! Choose him from this moment, and, before you all, I will put him in possession of this duchy as my successor.” The Normans did what Duke Robert proposed, “because,” says the chronicle, “it suited them so to do.” According to the feudal practice they one by one placed their hands within his hands, and swore fidelity to the child. Robert had a presentiment that he would not return; and he never did: he died about a year after (1034), on his road home. He had scarcely donned his pilgrim’s weeds and departed from Normandy when several relations of the old duke protested against the election of William, alleging that a bastard was not worthy of commanding the children of the Scandinavians. A civil war ensued, in which the party of William was decidedly victorious.

As the boy advanced in years he showed an indomitable spirit and a wonderful aptitude in learning those knightly and warlike exercises which then constituted the principal part of education. This endeared him to his partisans; and the important day on which he first put on armour, and mounted his battle-steed without the aid of stirrup, was held as a festal day in Normandy. Occasions were not wanting for the practice of war and battles, but were, on the contrary, frequently presented both by his own turbulent subjects and his ambitious neighbours. From his tender youth upwards, William was habituated to warfare and bloodshed, and to the exercise of policy and craft, by which he often succeeded when force and arms failed. His disposition was revengeful and pitiless in the extreme. At an after period of life, when he had imposed respect or dread upon the world, he scorned the distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate birth, and more than once bravely put “We, William the Bastard,” to his charters and declarations; but at the commencement of his career he was exceedingly susceptible and sore on this point, and often took sanguinary vengeance on those who scoffed at the stain of his birth.

The fame of William’s doings had long preceded him to England, where they created very different emotions, according to men’s dispositions and interests. But when he himself arrived in England, with a numerous and splendid train, it is said that the duke of Normandy might have doubted, from the evidence of his senses, whether he had quitted his own country. Normans commanded the Saxon fleet he met at Dover, Normans garrisoned the castle and a fortress on a hill at Canterbury; and as he advanced on the journey Norman knights, bishops, abbots, and burghers met him at every relay to bid him welcome. At the court of Edward, in the midst of Norman clerks, priests, and nobles, who looked up to him as their “natural lord,” he was more a king than the king himself; and every day he spent in England must have conveyed additional conviction of the extent of Norman influence, and of the weakness and disorganisation of the country.

[1051-1052 A.D.]

It is recorded by the old writers that King Edward gave a most affectionate welcome to his good cousin Duke William, that he lived lovingly with him while he was here, and that at his departure he gave him a most royal gift of arms, horses, hounds, and hawks. But what passed in the private and confidential intercourse of the two princes these writers knew not, and attempted not to divine; and the only evident fact is that, after William's visit, the Normans in England carried their assumption of superiority still higher than before.

## THE RETURN OF GODWIN

But preparations were in progress for the interrupting of this domination. Ever since his flight into Flanders, Godwin had been actively engaged in devising means for his triumphant return, and in corresponding with and keeping up the spirits of the Saxon party at home. In the following summer (1052) the great earl got together a number of ships, and, eluding the vigilance of the royal fleet, he fell upon the southern coast, where many Saxons gave him a hearty welcome. He had previously won over the Saxon garrison and the mariners of Hastings, and he now sent secret emissaries all over the country, at whose representations hosts of people took up arms, binding themselves by oath to the cause of the exiled chief, and "promising, all with one voice," says Roger of Hoveden,<sup>l</sup> "to live or die with Godwin."

Sailing along the Sussex coast to the Isle of Wight, he was met there by his sons Harold and Leofwine, who had brought over a considerable force in men and ships from Ireland. From the Isle of Wight the Saxon chiefs sailed to Sandwich, where they landed part of their forces without opposition, and then, with the rest, boldly doubled the North Foreland, and sailed up the Thames towards London. As they advanced, the popularity of their cause was manifestly displayed; the Saxon and Anglo-Danish troops of the king, and all the royal ships they met, went over to them; the burghers and peasants hastened to supply them with provisions, and to join the cry against the Normans. In this easy and triumphant manner did the exiles reach the suburb of Southwark, where they anchored, and landed without being obliged to draw a sword or bend a single bow. Their presence threw everything into confusion; and the court party soon saw that the citizens of London were as well affected to Godwin as the rest of the people had shown themselves. The earl sent a respectful message to the king, requesting for himself and family the revision of the irregular sentence of exile, the restoration of their former territories, honours, and employments; promising, on these conditions, a dutiful and entire submission.

Though he must have known the critical state of his affairs, Edward was firm or obstinate, and sternly refused the conditions. Godwin despatched other messengers, but they returned with an equally positive refusal, and then the old earl had the greatest difficulty in restraining his irritated partisans. But the game was in his hand, and his moderation and aversion to the spilling of kindred blood greatly strengthened his party. On the opposite side of the river a royal fleet of fifty sail was moored, and a considerable army was drawn up on the bank; but it was soon found there was no relying either on the mariners or the soldiers, who, for the most part, if not won over to the cause of Godwin, were averse to civil war. Still, while most of his party were trembling around him, and not a few seeking safety in flight or concealment, the king remained inflexible. The boldest of his Norman favourites, who

foresaw that peace between the Saxons would be their ruin, ventured to press him to give the signal for attack; but the now openly expressed sentiments of the royal troops, and the arguments of the priest Stigand and many of the Saxon nobles, finally induced Edward to yield, and give his reluctant consent to the opening of negotiations with his detested father-in-law. The foreign favourites fled in all directions, some taking refuge in the castles or fortresses commanded by their countrymen, and others making for the shores of the British Channel, where they lay concealed until favourable opportunities offered for passing over to the Continent.

In the mean time the witenagemot was summoned, and when Godwin, in plenitude of might, appeared before it, after having visited the humbled king, the "earls" and "all the best men of the land" agreed in the proposition that the Normans were guilty of the late dissensions, and Godwin and his sons innocent of the crimes of which they had been accused. With the exception of four or five obscure men, a sentence of outlawry was hurled against all the Normans and French; and, after he had given hostages to Edward, Godwin and his sons, with the exception only of Sweyn, received full restitution; and, as a completion of his triumph, his daughter Eadgyth was removed from her monastic prison to court, and restored to all her honours as queen. The hostages granted were Wulfnoth, the youngest son, and Hakon, a grandson of Godwin. Edward had no sooner got them into his hands than, for safer custody, he sent them over to his cousin, William of Normandy, and from this circumstance there arose a curious episode, or under-act, in the treacherous and sanguinary drama. The exclusion of Sweyn from pardon, and a nominal restoration to the king's friendship, did not arise from the active part he had taken in the Norman quarrel, but was based on his old crimes, and more particularly the treacherous murder of his cousin Beorn.

Godwin did not long survive the re-establishment of Saxon supremacy, and his complete victory over the king. According to Henry of Huntingdon,<sup>e</sup> and other chroniclers, a very short time after their feigned reconciliation, as Godwin sat at table with the king at Windsor, Edward again reproached the earl with his brother Ælfred's murder. "O king!" Godwin is made to say, "whence comes it that, at the least remembrance of your brother, you show me a bad countenance? If I have contributed, even indirectly, to his cruel fate, may the God of heaven cause this morsel of bread to choke me!" He put the bread to his mouth, and, according to this story, was choked, and died instantly. But it appears, from better authority, that Godwin's death was by no means so sudden and dramatic; that though he fell speechless from the king's table on Easter Monday, most probably from apoplexy, he was taken up and carried into an inner chamber by his two sons, Tostig and Gurth, and did not die till the following Thursday.

Harold, the eldest, the handsomest, the most accomplished, and in every respect the best of all the sons of Godwin, succeeded to his father's territories and command, and to even more than Godwin's authority in the nation; for, while the people equally considered him as the great champion of the Saxon cause, he was far less obnoxious than his father to the king; and whereas his father's iron frame was sinking under the weight of years, he was in the prime and vigour of life. The spirit of Edward, moreover, was subdued by misfortune, the fast-coming infirmities of age, and a still increasing devotion, that taught him all worldly dominion was a bauble not worth contending for. He was also conciliated by the permission to retain some of his foreign bishops, abbots, and clerks, and to recall a few other favourites from Normandy.



[1053-1059 A.D.]

## HAROLD, THE REAL RULER OF ENGLAND

The extent of Harold's power was soon made manifest. On succeeding to Godwin's earldom, he had vacated his own command of East Anglia, which was bestowed on Ælfgar (Algar), the son of Earl Leofric, the hereditary enemy of the house of Godwin, who had held it during Harold's disgrace and exile. As soon as he felt confident of his strength, Harold caused Ælfgar to be expelled his government and banished the land, upon an accusation of treason; and, however unjust the sentence may have been, it appears to have been passed with the sanction and concurrence of the witenagemot. Ælfgar, who had married a Welsh princess, the daughter of King Gruffydd, fled into Wales, whence, relying on the power and influence possessed by his father, the earl Leofric, and by his other family connections and allies, he shortly after issued with a considerable force, and fell upon the county and city of Hereford.

Harold soon hastened to the scene of action; and advancing from Gloucester with a well-appointed army defeated Ælfgar, and followed him in his retreat through the mountain defiles and across the moors and morasses of Wales. Ælfgar, however, still showed himself so powerful that Harold was obliged to treat with him. By these negotiations he was restored to his former possessions and honours; and when, very shortly after, his father Leofric died, Ælfgar was allowed to take possession of his vast earldoms. The king seems to have wished that Ælfgar should have been a counterpoise to Harold, as Leofric had once been to Godwin; but, both in council and camp, Harold carried everything before him, and his jealousy being again excited, he again drove Ælfgar into banishment. Ælfgar, indeed, was no mean rival. Both in boldness of character and in the nature of his adventures he bore some resemblance to Harold. This time he fled into Ireland, whence he soon returned with a small fleet and an army, chiefly raised among the Northmen who had settled on the Irish coasts. With this force, and the assistance of the Welsh under his father-in-law, King Gruffydd, he recovered his earldoms by force of arms, and held them in defiance of the decrees of the king, who whatever were his secret wishes, was obliged openly to denounce these proceedings as illegal and treasonable. After enjoying this triumph little more than a year, Ælfgar died (1059), and left two sons, Morear (Morkere) and Edwin (Eadwine), who divided between them part of his territories and commands.

While these events were in progress, other circumstances had occurred in the north of England which materially augmented the power of Harold. Siward, the great earl of Northumbria, another of Godwin's most formidable rivals, had died, after an expedition into Scotland, and as his elder son Osbern had been slain, and his younger son Waltheof was too young to succeed to his father's government, the extensive northern earldom was given to Tostig, the brother of Harold. Siward had proceeded to Scotland to assist in seating his relation, Prince Malcolm, the son of the late King Duncan, upon the throne of that country, which had been usurped by Duncan's murderer, Macbeth. It was in this enterprise, and before it was crowned with final success, that, as has just been mentioned, Osbern, the pride of his father's heart, was slain. He appears to have fallen in the first battle fought with Macbeth (1054), near the hill of Dunsinane.

Siward, who was a Dane, either by birth or near descent, was much beloved by the Northumbrians, who were themselves chiefly of Danish extraction. They called him Siward the Strong; and many years after his death they showed, with pride, a rock of solid granite which they pretended he had split

in two with a single blow of his battle-axe. To his successor, Tostig, the brother of Harold, they showed a strong dislike from the first, and this aversion was subsequently increased by acts of tyranny on the part of the new earl. In another direction the popularity of Harold was increased by a most successful campaign against the Welsh, who had inflamed the hatred of the Saxon people by their recent forays and cruel murders. Their great leader, King Gruffydd, had been weakened by the death of Earl Ælfgar, in 1059; and after some minor operations Harold was commissioned, in 1063, to carry extreme measures into effect against the ever-turbulent Welsh.

The great earl displayed his usual ability, bravery, and activity; and by skilfully combined movements, in which his brother Tostig and the Northumbrians acted in concert with him—by employing the fleet along the coast, by accoutring his troops with light helmets, targets, and breast-pieces made of leather instead of their usual heavy armour, in order that they might be the better able to follow the fleet-footed Welsh—he gained a succession of victories, and finally reduced the mountaineers to such despair that they decapitated their king, Gruffydd, and sent his bleeding head to Harold, as a peace-offering and token of submission. The two half-brothers of Gruffydd swore fealty and gave hostages to King Edward and Harold. They also engaged to pay the ancient tribute; and a law was passed that every Welshman found in arms to the east of Offa's Dyke should lose his right hand. From this memorable expedition, the good effects of which were felt in England, through the tranquillity of the Welsh, for many years after, Harold returned in a sort of a Roman triumph to the mild and peaceable Edward, to whom he presented the ghastly head of Gruffydd, together with the rostrum or beak of that king's chief war-ship.

The king's devotion still kept increasing with his years, and now, forgetful of his bodily infirmities, which, in all probability, would have caused his death on the road, and indifferent to the temporal good of his people, he expressed his intention of going in pilgrimage to Rome, asserting that he was bound thereto by a solemn vow. The witan objected that, as he had no children, his absence and death would expose the nation to the dangers of a disputed succession; and then the king, for the first time, turned his thoughts to his nephew and namesake, Eadward, the son of his half-brother, Eadmund Ironside. The long neglect of this prince of the old race of Cerdic and Ælfred shows but slight affection for that Saxon family; and, as the king had never expected any children of his own to succeed him, it seems to confirm the statement of those old writers who say he had all along intended to bequeath his crown to his cousin, William of Normandy. But at this moment Norman interest and influence were at a low ebb; be his wishes what they might, Edward durst not propose the succession of William; and, being pressed by the witan and his own eager desire of travelling to Rome, he sent an embassy to the German emperor, Henry III, whose relative the young prince had married, requesting he might be restored to the care of the English nation.

Eadward the Ætheling, or Eadward the Outlaw as he is more commonly called, obeyed the summons with alacrity, and soon arrived in London, with his wife Agatha and his three young children—Eadgar, Margaret, and Christina. The race of their old kings was still dear to the English: Eadmund Ironside was a national hero, inferior only to the great Ælfred; his gallantry, his bravery, his victories over the Danes were sung in popular songs, and still formed the subject of daily conversation among the people, who therefore received his son and grandchildren with the most hearty welcome and enthusiastic joy. But though King Edward had invited over his nephew with the

[1064 A.D.]

professed intention of proclaiming him his heir to the crown, that prince was never admitted into his presence. This circumstance could not fail of creating great disgust; but this and all other sentiments in the popular mind were speedily absorbed by the deep and universal grief and despondence caused by Prince Eadward's death. He expired in London shortly after his arrival in that city, and was buried in the cathedral of St. Paul's. This sudden catastrophe, and the voluntary or constrained coyness of the king towards his nephew, awakened horrid suspicions of foul play. The more generally received opinion seems to have been that the prince was kept at a distance by the machinations and contrivances of the jealous Harold, and that that earl caused him to be poisoned, in order to remove what he considered the greatest obstacle to his own future plans.

In justice, however, the memory of Harold ought not to be loaded with a crime which possibly after all was never committed; for the prince might very well have died a natural death, although his demise tallied with the views and interests of Harold. There is no shadow of proof that Harold circumvented and then destroyed the prince. It is merely presumed that, because the earl gained most by his death, he caused him to be killed. But William of Normandy gained as much as Harold by the removal of the prince, and was, at the very least, as capable of extreme and treacherous measures. During his visit in England, the king may have promised the duke that he would never receive his nephew Eadward; and while this circumstance would of itself account for the king's shyness, the coming of the prince would excite the jealousy and alarm of William, who had emissaries in the land and friends and partisans about the court. Supposing, therefore, Prince Eadward to have been murdered (and there is no proof that he was), the crime was as likely to have been committed by the orders of the duke as by those of the earl.

The demise of Eadward the Outlaw certainly cut off the national hope of a continuance of the old Saxon dynasty; for though he left a son, called Eadgar the Ætheling, that prince was very young. Had he been the most promising of youths, it is very doubtful whether a minor would not have been crushed by one or other of two such bold and skilful competitors as William and Harold. As matters stood, the king, whose journey to Rome could be no more talked of, turned his eyes to Normandy, while many of the Saxons began to look up to Harold, the brother of the queen, as the best and most national successor to the throne.

#### THE OATH OF HAROLD

That Harold went to Normandy at this time is certain; but it is said that his sole object in going was to obtain the release of his brother Wulfnoth and his nephew Hakon, the two hostages for the Godwin family, whom Edward had committed to the custody of Duke William, but whom he was now willing to restore. Another opinion is that Harold's going at all was wholly accidental. According to this version, being one day at his manor of Bosenham, or Bosham, on the Sussex coast, he went into a fishing-boat for recreation, with but few attendants, and those not very expert mariners; and scarcely was he launched into the deep, when a violent storm suddenly arose and drove the ill-managed boat upon the opposite coast of France; but whether he went by accident or design, or whatever were the motives of the voyage, the following facts seem to be pretty generally admitted:

Harold was wrecked or stranded near the mouth of the river Somme, in the territory of Guy, count of Ponthieu, who, according to a barbarous practice,



held as good law in the Middle Ages, seized the wreck as his right, and made the passengers his prisoners until they should pay a heavy ransom for their release. Harold made his condition known to Duke William, and entreated his good offices. The duke could not be blind to the advantages that might be derived from this accident, and he instantly and earnestly demanded that Harold should be released and sent to his court. William at first employed threats, without talking of ransom. The count of Ponthieu, who knew the rank of his captive, was deaf to these menaces, and only yielded on the offer of a large sum of money. Harold then went to Rouen; and the bastard of Normandy had the gratification of having in his court, and in his power, and bound to him by this recent obligation, the son of the great enemy of the Normans, one of the chiefs of the league that had banished from England the foreign courtiers—the intriguers in his favour for the royalty of that kingdom.

Although received with much magnificence, and treated with great respect and even a semblance of affection, Harold soon perceived he was in a more dangerous prison at Rouen than he had been in the castle of Guy. If he was uninformed as yet as to William's intentions, that happy ignorance was soon removed, and the whole peril of his present situation placed full before him by the duke, who said to him one day, as they were riding side by side: "When Edward and I lived together, like brothers, under the same roof, he promised me that, if ever he became king of England, he would make me his successor. Harold, I would, right well, that you helped me in the fulfilment of this promise; and be assured that if I obtain the kingdom by your aid, whatever you choose to ask shall be granted on the instant." The liberty and life of the earl were in the hands of the proposer, and so Harold promised to do what he could. William was not to be satisfied with vague promises. "Since you consent to serve me," he continued, "you must engage to fortify Dover Castle, to dig a well of good water there, and to give it up to my men-at-arms; you must also give me your sister, that I may marry her to one of my chiefs; and you yourself must marry my daughter Adele. Moreover, I wish you, at your departure, to leave me, in pledge of your promises, one of the hostages whose liberty you now reclaim; he will stay under my guard, and I will restore him to you in England when I arrive there as king." Harold felt that to refuse or object would be only to expose himself to ruin; and the champion of the Saxon cause, hiding his heart's abhorrence, pledged himself verbally to deliver the principal fortress of his country to the Normans, and to fulfil all the other engagements, which were as much forced upon him as though William had held the knife to his defenceless throat. But the ambitious, crafty, and suspicious Norman was not yet satisfied.

In the town of Avranches, or, according to other authorities, in the town of Bayeux, William summoned a grand council of the barons of Normandy, to be witnesses to the oaths he should exact from the English earl. The sanctity of an oath was so frequently disregarded in these devout ages that men had begun to consider it not enough to swear by the majesty of heaven and the hopes of eternal salvation; and had invented sundry plans, such as swearing upon the host or consecrated wafer and upon the relics of saints and martyrs, which, in their dull conception, were things far more awful and binding.

But William determined to gain this additional guarantee by a trick. On the eve of the day fixed for the assembly, he caused all the bones and relics of saints preserved in all the churches and monasteries in the country to be collected and deposited in a large tub, which was placed in the council-chamber,

[1064-1065 A.D.]

and covered and concealed under a cloth of gold. At the appointed meeting, when William was seated on his chair of state, with a rich sword in his hand, a golden diadem on his head, and all his Norman chieftains round about him, the missal was brought in, and being opened at the evangelists was laid upon the cloth of gold which covered the tub, and gave it the appearance of a rich table or altar. Then Duke William rose and said: "Earl Harold, I require you, before this noble assembly, to confirm by oath the promises you have made me—to wit, to assist me in obtaining the kingdom of England after King Edward's death, to marry my daughter Adele, and to send me your sister, that I may give her in marriage to one of mine." Harold, who, it is said, was thus publicly taken by surprise, durst not retract; he stepped forward with a troubled and confused air, laid his hand upon the book, and swore. As soon as the oath was taken, at a signal from the duke the missal was removed, the cloth of gold was taken off, and the large tub was discovered, filled to the very brim with dead men's bones and dried-up bodies of saints, over which the son of Godwin had sworn without knowing it. According to the Norman chroniclers, Harold shuddered at the sight. Having, in his apprehension, thus made surety doubly sure, William loaded Harold with presents and permitted him to depart. Liberty was restored to young Hakon, who returned to England with his uncle, but the politic duke retained the other hostage, Wulfnoth, as a further security for the faith of his brother the earl.<sup>b</sup>

There is so much contradiction and conflict of statement in the several stories of Harold's oath, all of which come to us from Norman writers desirous of bolstering up the claims of the Conqueror, that it is impossible to get at the exact truth. Freeman<sup>i</sup> says: "The tale is altogether impossible; but it is very likely that Harold was shipwrecked on the shore of Ponthieu and imprisoned by its count, Guy; that he was released by the interference of Duke William; that, in return for this favour, Harold helped him in his war with the Bretons; that he promised to marry his daughter, and that he did an act of formal homage to his intended father-in-law and temporary military commander. Here is most likely the germ of the story, a story about which the contemporary English writers are significantly silent, while the Normans improved it into such forms as suited their own purposes."<sup>a</sup>

#### EDWARD'S LAST YEARS

Harold had scarcely set foot in England when he was called to the field by circumstances which, for the present, gave him an opportunity of showing his justice and impartiality, or his wise policy, but which soon afterwards tended to complicate the difficulties of his situation. His brother Tostig, who had been intrusted with the government of Northumbria on good Siward's death, behaved with so much rapacity, tyranny, and cruelty as to provoke a general rising against his authority and person. Tostig fled; his treasury and armory were pillaged, and two hundred of his bodyguard were massacred on the banks of the Ouse.

The Northumbrians then determined to choose an earl for themselves; and their choice fell on Morcar, one of the sons of Earl Ælfgar, the old enemy of Harold and his family. Morcar, whose power and influence were extensive in Lincoln, Nottingham, and Derbyshire, readily accepted the authority offered him, and gathering together an armed host, and securing the services of a body of Welsh auxiliaries, he not only took possession of the great northern earldom, but advanced to Northampton, with an evident intention of extending

his power towards the south of England; but here he was met by the active and intrepid Harold, who had never yet returned vanquished from a field of battle. Before drawing the sword against his own countrymen, the son of Godwin proposed a conference. The Northumbrians, at the meeting, exposed the wrongs they had suffered from Tostig, and the motives of their insurrection. Harold endeavoured to palliate the faults of his brother, and promised better conduct for the future, if they would receive him back as their earl. But the Northumbrians unanimously protested against any reconciliation with the chief who had tyrannised over them. "We were born free men," said they, "and were brought up in freedom; a proud chief is to us unbearable—for we have learned from our ancestors to live free, or die."

The crimes of Tostig were proved, and Harold, giving up his brother's cause as lost, agreed to the demands of the Northumbrians that the appointment of Morecar as earl should be confirmed. A truce being concluded, he hastened to obtain the consent of the king, which was little more than a matter of form, and granted immediately. The Northumbrians then withdrew with their new earl, Morecar, from Northampton. As for the expelled Tostig, he fled to the court of Baldwin of Flanders, whose daughter he had married, and, burning with rage and revenge, and considering himself betrayed or unjustly abandoned by his brother Harold, he opened a correspondence and sought friendship and support with William of Normandy.

The childless and now childish Edward was dying. Harold arrived in London on the last day of November; the king grew worse and worse; and in the first days of January it was evident that the hand of death was upon him. The veil of mystery and doubt again thickens round the royal deathbed. The Norman writers positively affirm that Edward named William his successor, and that when Harold and his kinsmen forced their way into his chamber to obtain a different decision, he said to them with his dying voice, "Ye know right well, my lords, that I have bequeathed my kingdom to the duke of Normandy; and are there not those here who have plighted oaths to secure William's succession?" On the other side it is maintained, with equal confidence, that he named Harold his successor, and told the chiefs and churchmen that no one was so worthy of the crown as the great son of Godwin.

The Norman duke, whose best right was the sword of conquest, always insisted on the intentions and last will of Edward. But, although the will of a popular king was occasionally allowed much weight in the decision, it was not imperative or binding to the Saxon people without the consent and concurrence of the witenagemot—the parliament or great council of the nation—to which source of right the Norman, very naturally, never thought of applying. The English crown was in great measure an elective crown. As the royal race ended in Edward, or only survived in a boy, it became imperative to look elsewhere for a successor: and upon whom could the eyes of the nation so naturally fall as upon the experienced, skilful, and brave Harold, the defender of the Saxon cause and the near relation by marriage of their last king? Harold, therefore, derived his authority from what ought always to be considered its most legitimate source, and which was actually acknowledged to be so in the age and country in which he lived. William, a foreigner of an obnoxious race, rested his claim on Edward's dying declaration, and on a will that the king had no faculty to make or enforce without the consent and ratification of the states of the kingdom; and, strange to say, this will, which was held by some to give a plausible or even a just title (which it did not), was never produced, whence people concluded it had never existed.



[1065-1066 A.D.]

During these his last days, however, the anxious mind of the king was in good part absorbed by the care for his own sepulture, and his earnest wish that Westminster Abbey, which he had rebuilt from the foundation, should be completed and consecrated before he departed this life. The works, to which he had devoted a tenth part of his revenue, were pressed—they were finished; but on the festival of the Innocents, the day fixed for the consecration, he could not leave his chamber; and the grand ceremony was performed in presence of Queen Eadgyth, who represented her dying husband, and of a great concourse of nobles and priests, who had been bidden in unusual numbers to the Christmas festival, that they might partake in this solemn celebration. He expired on the 5th of January, 1066; and, on the very next day, the festival of the Epiphany, all that remained of the last Saxon king of the race of Cerdic and Ælfred was interred, with great pomp and solemnity, within the walls of the sacred edifice he had lived just long enough to complete. He was in his sixty-fifth or sixty-sixth year, and had reigned over England nearly twenty-four years.

The body of laws he compiled, which were so fondly remembered in after times when the Saxons were ground to the dust by Norman tyranny, were selected from the codes or collections of his predecessors, Æthelbert, Ine, and Ælfred, few or none of them originating in himself, although the gratitude of the nation long continued to attribute them all to him.<sup>1</sup> In his personal character pious, humane, and temperate, but infirm and easily persuaded, his whole life showed that he was better fitted to be a monk than a king.

#### THE ACCESSION OF HAROLD

Harold was proclaimed king in a vast assembly of the chiefs and nobles, and of the citizens of London, almost as soon as the body of Edward was deposited in the tomb, and the same evening witnessed his solemn coronation, only a few hours intervening between the two ceremonies.<sup>b</sup>

Of the lawfulness of Harold's succession, according to the English law of the time, there can be no doubt. He was nominated by the late king, regularly chosen, regularly consecrated. The witan had always exercised a free choice within the royal house, and the same principle would justify a choice beyond the royal house, when the royal house contained no qualified candidate. Minorities had been endured after the death of Eadred, and after the death of Eadgar. But then the only man in the land who held at all the same position as Harold now did was the churchman Dunstan. In fact the claims of Eadgar the Ætheling do not seem to have been put forward at the time. They begin to be heard of at a later time, when the notion of strict hereditary right was growing. When Harold is blamed at the time, it is not for disregarding the hereditary right of Eadgar but for breaking his own personal engagement to William. Whatever was the nature of that engagement, its breach was at most a ground of complaint against Harold personally; it could give William no claim as against the people of England. According to English law, William had no shadow of claim. The crown was not hereditary but

[Hallam says: "It became a favourite cry to demand the laws of Edward the Confessor; and the Normans themselves, as they grew dissatisfied with the royal administration, fell into these English sentiments. But what these laws were, or more properly, perhaps, these customs subsisting in the Confessor's age, was not very distinctly understood. In claiming the laws of Edward the Confessor, our ancestors meant but the redress of grievances, which tradition told them had not always existed."]

elective; and he was not elected to it. Nor had he even any hereditary claim; for he was not of the kingly stock of Cerdic. The alleged bequest of Edward was cancelled by the later bequest in favour of Harold. The whole question was a personal question between William and Harold. A single act of homage done by Harold to William when in William's military service could not bind Harold to refuse the crown which the nation offered him. William then had no claim to the crown on any showing, either of natural right or of English law.<sup>i</sup>

As for his oath, the strong mind of the Saxon, though not destitute of superstition, may have risen superior to the terrors of the dead men's bones, and the oaths that had been extorted from him most foully and by force in Normandy; but the circumstances, no doubt, made an unfavourable impression on the minds of such of his countrymen as were acquainted with them.



THE CORONATION OF KING HAROLD

Still, all the southern counties of England hailed his accession with joy; nor was he wanting himself in exertions to increase his well-established popularity. "He studied," says Holinshed,<sup>t</sup> "by all means which way to win the people's favour, and omitted no occasion whereby he might show any token of bounteous liberality, gentleness, and courteous behaviour towards them. The grievous customs, also, and taxes which his predecessors had raised, he either abolished or diminished; the ordinary wages of his servants and men-of-war he increased, and further showed himself very well bent to all virtue and goodness." Roger of Hoveden<sup>l</sup> adds that, from the moment of his accession, he showed himself pious, humble, and affable, and that he spared himself no fatigue, either by land or by sea, for the defence of his country.

The court was effectually cleared of the unpopular foreign favourites, but their property was respected; they were left in the enjoyment of their civil rights, and not a few retained their employments. Some of these Nor-

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mans were the first to announce the death of Edward and the coronation of Harold to Duke William. At the moment when he received this great news William was in his hunting-grounds near Rouen. On a sudden he was observed to be very pensive; and giving his bow to one of his people, he threw himself into a skiff, crossed the river Seine, and then hurried on to his palace of Rouen, without saying a word to anyone. He stopped in the great hall, and strode up and down that apartment, now sitting down, now rising, changing his seat and his posture, as if unable to find rest in any. None of his attendants durst approach, he looked so fierce and agitated. Recovering from his reverie, William agreed that ambassadors should be immediately sent to England. When these envoys appeared before Harold, they said, "William, duke of the Normans, reminds thee of the oath thou hast sworn him with thy mouth, and with thy hand on good and holy relics." "It is true," replied the Saxon king, "that I made an oath to William, but I made it under the influence of force; I promised what did not belong to me, and engaged to do what I never could do; for my royalty does not belong to me, nor can I dispose of it without the consent of my country. In the like manner I cannot, without the consent of my country, espouse a foreign wife. As for my sister, whom the duke claims, in order that he may marry her to one of his chiefs, she has been dead some time—will he that I send him her corpse?" A second embassy terminated in mutual reproaches; and then William, swearing that, in the course of the year, he would come to exact all that was due to him, pressed those preparations for war which he had begun almost as soon as he learned the course events had taken in England.

#### WILLIAM'S PREPARATION FOR THE INVASION

On the Continent the opinion of most men was in favour of William, and Harold was regarded in the light of a sacrilegious oath-breaker, with whom no terms were to be kept. The habitual love of war, and the hopes of obtaining copious plunder and rich settlements in England, were not without their effect. In the cabinet council which the duke assembled, there was not one dissenting voice; all the great Norman lords were of opinion that the island ought to be invaded; and, knowing the magnitude of the enterprise, they engaged to serve him with their body and goods, even to the selling or mortgaging their inheritance. Some subscribed for ships, others to furnish men-at-arms, others engaged to march in person; the priests gave their gold and silver, the merchants their stuffs, and the farmers their corn and provender. A clerk stood near the duke, with a large book open before him; and as the vassals made their promises he wrote them all down in his register.

The ambitious William looked far beyond the confines of Normandy for soldiers of fortune to assist him in his enterprise. He had his ban of war published in all the neighbouring countries; he offered good pay to every tall, robust man who would serve him with a lance, the sword, or the cross-bow. A multitude flocked to him from all parts. They came from Maine and Anjou; from Poitou and Brittany; from the country of the French king and from Flanders; from Aquitaine and from Burgundy; from Piedmont beyond the Alps and from the banks of the Rhine. Adventurers by profession, the idle, the dissipated, the profligate, the *enfants perdus* of Europe hurried at the summons. Of these some were knights, others simple foot-soldiers; some demanded regular pay in money, others merely their passage across the Channel, and all the booty they might make. Some demanded



territory in England; while others, again, simply wished to secure some rich Saxon lady in marriage. All the wild wishes, all the pretensions of human avarice were wakened into activity. "William," says the *Norman Chronicle*, "repulsed no one; but promised and pleased all as much as he could." He even sold, beforehand, a bishopric in England to a certain Remi of Fescamp (afterwards canonised as St. Remigius), for a ship and twenty men-at-arms.

Three churchmen—the celebrated Lanfranc, Robert of Jumièges (archbishop of Canterbury, who had been expelled by Earl Godwin and his sons), and a deacon of Lisieux—had been sent on an embassy to Rome, where they urged the cause of William with entire success, and obtained from Alexander II a holy license to invade England—on the condition, however, that the Norman duke, when he had conquered the island, should hold it as a fief of the church. This measure was not carried through the consistory without opposition. The man who combated most warmly in its favour was the fiery Hildebrand then archdeacon of the church of Rome, and afterwards the celebrated Pope Gregory VII. The most valid reasons William or his ambassadors could present to the pope were the will of King Edward the Confessor, which was never produced, the perjury and sacrilege of Harold, the forcible expulsion from England of the Norman prelates, and the old massacre of the Danes on St. Brice's Day by King Æthelred. But if there was any want of plausibility in the argumentative statement of his case, William, as already intimated, was most liberal and convincing in his promises to the pope.

A papal bull was sent to the Norman duke; and, in order to give him still more confidence and security in his invasion, a consecrated banner and a ring of great price, containing one of the hairs of St. Peter, were added to the bull. William repaired in person to St. Germain, in order to solicit the aid of Philip I, king of the French, who refused any direct assistance; but permitted (what he probably could not prevent) many hundreds of his subjects to join the expedition. William's father-in-law, Baldwin of Flanders, gave some assistance in men, ships, and stores; and the other Continental princes pretty generally encouraged William, in the politic hope that a formidable neighbour might be kept at a distance for the rest of his life if the expedition succeeded, or so weakened as to be no longer formidable if it failed. From early spring all through the summer months the most active preparations had been carried on in all the seaports of Normandy. Workmen of all classes were employed in building and equipping ships; smiths and armourers forged lances, and made coats of mail; and porters passed incessantly to and fro, carrying the arms from the workshops to the ships. These notes of preparation soon sounded across the Channel, and gave warning of the coming invasion.

#### THE INVASION OF TOSTIG AND HAROLD HARDRADE

The first storm of war that burst upon England did not, however, proceed from Normandy, but from Harold's own unnatural brother. It will be remembered how this brother, Tostig, expelled from Northumbria, fled with treacherous intentions to the court of the earl of Flanders, and opened communications with the duke of Normandy. Soon after Harold's coronation Tostig repaired in person to Rouen, where he boasted to William that he had more credit and real power in England than his brother, and promised him the sure possession of that country, if he would only unite with him for its conquest. William was no doubt too well informed to credit this assertion; but he saw the advantage which might be derived from this fraternal hatred;

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and gave Tostig a few ships, with which that miscreant ravaged the Isle of Wight and the country about Sandwich. Retreating before the naval force of his brother, Tostig then went to the coast of Lincolnshire, where he did great harm. He next sailed up the Humber, but was presently driven thence by Morecar, earl of Northumbria, and his brother Edwin, now living in friendship with Harold, who had espoused their sister, Eadgyth (Algotha), and made her queen of England. From the Humber, Tostig fled with only twelve small vessels to the north of Scotland, whence, forgetful of his alliance with the Norman duke, he sailed to the Baltic, to invite Sweyn, the king of Denmark, to the conquest of the island. Sweyn wisely declined the dangerous invitation; Tostig then, caring little what rival he raised to his brother, went to Norway, and pressed Harold Hardrada, the king of that country, to invade England. Hardrada could not resist the temptation; and, early in autumn, he set sail with a formidable fleet. Having touched at the Orkneys, where he left his queen, and procured a large reinforcement of pirates and adventurers, Hardrada made for England, and sailed up the Tyne, taking and plundering several towns. He then continued his course southwards, and, being joined by Tostig, sailed up the Humber and the Ouse. The Norwegian king and the Saxon traitor landed their united forces not far from the city of York. The earls Morecar and Edwin, true to Harold and their trust, marched boldly out from York; but they were defeated, after a desperate conflict, and compelled to flee. The citizens of York then opened their gates to the Norwegian conqueror.

Through all the summer months the last of the Saxon monarchs had been busily engaged watching the southern coast, where he expected William to land; but now, giving up for the moment every thought of the Normans, he united nearly all his forces, and marched most rapidly to the north. This march was so skilfully managed that the invaders had no notion of the advance; and they were taken by surprise when Harold burst upon them like a thunderbolt, in the neighbourhood of York, a very few days after their landing. Hardrada drew up his forces as best he could, at Stamford bridge. Before joining battle, Harold detached twenty mail-clad horsemen to parley with that wing of the enemy where the standard of Tostig was seen; and one of these warriors asked if Earl Tostig was there. Tostig answered for himself, and said, "You know he is here." The horsemen then, in the name of his brother, King Harôid, offered him peace and the whole of Northumbria; or, if that were too little, the third part of the realm of England.

"And what territory would Harold give in compensation to my ally Hardrada, king of Norway?" The horsemen replied, "Seven feet of English



HAROLD  
(From an old coin)

ground for a grave; or a little more, seeing that Hardrada is taller than most men." "Ride back," cried Tostig, "and bid King Harold make ready for the fight. When the Northmen tell the story of this day, they shall never say that Earl Tostig forsook King Hardrada, the son of Sigurd. He and I have one mind and one resolve, and that is either to die in battle or to possess all England." Soon after, the action commenced; it was long, fierce, and bloody, but the victory was decisive and in favour of Harold. Hardrada fell, with nearly every one of his chiefs, and the greater part of the Norwegians perished. Tostig, the cause of the war, was slain soon after Hardrada. Even the Norwegian fleet fell into the hands of the conqueror, who had the generosity to permit Olaf, the son of Hardrada, to depart, with all the survivors, in twenty-four ships, after that prince had sworn that he would forever maintain faith and friendship to England.

#### THE LANDING OF WILLIAM

Only three days after this signal victory the Normans landed in the south. Harold received this news as he was sitting joyfully at table in the good city of York; but, taking his measures with his usual rapidity, he instantly began his march towards London. Upon his way, his forces, which had suffered tremendously in the battle against the Norwegians, were weakened by discontents and desertion; and not a few men were left behind by the speed of his march, from the effects of their wounds and from sheer fatigue. In number, spirit, discipline, appointment, and in all other essentials, the enemies he had now to encounter were most formidable. They have well been called "the most remarkable and formidable armament which the western nations had seen, since some degree of regularity and order had been introduced into their civil and military arrangements." [Mackintosh.]<sup>p</sup>

By the middle of August the whole of William's fleet, with the land troops on board, had assembled at the mouth of the Dive, a small river which falls into the sea between the Seine and the Orne. The total number of vessels amounted to about three thousand, of which six hundred or seven hundred were of a superior order. During a whole month the winds were contrary, and kept the Norman fleet in that port.

During this delay some of the ships were wrecked, and their crews drowned on the coast. In consequence of all this, not a few of the discouraged adventurers broke their engagements, and withdrew from the army; and the rest were inclined to believe that providence had declared against the war. To check these feelings, which might have proved fatal to his projects, William caused the bodies of the shipwrecked to be privately buried as soon as they were found, and increased the rations both of food and strong drink. "He is mad!" murmured the soldiers, "who seeks to take possession of another's country! God is offended at such designs, and this he shows now by refusing us a fair wind." The duke then had recourse to something more potent than bread and wine. He caused the body of St. Valery to be taken from his shrine and carried in procession through the camp, the knights, soldiers, camp-followers, and sailors, all devoutly kneeling as it passed, and praying for the saint's intercession. In the course of the ensuing night the weather changed, and the wind blew fair from the Norman to the English coast. The troops repaired to their several ships, and at an early hour the next morning the whole fleet set sail. William led the van, in a vessel which had been presented to him for the occasion by his wife Matilda, and which was distin-



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guished by its splendid decorations in the day and in the darkness of night by a brilliant light at its masthead. The consecrated banner, sent from Rome by the pope, floated at the main topmast, and the invader had put a cross upon his flag, in testimony of the holiness of his undertaking.

The Norman fleet came to anchor on the Sussex coast, without meeting with any resistance; for Harold's ships, which so long had cruised on that coast, had been called elsewhere, or had returned into port through want of pay and provisions. It was on the 28th of September, 1066, that the Normans landed unopposed at a place called Bulverhithe, between Pevensey and Hastings. The duke was the last man to land; and as his foot touched the sand, he made a false step, and fell upon his face. A murmur instantly succeeded this trifling mishap, and the soldiery cried out, "God keep us! but here is a bad sign!" The Conqueror's presence of mind never forsook him, and, leaping gaily to his feet, and showing them his hand full of English earth or sand, he exclaimed, "What now? What astonishes you? I have taken seisin of this land with my hands, and, by the splendour of God! as far as it extends it is mine—it is yours!"

From the landing-place the army marched to Hastings, near to which town he traced a fortified camp, and set up two of the wooden castles or towers that he had brought with him from Normandy. Detached corps of Normans then overran all the neighbouring country, pillaging and burning the houses. The English concealed their goods and their cattle, and repaired in crowds to the sacred protection of their inland churches. William personally surveyed all the neighbouring country, and occupied the old Roman castle of Pevensey with a strong detachment. He was presently welcomed into England by the remnant of the old Norman court party which had been so predominant in the days of the late king. It is probable that the disembarking would occupy two or three days; but sixteen days elapsed between their arrival and the battle, and in all that time William made no advance into the country, but lingered within a few miles of the coast where he had landed.

On reaching London, where he appears to have been well received by the people, Harold manned seven hundred vessels, and sent them round to hinder William's escape; for he made no doubt of vanquishing the Normans, even as he had so recently vanquished the Norwegians. Reinforcements of troops came in from all quarters except from the north; and another of his Norman spies and advisers, who was residing in the capital, informed the duke there were grounds for apprehending that in a few days the Saxon army would be swelled to one hundred thousand men. But Harold was irritated by the ravages committed in the country by the invaders; he was impatient to meet them: and, hoping to profit a second time by a sudden and unexpected attack, he marched off for the Sussex coast by night, only six days after his arrival in London, and with forces inferior in numbers to those of William.

The camp of William was well guarded; and, to prevent all surprise, he had thrown out advanced posts to a considerable distance. These posts, composed of good cavalry, fell back as the Saxons approached, and told William that Harold was rushing on with the speed and fury of a madman. On his side, Harold despatched some spies, who spoke the French language, to ascertain the position and state of preparation of the Normans. Both these the returning spies reported to be formidable, and they added, with astonishment, that there were more priests in William's camp than there were soldiers in the English army. These men had mistaken for priests all the Norman soldiers that had short hair and shaven upper lips; for it was then the fashion of the English to let both their hair and their moustaches grow long.

Harold smiled at their mistake, and said, "Those whom you have found in such great numbers are not priests, but brave men of war, who will soon show us what they are worth." He then halted his army at Senlac, since called Battle, and, changing his plan, surrounded his camp with ditches and palisades, and waited the attack of his rival in that well-chosen position.

One whole day was passed in fruitless negotiations, the nature of which is differently reported by the old chroniclers. According to William of Poitiers,<sup>u</sup> who was chaplain to the Conqueror, and had the best means of information, and the writer or writers of the *Chronicle of Normandy*,<sup>v</sup> a monk named Hugh Maigrot was despatched to demand from Harold, in the name of William, that he would do one of three things: resign his crown in favour of the Norman, submit to the arbitration of the pope, or decide the quarrel by single combat. Harold sent a refusal to all of these proposals, upon which William charged the monk with this last message: "Go, and tell Harold that if he will keep his old bargain with me, I will leave him all the country beyond the river Humber, and will give his brother Gurth all the lands of his father, Earl Godwin; but if he obstinately refuse what I offer him, thou wilt tell him, before all his people, that he is perjured and a liar; that he and all those who shall support him are excommunicated by the pope, and that I carry a bull to that effect." The *Norman Chronicle* says that the monk Hugh pronounced this message in a solemn tone, and at the word "excommunication," the English chiefs gazed upon one another in great dismay; but that, nevertheless, they all resolved to fight to the last, well knowing that the Norman had promised their lands to his nobles, his captains, and his knights, who had already done homage for them.

#### THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS OR SENLAC (1066 A.D.)

The Normans quitted Hastings, and occupied an eminence opposite to the English, plainly showing that they intended to give battle on the morrow. Several reasons had been pressed upon Harold by his followers, and were now repeated, why he should decline the combat, or absent himself from its perilous chances. It was urged that the desperate situation of the duke of Normandy forced him to bring matters to a speedy decision, and put his whole fortune on the issue of a battle, for his provisions were already exhausted, and his supplies from beyond sea would be rendered precarious both by the storms of the coming winter and the operations of the English fleet, which had already blockaded all the ships William kept with him in the ports of Pevensey and Hastings; but that he, the king of England, in his own country, and well provided with provisions, might bide his own time, and harass with skirmishes a decreasing enemy, who would be exposed to all the discomforts of an inclement season and deep miry roads; that if a general action were now avoided, the whole mass of the English people, made sensible of the danger that threatened their property, their honour, and their liberties, would reinforce his army from all quarters, and by degrees render it invincible. As he turned a deaf ear to all these arguments, his brother Gurth, who was greatly attached to him, and a man of bravery and good counsel, endeavoured to persuade him not to be present at the action, but to set out for London, and bring up the levies, while his best friends should sustain the attack of the Normans.

"O Harold," said the young man, "thou canst not deny that, either by force or free-will, thou hast made Duke William an oath upon the body of

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saints; why, then, adventure thyself in the dangers of the combat with a perjury against thee? To us, who have sworn nothing, this war is proper and just, for we defend our country. Leave us, then, alone to fight this battle—thou wilt succour us if we are forced to retreat, and if we die thou wilt avenge us.” To this touching appeal Harold answered that his duty forbade him to keep at a distance whilst others risked their lives; and, determined to fight and full of confidence in the justice of his cause, he awaited the morrow with his usual courage. The night was cold and clear. It was spent very differently by the hostile armies: the English feasted and rejoiced, singing their old national songs, and emptying their horn-cups, which were well filled with beer and wine; the Normans, having looked to their arms and to their horses, listened to their priests and monks, who prayed and sang litanies; and that over, the soldiers confessed themselves, and took the sacrament by thousands at a time.

The day of trial—Saturday, the 14th of October—was come. As day dawned, Odo, the bishop of Bayeux, a half-brother of Duke William, celebrated mass, and gave his benediction to the troops, being armed the while in a coat of mail, which he wore under his episcopal rochet; and when the mass and the blessing were over, he mounted a war-horse, which the old chroniclers, with their interesting minuteness of detail, tell us was large and white, took a lance in his hand, and marshalled his brigade of cavalry. William rode a fine Spanish horse, which a rich Norman had brought him on his return from a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Iago (Santiago) of Galicia: he wore suspended round his neck some of those revered relics upon which Harold had sworn, and the standard blessed by the pope was carried at his side by one Tonstain, surnamed the White, or the Fair, who accepted the honourable but dangerous office, after two Norman barons had declined it. Just before giving the word to advance, he briefly addressed his collected host: “Make up your minds to fight valiantly, and slay your enemies. A great booty is before us: for if we conquer we shall all be rich; what I gain you will gain—if I take this land, you will have it in lots among you. Know ye, however, that I am not come hither solely to take what is my due, but also to avenge our whole nation for the felonies, perjuries, and treachery of these English. They massacred our kinsmen the Danes—men, women, and children—on the night of St. Brice; they murdered the knights and good men who accompanied Prince Ælfred from Normandy, and made my cousin Ælfred expire in torture. Before you is the son of that Earl Godwin who was charged with these murders. Let us forward, and punish him, with God to our aid!”<sup>b</sup>

About the third hour of the day, *i.e.* nine A.M., William launched his forces against the living castle on the heights of Battle. The three divisions, attacking from three different sides, had somewhat different tasks before them. The right wing would advance in the first instance along the road, to attack and if possible outflank the English left. Deploying to the right from the road, they would have first to wind round the eastern spur of the hill, to find on the farther side slopes so steep as to be unassailable by mail-clad infantry, not to say by cavalry. The centre, deploying leftwards from the road, would have a fairly even gradient up to the plateau. The left, however, would have the most arduous duty to fulfil: they would have to make a circuitous flank march up and across rather broken ground, with a jutting knoll or hillock in their way, to the western spur of the Battle hill, and so up its slopes to the English right. A little watercourse to their left and rear would probably be hardly noticed in their advance.



As the troops were moving out a Norman juggling minstrel, who had gained the name of Taille-fer (Cut-iron), probably from some feat he was in the habit of exhibiting, asked for and obtained leave to break a first lance with the English. Gaily singing a lay of Roland, and Oliver, and Charlemagne, he rode up the height, tossing his sword in the air, and again catching it by the hilt as it fell. English skirmishers having come out to meet him, he ran one through the body with his lance, cut down a second one with his sword, and then, overcome by superior numbers, succumbed. The Normans consoled themselves for his loss by the thought that their side had struck the first blow.

Pressing stoutly from all sides up the hill, the Normans attacked the English shield-wall. "*Dex aie*" (God help us) was their cry, while the natives answered with shouts of "*Habig-Rod*" (Holy Rood) and "*God Eall-mihtig*" (God Almighty). Not an inch of level ground had they left for the Normans to set foot on. Firmly posted on the brink of the plateau, they showered javelins and stone hammers on the heads of their assailants; while, independently of their vantage ground, their superior strength and stature gave deadly effect to their blows.

William had hoped to carry the day with his infantry, without engaging his precious cavalry; but he soon found that all the three arms of his force had to be sent to the front. Even so the Bretons and others on the Norman left were unable to hold their ground. Overwhelmed with missiles, they wavered, broke, and finally fled. A portion of the English right, unable to resist the temptation, left their ranks and chased them down the hill, driving many of them into the little brook or ditch running along the low ground in their rear. The disorder extended to the Norman centre, and the whole line fell back. The duke apparently was unhorsed, and the cry was raised that he was killed. Bishop Odo threw himself across the line of the fugitives, while William, roughly unseating an auxiliary, mounted his steed and hastened to the rescue. Throwing his helmet back, he shouted aloud, "Here I am, alive, and please God we shall win yet." The flight having been arrested, the tables were quickly turned on those of the English who had ventured too far down the hill in their pursuit; they were surrounded and cut off. Not a man escaped, but a good many of the invaders had lost their lives in the brook.

Encouraged by this success, the Normans reformed and returned to their attack on the English position. But the living wall, in spite of some gaps, still showed a front substantially unbroken. The man who attempted to break in was hurled out again or lost his life. One advantage of the native position on the plateau was that the Norman archers had nothing to aim at except the shields of the front-rank men, the rear ranks being covered by them and out of sight. William directed his men to aim over the heads of the front ranks, so as to allow their arrows to fall among the masses in the rear. By one of these dropping shots, as we may suppose, Harold lost his right eye, and was incapacitated for further part in the struggle. Supporting himself in his agony on his shield, he still kept his post manfully by the standard.<sup>1</sup> But still William made no headway. After a second determined assault of uncertain duration he was driven to the conclusion that his means

<sup>1</sup> So the *Roman de Rou*,<sup>w</sup> and H. Huntingdon;<sup>e</sup> the only writers who distinguish between the wound from the arrow and Harold's death. Malmesbury<sup>d</sup> represents him as killed outright by the arrow. Guy of Amiens<sup>x</sup> and William of Poitiers,<sup>y</sup> ignoring the arrow, represent him as merely overwhelmed in the final assault. William of Jumièges<sup>v</sup> and Orderic<sup>z</sup> represent him as killed (*occubuit, peremptus*) early in the day, when apparently in fact he was only placed *hors de combat*.

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of offence were not greater than those of the English defence, and that unless the English could be lured from their vantage ground he could not win. Taking a hint from the earlier incidents of the day, he resolved to try the effect of a feigned retreat.

A feigned retreat, of course, is a hazardous experiment, but it must be confessed that William risked it under circumstances exceptionally favourable to the manœuvre. On his left the thing would be impossible. Retreat there would bring his men into the brook. But on his right a retrograde movement of four hundred or five hundred yards would bring his men to the bottom of the valley with the opposite hill at their backs, and the Hastings road on which to reform and renew the struggle with the ground all in their favour. The English, destitute of cavalry, would be unable to take any decided advantage of the short critical period of downward retreat. The result was entirely successful, a portion of the English again bursting wildly from their ranks, to be met and overwhelmed in the bottom. If the feigned retreat was executed by the duke's extreme right along the road, the English would be taken in flank by the duke himself.

"In vain is the net spread in the sight of any bird." So thought the Preacher. We, however, positively groan with humiliation when we hear that the transparent trick could be repeated; and that again our foolhardy, undisciplined ancestors, incapable of profiting by experience, could walk into the open trap. But even after this third disaster we are distinctly told that the English were not routed, and that their main body on the height was still formidable, still in possession of a site that could not be turned. From this we may infer that the successive parties that broke from the ranks were not really very numerous, otherwise these losses would have ended the day.

Nevertheless it is clear that the struggle now entered upon a new stage. Unbroken though the English phalanx might seem to be, it could no longer hold the whole area of the plateau. The Normans were now able to establish a footing there, and to carry on the fight on more equal terms. In fact, the English appear to have been reduced to a purely defensive attitude, the attitude of a tortoise or a hedgehog, their missiles being exhausted, while the Normans, now here, now there, hacked at them wherever they saw an opening. To such a contest there could be but one issue. At last William ordered a combined charge on the central point marked by the standard. According to the bishop of Amiens, Eustace of Boulogne, Ivo of Ponthieu, Hugh the Constable, and Walter Giffard led the assault. At last the English gave way. The shield-wall was broken, the standard beaten down. Harold fell beside it, while the relics of the native force were driven bodily down the slight reverse slope, on to the neck of the isthmus.

Downwards the English were driven, but not for far, nor was the contest altogether ended yet. After a few yards of descent from the gatehouse the ground rises again towards the north, the ascent becoming somewhat steep at the end of the village. Here the English masses, arrested by the hill, halted, and once more turned at bay. The Norman cavalry, pressing on in hot pursuit, swerved from the bristling pikes, and turned, apparently, to the left, to fall headlong into the head of the western ravine, which, in the shape of a *coulvoir* or ditch, comes within a hundred yards of the roadway. Brushwood and undergrowth masked the pitfall of the treacherous Malfosse.

Eustace, who led the pursuit, thinking that enough had been done, was prepared to stay his hand in face of this check. He was turning back and sounding the retreat, when William met him and sternly ordered him to the front. The duke would hear of no cessation till the last semblance of resist-

ance had been crushed. While the two were parleying in the failing light, the count received a blow between the shoulders that hurled him from his horse, with blood flowing from his mouth and nostrils. Under the duke's own eye the bloody work was kept up, until towards sunset the last of the English had been trodden under foot or dispersed. Some sought hiding-places in the woods; those who had horses galloped off along the London road. Some seven hours the battle must have lasted, say from nine A.M. till four P.M., if not later. Harold's two brothers were found beside him, doubtless killed in the same final charge.

On the heights of Senlac the loose, primitive Anglo-Saxon polity collapsed with a final crash. The system so often tried and found wanting had received its death-blow. The catastrophe gave final proof that, under existing circumstances, the nation was too self-willed, too undisciplined, too much sunk in the ruts of insular conservatism to be able to turn the fine natural qualities of its people to account. Whatever our racial sympathies, we cannot regret a result destined to convert a sluggish country, paralysed by feudalism, localism, and home rule, into a compact, well-ordered kingdom, able not only to defend itself at home, but also in due time to prosecute a great and glorious imperial career abroad.

The victory was a signal triumph for the Normans—or rather for their duke, as to his generalship and his unflinching purpose the result was clearly due. Three horses were killed under him. On the English side no higher merit than that of dogged courage and tenacity can be claimed; but that much their enemies could not refuse them. "They were ever ready with their steel, those sons of the old Saxon race; the most dauntless of men," wrote William of Poitiers.<sup>u</sup> At the time the result would doubtless be claimed as final proof of the superiority of that cavalry on which continental armies had come to depend. So far as any tactical lesson is to be derived from the day, we would rather look on it as bearing witness to the effectiveness of the long-bow; and to the advantage of fighting in open order as against fighting in solid columns. But the result was too plainly due to want of discipline and leadership on the part of the English to be taken as a text to point any other moral.<sup>g</sup><sup>1</sup>

#### TRADITIONS CONCERNING HAROLD

The victor is now installed; but what has become of his competitor? If we ask the monk of Malmesbury,<sup>d</sup> we are told that William surrendered the body to Harold's mother, Githa, by whose directions the corpse of the last surviving of her children was buried in the abbey of the Holy Cross. Those who lived nearer the time, however, relate in explicit terms that William refused the rites of sepulture to his excommunicated enemy. William of Poitiers,<sup>u</sup> the chaplain of the Conqueror, informs us that a body of which the features were undistinguishable, but supposed, from certain tokens, to be that of Harold, was found between the corpses of his brothers, Gurth and Leofwine, and that William caused this corpse to be interred in the sands of the

[<sup>1</sup> In regard to the much disputed question as to the number of troops engaged, Longman<sup>m</sup> says, "According to the most credible accounts, each army consisted of about fifty or sixty thousand men." Ramsay<sup>g</sup> comes to a radically different conclusion. According to him there are no "credible accounts" when the question of estimating the numbers of an army is under consideration by one of the mediæval chroniclers. An exaggeration of ten times the ascertainable figure, he asserts, is not uncommon. Of the Conqueror's army he says he should consider an estimate of ten thousand men "beyond credibility."]



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seashore. "Let him guard the coast," said William, "which he so madly occupied"; and though Githa had offered to purchase the body by its weight in gold, yet William was not to be tempted by the gift of the sorrowing mother nor touched by her tears.

In the abbey of Waltham they knew nothing of Githa. According to the annals of the convent, two brethren who had accompanied Harold hovered as nearly as possible to the scene of war, watching the event of the battle: and afterwards they humbly approached William, and solicited his permission to seek the corpse. The Conqueror permitted them to proceed to the field, and to bear away not only the remains of Harold but of all who, when living, had chosen the abbey of Waltham as their place of sepulture.

Amongst the loathsome heaps of the unburied they sought for Harold, but sought in vain. As the last hope of identifying his remains, they suggested that possibly his beloved Editha<sup>1</sup> might be able to recognise the features so familiar to her affections. Eadgyth, the wife of Harold, was not to be asked to perform this sorrowful duty. One of the monks went back to Waltham and returned with Editha, and the two canons and the weeping woman resumed their miserable task in the charnel field. A ghastly, decomposing, and mutilated corpse was selected by Editha, and conveyed to Waltham as the body of Harold, and there entombed at the east end of the choir, with great honour and solemnity, many Norman nobles assisting in the requiem.

Years afterwards, when the Norman yoke pressed heavily upon the English, and the battle of Hastings had become a tale of sorrow, which old men narrated by the light of the embers, until warned to silence by the sullen tolling of the curfew, there was a decrepit anchorite, who inhabited a cell near the abbey of St. John at Chester, where Eadgar celebrated his triumph. This recluse, deeply scarred, and blinded in his left eye, lived in strict penitence and seclusion. Henry I once visited the aged hermit and had a long private discourse with him; and, on his deathbed, he declared to the attendant monks that he was Harold. As the story is transmitted to us, he had been secretly conveyed from the field to a castle, probably of Dover, where he continued concealed until he had the means of reaching the sanctuary where he expired.

The monks of Waltham loudly exclaimed against this rumour. They maintained most resolutely that Harold was buried in their abbey: they pointed to the tomb sustaining his effigies, and inscribed with the simple and pathetic epitaph, "*Hic jacet Harold infelix*"; and they appealed to the mouldering skeleton, whose bones, as they declared, showed, when disinterred, the impress of the wounds which he had received. But may it not still be doubted whether the two monks who followed their benefactor to the fatal field did not aid his escape? They may have discovered him at the last gasp; restored him to animation by their care; and the artifice of declaring to William that they had not been able to recover the object of their search would readily suggest itself as the means of rescuing Harold from the power of the conqueror. The demand for Editha's testimony would confirm their assertion, and enable them to gain time to arrange for Harold's security; and whilst the litter which bore the corpse was slowly advancing to the abbey of Waltham, the living Harold, under the tender care of Editha, might be safely proceeding to the distant fane, his haven of refuge.

[<sup>1</sup> This was Eadgyth or Editha, "the Swansneck" (*Swanneshals*), Harold's mistress, whose long and tender attachment to the king was looked upon with general approval by the people, and accepted without complaint by the queen, to whom Harold appears to have been otherwise faithful.]

If we compare the different narratives concerning the inhumation of Harold, we shall find the most remarkable discrepancies. It is evident that the circumstances were not accurately known; and since those ancient writers who were best informed cannot be reconciled to each other, the escape of Harold, if admitted, would solve the difficulty. It may be remarked that the tale, though romantic, is not incredible, and that the circumstances may be easily reconciled to probability. There were no walls to be scaled, no fosse to be crossed, no warder to be eluded; and the examples of those who have survived after encountering much greater perils are so very numerous and familiar that the incidents narrated would hardly give rise to a doubt, if they referred to any other personage than a king.

In this case we cannot find any reason for supposing that the belief in Harold's escape was connected with any political artifice or feeling. No hopes were fixed upon the son of Godwin. No recollection dwelt upon his name, as the hero who would sally forth from his seclusion, the restorer of the Anglo-Saxon power. That power had wholly fallen; and if the humbled Englishman, as he paced the aisles of Waltham, looked around, and having assured himself that no Norman was near, whispered to his son that the tomb which they saw before them was raised only in mockery, and that Harold still breathed the vital air—he yet knew too well that the spot where Harold's standard had been cast down was the grave of the pride and glory of England.<sup>c</sup>

#### ANGLO-SAXON INSTITUTIONS

The Anglo-Saxon institutions were not arbitrarily created by any one law-giver or during any one age. They grew by degrees; and they grew also in a country which was an almost perpetual scene of war and tumult, and which was inhabited by races of different origin; so that the local development of these institutions varied, besides their temporary fluctuations. It is unsafe to attempt to give more than a general idea of their leading features, which must be variously worked out in detail, according to the particular reign and the particular part of England to which it is meant to be applied.

One class of the community in Anglo-Saxon times (though probably no very large portion) was in a state of absolute slavery. They were known in Saxon by the names of theow, esne, and thrall. They probably originally consisted of conquered Britons; but as criminals who could not pay the fine imposed by law were reducible to this state, many unfortunate beings of German ancestry must in process of time have been comprised in this degraded and suffering class. The freemen of the land were classified by a broad division into the ceorls, who formed the bulk of the population, and into the thanes, who formed the nobility and the gentry. Sometimes the classification is made into ceorls and eorls; the title of eorl having reference to birth, whereas the title of thane had reference to the possession of landed property. It was this, the ownership of landed property, that mainly determined the *status* and political rights of a Saxon freeman, and therefore the classification into ceorls and thanes is the most convenient to follow. There is an additional reason for doing so, because the Danes used the title eorl (jarl, earl) to designate authority and command; and when the Danish influence extended in Saxon England, the title of earl was employed, not to mark a man of good birth but the ruler of a shire or other district. Both the democratic and the aristocratic principles entered largely into the Anglo-Saxon polity; the latter finally obtaining the ascendancy, chiefly by reason of the strictness of the regulations which it was

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found necessary to introduce, in order to maintain some degree of public peace and to give some security for property and person, amid the tumult and confusion which prevailed so often and so generally in England during the troubled ages of the Anglo-Saxon rule.

One great fact, however, never must be forgotten while we examine the Anglo-Saxon institutions and mark the privileges which the thanes (*i.e.* the landed proprietors) possessed over the mass of the free commonalty, the ceorls. The superior body was not composed of a hereditary caste or noblesse. It was an aristocracy, but it was open to receive recruits from the ranks below it. Any ceorl, who could acquire a defined amount of landed property, could become a thane.

It is convenient to examine the Anglo-Saxon social body, by commencing with its component parts. This method is recommended by Palgrave, and (subject to some slight additions and qualifications) we may safely follow him in taking the Anglo-Saxon townships as the integral molecule out of which the Anglo-Saxon state was formed. He says: "Ascending in the analysis of the Anglo-Saxon state, the first and primary element appears to be the community, which in England, during the Saxon period, was denominated the town, or township. An explanation of the term may be required. Denoting in its primary sense the enclosure which surrounded the mere homestead or dwelling of the lord, it seems to have been gradually extended to the whole of the land which constituted the domain."

There was a lord of every township, usually one of the more opulent thanes, though some townships belonged to the sovereign as their superior. We will, however, limit our attention to the ordinary and normal case, where a resident thane was lord of the township. He dwelt there on his own demesne lands. Round him there were grouped a number of ceorls, some occupying allotments of land, some tilling the lands of others. Each township had its geref, or reeve, an elective chief officer; and also in each township four good and lawful men were elected, who, with the reeve, represented the township in the judicial courts of the hundred and the shire. All these appear to have been freely elected by the commonalty of each township from among their own body. The inhabitants of each township regulated their own police. They were bound to keep watch and ward; and if any crime was committed in their district, they were to raise the hue and cry, and to pursue and apprehend the offender. Such were the townships: having, generally, each its own local court, with varying amounts of jurisdiction; and being subordinate to the hundred court, which was again subordinate to the shire moot or county court.

This leads us to consider the English hundreds, which subsist to this day, though the townships have become almost obsolete, having been superseded partly by the Norman manors, and partly in consequence of the ecclesiastical division into parishes having been adopted for the purposes of petty local self-government. Whether the hundreds had originally any reference to number or not, it is certain that they ultimately became mere territorial divisions. And, both in order to facilitate the organization of the inhabitants for military purposes and to afford better security against crime, the hundreds were subdivided into tythings. In one respect, the system of tything was more comprehensive than the system of townships, as there may have been land not included in any township, and which would yet be within a hundred, and consequently would, when hundreds were subdivided, be brought within a tything.

Every hundred had its court, which was attended by the thanes whose demesnes were within its boundaries, and by the four men and the reeve of each township. The hundred court was held monthly, and was subordinate



to the court of the shire. The shire or county courts were held at least once a year. They were presided over by the bishop and the ealdorman or earl. Each shire had also its reeve, who, in the absence of the ealdorman, was the president of its court, in conjunction with the bishop. All the thanes in the county, the four men, and the reeve of each township, and the twelve men chosen to represent each hundred, attended the county court; but it is justly doubted whether any but the thanes had a voice in it. Though an appeal from it seems to have lain to the witenagemot, the supreme court of the kingdom, and though the witan in some cases sometimes exercised an original jurisdiction, the shire moots were in practice the most important tribunals in the country, and both they and the minor ones, which we have referred to, were certainly of a very free and popular character.

So far the Anglo-Saxon system seems democratic enough; but even before we proceed to the consideration of the witenagemot there are two features to be attended to which are of a very different character. Every member of the Anglo-Saxon commonalty was bound to place himself in dependence upon some man of rank and wealth, as his lord. The "lordless" man was liable to be slain as an outlaw by anyone who met him. Besides this, by the system of frank pledge, every man was bound to be enrolled in some tything; the members of each tything being mutually responsible for each other's good conduct—to this extent at least, that if any one of them committed a crime the rest were bound either to render him to justice to take his trial, or to make good the fine to which, in his absence, he might be sentenced. The effect of these regulations was almost to limit every man to the place and neighbourhood of his nativity; for it was difficult and almost impossible to get enrolled in a tything or to find a lord in a place where a man was not known. At the same time, it is to be borne in mind that this species of compulsory settlement inflicted far less hardship in Anglo-Saxon times, when there was little traffic or communication between one district and another and little inducement for a poor man to try to change his home, than has been in modern times caused by our laws of settlement and removal.

The recollection of this will keep us from exaggerating the importance of one point in the position of the ceorls, which has caused some writers to speak of it as a state of servitude. Many of the Saxon ceorls were legally annexed to the lands of their lords, and could not quit the estate on which they had to render their services. But the ceorl was in other respects personally free. He was law-worthy, to use the old expressive phraseology. Among the Anglo-Saxons (as among all the other northern nations) a composition, or *were-gild*, was fixed by the law for the slaying of any member of the state, according to the class to which he belonged. The *were-gild* for the death of a ceorl was two hundred shillings, and was payable to his family, and not to the lord of the estate on which he lived. But the fine for killing a slave was paid to the slave's owner. The ceorl had the right of bearing arms. He was a legal witness. As already pointed out, he had political rights with regard to the magistracies of his township, his tything, and his hundred, both as an elector and as himself eligible to office. He could acquire and hold property in absolute ownership; and he needed no act of emancipation to pass into the class of thanes, if he acquired the requisite property qualification of five hides of land. Many of the ceorls were landowners to a smaller extent. Hallam<sup>r</sup> considers the socmen, who are frequently spoken of in *Domesday Book*, to have been ceorls of this description. He says, "They are the root of a noble plant, the free socage tenants, or English yeomanry, whose independence has stamped with peculiar features both our constitution and our national character."

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By far the larger part of the population in the Anglo-Saxon times was agricultural, but the towns were of considerable importance. The free spirit of local self-government which marks the Anglo-Saxon polity as displayed in its rural and village communities, was no less strongly developed in their cities and towns. The *burg* (as the town was usually called, meaning, literally, a fortified place) was organised like a hundred, having subdivisions analogous to those of the hundred, according to its size and population. The *burhwara*, or men of the borough, elected from among themselves their local officers for keeping the peace, and other purposes of municipal government. They thus also freely chose their own borough-reeve, or port-reeve, as their head of the civic community was termed. This officer presided at their local courts (the *burhwaremot*, or *hustings*), and in time of war led the armed burghers into the field. Sometimes the king, or a bishop, or a neighbouring lord claimed and exercised seigniorial rights within the borough; nor can any description of the Saxon municipal system be drawn that could be uniformly accurate. But, in general, we may safely assert that the Saxon boroughs were thriving and were free; that they were strongholds, where the germs of England's commercial prosperity, and of the capacity of the Anglo-Saxon race for local self-government, were matured, amid the turbulence of a rude age and the attempted encroachments of royal and aristocratic power.

Many political writers of the last century used to describe the *witenagemot* as a genuine English parliament annually elected by universal suffrage. Palgrave, Hallam,<sup>7</sup> and Kemble, however they may differ among themselves on points of detail, have effectually dispelled these monstrous and often mischievous delusions. The *witan* was essentially an aristocratic body. It was summoned and presided over by the king. It was attended by the bishops, by the earls or ealdormen: the *thanes* generally had a right to attend; and probably those who resided in the neighbourhood of the place where a *witan* was held did attend in considerable numbers. For the purpose of appealing against the decisions of inferior tribunals, and of procuring justice against powerful individuals, whom the minor courts could not reach, the magistrates of boroughs, and the four men or reeves of townships, and other similar officers, must have occasionally been present. This is what Sir Francis Palgrave terms "remedial representation." But there certainly were no representatives of the *ceorls* at the *witan* with any power to take part in or vote in its proceedings.

The *witan* made laws and voted taxes; but this last was a rare necessity. The king was bound to take their advice as to making war or peace, and on all important measures of government. The *witan* had the power of electing the king from among the members of the blood royal. They on some occasions exercised the power of deposing him for misconduct: and they formed the supreme court of justice both in civil and criminal causes. The nature and extent of the authority which the Anglo-Saxon kings possessed are partly shown by the description of the powers of the *witan*. But, in addition to many minor rights, the royal prerogatives of appointing many of the principal officers of government, of commanding and disposing of the military force of the kingdom were of considerable importance; and the personal character of the sovereign influenced materially the prosperity or adversity of the country, during the troubled centuries that passed between the accession of Egbert and the fall of the last Harold.

It has been stated that the bishops were members of the *witan*. The influence of the clergy in the Anglo-Saxon times was very great, the humblest priest ranking with the landed gentry as a mass *thane*. The ecclesiastical

distribution of the country into parishes (*i.e.* *preost scyres*, each being the district of a single priest) is Anglo-Saxon—a division since generally adopted for purposes of local self-government. It is to Saxon laws that modern disputants respecting tithes and church-rates refer for the original legal obligation on the English laity to provide those ecclesiastical revenues. Besides their right to these, the church was largely endowed with glebe for her parochial churches, and broad lands for her cathedrals and monasteries. The existence of one of these great ecclesiastical foundations in or near a city favoured the progress of municipal civilisation; and many of the towns grew up round the ancient cathedrals. The high officers of the church, her bishops and archbishops, were recognised as the highest officers of the state also. Kemble has well remarked on the effect of this alliance between church and state in the Saxon times, that “guilty of extravagances the clergy were here, no doubt, as elsewhere; but on the whole their position was not unfavourable to the harmonious working of the state; and the history of the Anglo-Saxons is perhaps as little deformed as any by the ambition, and power, and selfish class-interests of the clergy.

“On the other hand, it cannot be denied that in England, as in other countries, the laity are under the greatest obligations to them, partly for rescuing some branches of learning from total neglect and partly for the counterpoise which their authority presented to the rude and forcible government of a military aristocracy. Ridiculous as it would be to affirm that their influence was never exerted for mischievous purposes, or that this institution was always free from the imperfections and evils which belong to all human institutions, it would be still more unworthy of the dignity of history to affect to undervalue the services which they rendered to society. If in the pursuit of private and corporate advantages they occasionally seemed likely to prefer the separate to the general good, they did no more than all bodies of men have done—no more than is necessary to ensure the active co-operation of all bodies of men in any one line of conduct. But, whatever their class-interests may from time to time have led them to do, let it be remembered that they existed as a permanent mediating authority between the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, and that, to their eternal honour, they fully comprehended and performed the duties of this most noble position. To none but themselves would it have been permitted to stay the strong hand of power, to mitigate the just severity of the law, to hold out a glimmering of hope to the serf, to find a place in this world and a provision for the destitute, whose existence the state did not even recognise.”

This last observation of Kemble refers to the wretched position of those outcasts of the Saxon civil community who could find no place in one of the mutual associations, the tythings, and find no lord who would permit them to become his retainers. These friendless, helpless beings could not have been very numerous (we are not speaking of the wilful outlaws who lived by brigandage, but of the involuntary outlaws), but some of them must have existed. Such a being had no existence in the eye of the law, the civil state regarded him not, but abandoned him to arbitrary violence or starvation. But (to adopt again the eloquent words of Kemble) Christianity “taught that there was something even above the state, which the state itself was bound to recognise.” The church impressed the heavenly law by which the poor and needy, whom the earthly law condemned to misery, were to be relieved; and the clergy presented their organisation as an efficient machinery for the distribution of alms. There were other sources of relief for the poor. The tithes and other ecclesiastical revenues contributed their portion, and



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thus at every cathedral and every parish church there was a fund for the helpless pauper, and officers ready for its administration.

But, in approaching the period of the Norman Conquest, it may be usefully observed, with Guizot, that in the last period of the Anglo-Saxon system the power of the great nobles was becoming more and more predominant, so as to menace both the independence of the crown and the freedom of the commonalty. The earls, or ealdormen, the rulers of large provinces, like Earl Siward, Earl Leofric, Earl Godwin and his sons, and others, were forming a separate order in the state, through the aggressive influence of which the political rights and liberties of the others would probably have decayed and perished. The catastrophe of the Norman Conquest prevented the—*a catastrophe terrible in itself, but in all human probability the averter of greater evils even to the Saxons themselves than those which it inflicted.*

## ANGLO-SAXON LITERATURE

The early history of literature in England might lend some countenance to the theory that the development of a nation's literature is, at bottom, but a chapter of its religious history. While the religion of our fathers was in the main a rude awe-struck worship of the forces of nature, literature either had no existence for them or was in a state not less elementary, consisting of a few songs and oracles, and nothing more. With the advent of the religion of Christ came an intellectual as well as spiritual awakening. Fortified by gospel precept for the present life, and thrilled with the hope of the life to come, the Saxon mind, released from disquietude, felt free to range discursively through such regions of human knowledge as its teachers opened before it, and the Saxon heart was fain to pour out many a rude but vigorous song. The missionaries could not fail to bring with them from Rome the intellectual culture of the countries bordering on the Mediterranean, so far as it had survived the fall of the Western Empire and the irruption of the barbarians. The Roman alphabet, paper or parchment, and pen and ink, drove out the Northern runes, the beechen tablet, and the scratching implement. The necessity of the preservation and at least partial translation of the Scriptures, the varied exigencies of the Catholic ritual, the demand for so much knowledge of astronomy as would enable the clergy to fix beforehand the date of Easter, all favoured, or rather compelled, the promotion of learning and education up to a certain point, and led to continual discussion and interchange of ideas. We find that there were two principal centres, during the first two centuries after the conversion, where learning was honoured and literature flourished. These centres were Wessex and Northumbria. When we have named the oldest form of the Saxon chronicle, and the not very interesting works of Abbot Ælfrie, there is little left in the shape of extant writings, dating before the Conquest, for which we have to thank the men of Kent. For although Christianity was first preached in Kent, and the great monastery at Canterbury was long a valuable school of theology and history, yet the limited size of the kingdom, and the ill fortune which befell it in its wars with Mercia and Wessex, seem to have checked its intellectual growth. But in Wessex and Northumbria alike, the size of the territory, the presence of numerous monasteries, perhaps also the proximity of Celtic peoples or societies endowed with many literary gifts—the Britons in the case of Wessex, the Culdees of Iona in the case of Northumbria—co-operated to produce a long period of literary activity.

## WESSEX

Christianity was introduced into Wessex by Bishop Birinus in 634, and spread over the whole kingdom with marvellous celerity. The interesting letters of St. Boniface give us tantalising glimpses of a busy life, social and monastic, in the west of England, no detailed picture of which it is now possible to reconstruct. The most distinguished known writer was St. Aldhelm, a monk of Malmesbury, and, for a few years before his death in 709, bishop or Sherborne. The Saxon writings of St. Aldhelm are lost, unless we accept a conjecture of Grimm that he was the author of *Andreas*, one of the poems in the Vercelli Codex. Cynewulf, the author of *Crist*, *Elene*, and *Juliana*, though to us unhappily no more than a name, was a poet of no mean powers. Kemble was disposed to identify him with an abbot of Peterborough who lived in the eleventh century; but it is far more probable that Cynewulf was a West-Saxon writer, and lived in the first half of the eighth century. *Crist* is a poem of nearly 1,700 lines, *incomplete at the beginning*, in which Cynewulf seems to revel in the task of expressing in his mother tongue the new religious ideas which had come to his race. *Elene* is the legend of the discovery of the true cross at Jerusalem by the empress Helena, the mother of Constantine; *Juliana* is the story of the martyrdom of the saint so named, under Maximianus.

The preponderance of opinion is now in favour of ascribing to Beowulf the most important surviving monument of Anglo-Saxon poetry, a West-Saxon origin, and a date not later than the middle nor earlier than the first decade, of the eighth century. Founded on a single manuscript which, as originally written, was full of errors, and now is much defaced, the text of Beowulf can never, unless another manuscript should be discovered, be placed on a thoroughly satisfactory footing. The general drift of the poem is to celebrate the heroic deeds of Beowulf, who, originally of Swedish race, was adopted by the king of Gautland, or Gotland (as the southern portion of Sweden is still called), and brought up with his own sons. Hearing that the Danish king Hrothgar is harassed by the attacks of a man-eating monster called Grendel, he sails to Zealand to his aid, and after various adventures kills both Grendel and his mother. After this Beowulf is chosen king of Gotland, and reigns many years in great prosperity, till in his old age, undertaking to fight with a fiery dragon that has been making great ravages among his subjects, he succeeds in killing it, but receives a mortal injury in the struggle. The burning of his body, and the erection of a huge mound or cairn over his ashes, as a beacon "easy to be seen far off by seafaring men," conclude the poem, and form a passage of remarkable beauty.

For two hundred and thirty years—from the sack of Lindisfarne (795) to the accession of Canute (1017)—the so-called Danes were the curse of England, destroying monasteries and the schools maintained by them, burning churches and private houses, making life and property everywhere insecure, and depriving the land of that tranquillity without which literature and art are impossible. After a long prevalence of this state of things, society in Wessex having been, one would think, almost reduced to its first elements, Alfred arose and obtained a period of peace for his harassed and dejected countrymen. History tells us how well he wrought to build up in every way the fallen edifice of West-Saxon society. Among his labours not the least meritorious was his translation of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Pope Gregory's work, *De Cura Pastoralis*, the famous treatise of Boethius *De Consolatione*, and

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the *Universal History* of Orosius. Yet, in spite of his generous efforts, the evils caused by the Danes could not be repaired. A sort of blight seemed to have passed over the Anglo-Saxon genius. Now and then a great man appeared, endowed with a reparative force, and with a courage which aimed at raising the fallen spirit of the people. Such a man was St. Dunstan, who was ever faithful to the interests of learning. But his work was undone during the disastrous reign of Æthelred the Unready, at the end of which the Danish power established itself in England. Under Edward the Confessor, French influences began to be greatly felt. The two races of the Teutonic north had torn each other to pieces, and the culture which Saxon had been able to impart to Northman was not sufficient to discipline him into a truly civilised man. England, though at a terrible cost, had to be knit on to the state-system of Southern Europe; her anarchy must give place to centralisation; her schools, and her art, and her architecture be remodelled by Italians and Frenchmen; her poets turn their eyes, not towards Iceland, but towards Normandy or Provence.

## NORTHUMBRIA

Turning now to the other literary centre, the Northumbrian kingdom, we find that impulse and initiation were due to more than one source. In the main, the conversion of the Angles north of the Tees, and the implantation among them of the germs of culture, are traceable to Iona, and, indirectly, to the Irish church and St. Patrick. From Ireland, in the persons of St. Columba and his followers, was wafted a ministry of light and civilisation, which from the sixth to the eleventh century diffused its blessings over northern Europe. Oswald, son of the Bernician king Æthelfrith, embraced Christianity through the teaching of the monks of Iona, and when he became king of Bernicia in 634, one of his first thoughts was to send to his old teachers and ask that missionaries might be sent to instruct his people. Aidan accordingly came from Iona and founded a bishop's see at Lindisfarne, or Holy Isle.

Adamnan, abbot of Iona about the year 690, has a peculiar interest, because a long extract from his work on the holy places is incorporated by Beda in his *Ecclesiastical History*. He also wrote a life of his founder, St. Columba. To the encouragement of Bishop Aidan we owe it that Hilda, a lady of the royal house of Deira, established monasteries at Hartlepool and Streonshalch (afterwards Whitby); and it was by the monks of Streonshalch that the seed was sown, which, falling upon a good heart and a capacious brain, bore fruit in the poetry of Caedmon, the earliest English poet. We need not repeat the well-known story of the vision, in which the destined bard, then a humble menial employed about the stables and boat-service of the monastery, believed that an injunction of more than mortal authority was laid upon him, to "sing of the beginning of creation." The impulse having been once communicated, Caedmon, as Beda informs us, continued for a long time to clothe in his native measures the principal religious facts recorded in the Pentateuch and in the New Testament. Hitherto the influences in Northumbria tending to culture have been found to be only indirectly Roman; the immediate source of them was Iona. But when we come to the Venerable Beda, the great light of the Northumbrian church, the glory of letters in a rude and turbulent age, nay, even the teacher and the beacon light of all Europe for the period from the seventh to the tenth century, we find that the fountain whence he drew the streams of thought and knowledge came



from no derivative source, but was supplied directly from Rome, the well-head of Christian culture. When only seven years old, Beda, like Orderic in a later age, was brought by his father to Jarrow and given up to the abbot to be trained to monastic life. The rest of his life, down to the year 731, was passed in the monastery, as we know from his own statement; in 735 he died. His works may be grouped under five heads: 1, Educational; 2, Theological; 3, Historical; 4, Poetical; 5, Letters. To the first class belong the treatises *De Orthographia* and *de Arte Metrica*, the first being a short dictionary; the second a prosody, describing the principal classical metres, with examples. *De Natura Rerum* is a cosmogony and cosmography, with numerous diagrams and maps. Under the second head, that of theological works, fall his *Expositiones* on St. Mark's and St. Luke's Gospels, on the Acts, and other books of the New Testament, his homilies, forty-nine in number, and a book of prayers, chiefly made up of verses taken from the Psalms.

The *Ecclesiastical History*, his greatest work, opens with a preface, in which, in that tone of calmness and mild dignity which go far to make a perfect prose style, Beda explains in detail the nature and the sources of the evidence on which he has relied in compiling the work. A short introduction then sketches the general history of Britain from the landing of Julius Caesar to the coming of Augustine. From the landing of Augustine in 596 to the year 731, the progress of Christianity, the successes and the reverses of the church in the arduous work of bringing within her pale the fiercely warring nations of the Anglo-Saxons, are narrated, fully but unsystematically, for each kingdom in turn. Among his poetical works are a life of St. Cuthbert in Latin hexameters, a number of hymns, a poem on Justin Martyr, and another on the Day of Judgment.

At the time when Beda died (735) the Angles of Northumbria were beginning to lay aside their arms and zealously to frequent the monastery schools. But a reaction set in; and after the middle of the century Northumbrian history is darkened by the frequent record of dissension among the members of the royal house, civil war, and assassination. At the monastery of York Alcuin was educated, and when grown up he had charge of its school and library. In 780 he was sent on a mission to Rome; on his return, at Parma, he fell in with the emperor Charlemagne, who invited him to settle at Aix-la-Chapelle, at that time the chief imperial residence, to teach his children, and aid in the organisation of education throughout his dominions. Having obtained the permission of his superiors at York, Alcuin complied with the request; and from that time to his death, in 804, resided, with little intermission, either at the imperial court or at Tours. Alcuin's letters, though the good man was of a somewhat dry and pedantic turn, contain much matter of interest. His extant works are of considerable bulk; they are chiefly educational and theological treatises, which for lack of vigour or originality of treatment have fallen into complete oblivion.

After the death of Alcuin the confusion in Northumbria became ever worse and worse. But for the *Durham Gospels*, a version in the Angle dialect of the four gospels, and a few similar remains, the north of England presents a dead blank to the historian of literature from Alcuin to Simeon of Durham, a period of more than three hundred years. In the south the intellectual atmosphere was far less dark. The works of Ælfrie, who died archbishop of Canterbury in 1006, are chiefly interesting because they show the growing importance of the native language. Ælfrie's *Homilies* are in Anglo-Saxon; his *Colloquy* is a conversation on common things, in Latin and Anglo-Saxon, between a master and his scholar. The annals of public events, to which, as

[684-1017 A.D.]

collected and arranged by Archbishop Plegmund at the end of the ninth century, we give the name of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, continued to be recorded at Canterbury in the native language till about the date of the Conquest; after that time the task passed into the hands of the monks of Peterborough, and was carried on by them for nearly a hundred years. Had there been no violent change, England would by slow degrees have got through with the task of assimilating and taming the Northmen, and, in spite of physical isolation, would have participated, though probably lagging far behind the rest, in the general intellectual advance of the nations of Europe. For good or for evil, the process of national and also of intellectual development was to be altered and quickened by the arrival of a knightly race of conquerors from across the Channel.<sup>bb</sup>





## CHAPTER V

### THE NORMAN CONQUEST

[1066-1087 A.D.]

THE Norman Conquest is the great turning-point in the history of the English nation. And yet there is no event whose true nature has been more commonly and more utterly mistaken. No event is less fitted to be taken, as it so often has been taken, for the beginning of our national history. The Norman Conquest brought with it a most extensive foreign infusion which affected our blood, our language, our laws, our arts; still it was only an infusion; the older and stronger elements still survived, and in the long run they again made good their supremacy. In a few generations we led captive our conquerors, England was England once again, and the descendants of the Norman invaders were found to be among the truest of Englishmen. England may be as justly proud of rearing such step-children as Simon de Montfort and Edward the First as of being the natural mother of Alfred and Harold.—FREEMAN.<sup>b</sup>

THE first feelings of the Normans after the battle of Hastings seem to have been sensations of triumph and joy, amounting almost to a delirium. They are represented by a contemporary as making their horses to prance and bound over the thickly strewn bodies of the Anglo-Saxons; after which they proceeded to rifle them, and despoil them of their clothes. By William's orders the space was cleared round the pope's standard, which he had set up; and there his tent was pitched, and he feasted with his followers amongst the dead. The critical circumstances in which he had so recently been placed, and the difficulties which still lay before him, disposed the mind of the Conqueror to serious thoughts. Not less, perhaps, in gratitude for the past than in the hope that such a work would procure him heavenly favour for the future, he solemnly vowed that he would erect a splendid abbey on the scene of this his first victory; and when, in process of time, this vow was accomplished,



[1066 A.D.]

the high altar of the abbey church stood on the very spot where the standard of Harold had been planted and thrown down. In the archives of the house was deposited a long roll, on which were inscribed the names of the nobles and gentlemen of mark who came with the Conqueror and survived the battle of Hastings.

The most sanguine of the Normans, in common with the most despondent among the English, expected that, immediately after the battle of Hastings, the Conqueror would march straight to London and make himself master of that capital. But the first move was a retrograde one; nor did William establish himself in the capital until more than two months had passed. While the army of Harold kept the field at Senlac or Battle, several new ships, with reinforcements, came over from Normandy to join William. Mistaking the proper place for landing, the commanders of these vessels put in to Romney, where they were at once assaulted and beaten by the people of the coast. William learned this unpleasant news the day after his victory, and to save the other recruits, whom he still expected, from a similar disaster, he resolved, before proceeding farther, to make himself master of all the south-eastern coast. He turned back, therefore, from Battle to Hastings, at which latter place he stayed some days, awaiting his transports from beyond sea, and hoping, it is said, that his presence would induce the population of those parts to make voluntary submission. At length, seeing that no one came to ask for peace, William resumed his march with the remnant of his army, and the fresh troops which had arrived in the interval from Normandy. He kept close to the seacoast, marching from south to north, and spreading devastation on his passage. He took a savage vengeance at Romney for the reverse his troops had sustained there, by massacring the inhabitants and burning their houses.

From Romney he advanced to Dover, the strongest place on the coast. With little or no opposition, he burst into the town, which his troops set fire to; and the strong castle, which the son of Godwin had put into an excellent state of defence, was so speedily surrendered to him, that a suspicion of treachery rests on the Saxon commander. The capture of this fortress was most opportune and important, for a dreadful dysentery had broken out in the Norman army, and a safe receptacle for the sick had become indispensable. Dover Castle also commanded the best landing-place for troops from the Continent, and William was not yet so sure of his game as not to look anxiously for a place of retreat on the coast, in case of meeting with reverses in the interior. He spent eight or nine days in strengthening the castle, and repairing some of the damage done to the town by his lawless soldiery.

When the Conqueror at last moved from Dover, he marched direct to London. A confused story is told by some of our early historians about a popular resistance, organised by Archbishop Stigand, and the abbot Egelnoth, in which the men of Kent, advancing like the army of Macduff and Siward against Macbeth, under the cover of cut-down trees and boughs, disputed the passage of the Normans, and, with arms in their hands, exacted from them terms most favourable to themselves and the part of England they occupied. But the plain truth seems to be that, overawed by the recent catastrophe of Hastings, and the presence of a compact and numerous army, the inhabitants of Kent made no resistance, and meeting William with offers of submission, placed hostages in his hands, and so obtained mild treatment.

During these calamities the Saxon witan had assembled in London, to deliberate and provide for the future: but evidently, as far as the lay portion of the meeting was concerned, with no intention of submitting to the Con-

queror. The first care that occupied their thoughts was to elect a successor to the throne. Either of Harold's brave brothers, at such a crisis, when valour and military skill were the qualities most wanted, might probably have commanded a majority of suffrages; but they had both fought their last fight; and, owing to their youth, their inexperience, their want of popularity, or to some other circumstance, the two sons of Harold seem never to have been thought of. Many voices would have supported Morecar or Edwin, the powerful brothers-in-law of Harold, who had already an almost sovereign authority in Northumbria and Mercia; but the citizens of London, and the men of the south of England generally, preferred young Eadgar Ætheling, the grandson of Eadmund Ironside, who had been previously set aside on account of his little worth: and when Stigand the primate, and Ealdred (Aldred) the archbishop of York, threw their weight into this scale, Eadgar was proclaimed king. It should seem, however, that even at this stage many of the bishops and clergymen, who were even then Frenchmen or Normans, raised their voice in favour of William, or let fall hints that were all meant to favour his pretensions. The pope's bull and banner could not be without their effect, and, motives of interest and policy apart, some of these ecclesiastics may have conscientiously believed they were performing their duty in promoting the cause of the elect of Rome. Others there were who were notoriously bought over, either by money paid beforehand, or by promises of future largesse.

The party that ultimately prevailed in the witan did not carry their point until much precious time had been consumed; nor could the blood of Cerdic, Alfred, and Eadmund make the king of their choice that rallying point which conflicting factions required, or a hero capable of facing a victorious invader, advancing at the head of a more powerful army than England could hope to raise for some time. In fact, Eadgar was a mere cipher—a boy incapable of government as of war—with nothing popular about him except his descent. The primate Stigand took his place at the council board, and the military command was given to earls Edwin and Morecar.

#### WILLIAM BEFORE LONDON

Very few acts of legal authority had been performed in the name of Eadgar, when William of Normandy appeared before the southern suburb of London. If the Normans had expected to take the capital by a *coup-de-main*, and at once, they were disappointed; the Londoners were very warlike; and the population of the city, great even in those days, was much increased by the presence of the thanes and chiefs of all the neighbouring counties, who had come in to attend the witan, and had brought their servants and followers with them. After making a successful charge, with five hundred of his best horse, against some citizens who were gathered on that side of the river, William set fire to Southwark, and marched away from London, with the determination of ravaging the country around it, and, by interrupting all communication, inducing the well-defended capital to surrender. Detachments of his army were soon spread over a wide tract; and in burning towns and villages, in the massacre of men armed and men unarmed, and in the violation of helpless females, the people of Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire, and Berkshire were made to feel the full signification of a Norman conquest. William crossed the Thames at Wallingford, near to which place he established an intrenched camp, where a division of his army was left, in order to cut off any succours that might be sent towards London from the west.

[1066 A.D.]

This done, he proceeded across Buckinghamshire into Hertfordshire, "slaying the people," till he came to Berkhamstead, where he took up a position, in order to interrupt all communication with London from the north. The capital, indeed, at this time seems to have been girded round by the enemy, and afflicted by the prospect of absolute famine. Nor were there wanting other causes of discouragement. The earls Edwin and Morcar showed little zeal in the command of a weak, and, as yet, unorganised army, and soon withdrew towards the Humber, taking with them all the soldiers of Northumbria and Mercia, who constituted the best part of King Eadgar's forces, but who looked to the earls much more than to the king. These two sons of Ælfgar probably hoped to be able to maintain themselves in independence in the north, where, in reality, they at a later period renewed and greatly prolonged the contest with the Normans.<sup>1</sup> Their departure had a baneful effect in London; and while the spirit of the citizens waxed fainter and fainter, the partisans and intriguers for William, encouraged at every move by the prevalent faction among the clergy, raised their hopes and extended their exertions.

After some time, however, earls Morcar and Edwin appear to have returned to the capital. On many an intermediate step the chroniclers are provokingly silent: but at last it was determined that a submissive deputation should be sent from London to Berkhamstead; and King Eadgar himself, the primate Stigand, Ealdred, archbishop of York, Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester, with other prelates and lay chiefs, among whom the Saxon chronicler expressly names the two earls of Northumbria and Mercia, and many of the principal citizens, repaired to William, who received them with an outward show of moderation and kindness. It is related that when the man whom he most hated, as the friend of Harold and the energetic enemy of the Normans—that when Stigand came into his presence, he saluted him with the endearing epithets of father and bishop. The puppet-king Eadgar made a verbal renunciation of the throne, and the rest swore allegiance to the Conqueror—the bishops swearing for the whole body of the clergy, the chiefs for the nobility, and the citizens for the good city of London.



WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

(From an ancient coin)

[<sup>1</sup> The attitude of the two grandsons of Leofric, who of all the men of England could have organised and directed anything like an effective opposition to William, has been the subject of much controversy. The chroniclers are at variance in their accounts, and whether the brothers retired from London, cutting themselves off from all communication with their countrymen, or whether they simply withdrew temporarily because of disgust or pique cannot be determined. "On the part of these young men," says Ramsay, "a certain jealousy of Harold and his family might be excused. We could understand their objecting to the promotion of one of Harold's sons. But for opposition to a return to the national dynasty, no apology can be offered. However weak Eadgar may have seemed, union of forces offered the only prospect of escape from ruin. The retirement of the two earls—if they did retire—was simply an act of suicidal treason."]



During a part of this singular audience William pretended to have doubts and misgivings as to the propriety of his ascending the vacant throne; but these hypocritical expressions were drowned in the loud acclamations of his Norman barons, who felt that the crown of England was on the point of their swords. Having taken oaths of fidelity and peace, the Saxon deputies left hostages with the Norman, who, on his side, promised to be mild and merciful to all men. On the following morning the foreigners began their march towards London, plundering, murdering, and burning, just as before. Even now William did not enter London in person, but, sending on part of his army to build a fortress for his reception, he encamped with the rest at some distance from the city. This fortress, which was built on the site, and probably included part of a Roman castle, grew gradually, in after times, into the Tower of London.

#### WILLIAM'S CORONATION; HIS CONCILIATORY POLICY

As soon as the Normans had finished his stronghold, William took possession of it, and then they fixed his coronation for a few days after. The Conqueror is said to have objected to the performance of this ceremony while so large a part of the island was independent of his authority; and he certainly hoped, by delaying it, to obtain a more formal consent from the English nation, or something like a Saxon election, which would be a better title in the eyes of the people than the right of conquest. Little, however, was gained by delay; and the coronation, which, for the sake of greater solemnity, took place on Christmas Day, was accompanied by accidents and circumstances highly irritating to the people. It is stated, on one side, that William invited the primate Stigand to perform the rites, and that Stigand refused to crown a man "covered with the blood of men, and the invader of others' rights." Although there might have been some policy in making this great champion of the Saxon cause hallow the Conqueror, it does not appear probable that William would ask this service of one who was lying under the severe displeasure of Rome; and it is said, on the other side, that he refused to be consecrated by Stigand, and conferred that honour on Ealdred, archbishop of York.

The new abbey of Westminster, the last work of Edward the Confessor, was chosen as the place for the coronation of England's first Norman king. The suburbs, the streets of London, and all the approaches to the abbey were lined with double rows of soldiers, horse and foot. The Conqueror rode through the ranks, and entered the abbey church, attended by 260 of his warlike chiefs, by many priests and monks, and a considerable number of English, who had been gained over to act a part in the pageantry. At the opening of the ceremony one of William's prelates, Geoffrey, the bishop of Coutances, asked the Normans, in the French language, if they were of opinion that their chief should take the title of king of England; and then the archbishop of York asked the English if they would have William the Norman for their king. The reply on either side was given by acclamation in the affirmative, and the shouts and cheers thus raised were so loud that they startled the foreign cavalry stationed round the abbey. The troops took the confused noise for a cry of alarm raised by their friends, and, as they had received orders to be on the alert, and ready to act in case of any seditious movement, they rushed to the English houses nearest the abbey and set fire to them all. A few, thinking to succour their betrayed duke and the nobles they served,

[1066-1067 A.D.]

ran to the church, where, at sight of their naked swords, and the smoke and flames that were rising, the tumult soon became as great as that without its walls. The Normans fancied the whole population of London and its neighbourhood had risen against them; the English imagined that they had been duped by a vain show, and drawn together, unarmed and defenceless, that they might be massacred. Both parties ran out of the abbey, and the ceremony was interrupted, though William, left almost alone in the church, or with none but the archbishop Ealdred, and some terrified priests of both nations near him at the altar, decidedly refused to postpone the celebration. The service was therefore completed amidst these bad auguries, but in the utmost hurry and confusion; and the Conqueror took the usual coronation oath of the Anglo-Saxon kings, making, as an addition of his own, the solemn promise that he would treat the English people as well as the best of their kings had done.

Meanwhile the commotion without continued, and it is not mentioned at what hour of the day or night the conflagration ended. The English, who had been at the abbey, ran to extinguish the fire—the Normans, it is said, to plunder, and otherwise profit by the disorder; but it appears that some of the latter exerted themselves to stop the progress of the flames, and to put an end to a riot peculiarly unpalatable to their master, whose anxious wish was certainly, at that time, to conciliate the two nations.

Soon after his coronation William withdrew from London to Barking, where he established a court, which gradually attracted many of the nobles of the south of England. Eadric, surnamed the Forester, Coxo, a warrior of high repute, and others are named; and, as William extended his authority, even the thanes and the great earls from the north, where the force of his arms was not yet felt, repaired to do him homage. In return William granted them the confirmation of their estates and honours, which he had not at present the power to seize or invade. It appears that the Conqueror's first seizures and confiscations, after the crown lands, were the domains of Harold, and his brothers Gurth and Leofwine, and the lands and property of such of the English chiefs as were either very weak, or unpopular, or indifferent to the nation.

Eadgar Ætheling was an inmate of the new court, and William, knowing he was cherished by many of the English on account of his descent, pretended to treat him with great respect, and left him the earldom of Oxford, which Harold had conferred on him when he ascended the throne in his stead. From Barking the new king made a progress through the territory, that was rather militarily occupied than securely conquered, displaying as he went as much royal pomp, and treating the English with as much courtesy and consideration, as he could. The extent of this territory cannot be exactly determined, but it appears the Conqueror had not yet advanced, in the northeast beyond the confines of Norfolk, nor in the southwest beyond Dorsetshire. Both on the eastern and western coast, and in the midland counties, the invasion was gradual and slow.

All William's measures at this time were mild and conciliating; he respected the old Anglo-Saxon laws; he established good courts of justice, encouraged agriculture and commerce, and (at least nominally) enlarged the privileges of London and some other towns. At the same time, however, the country he held was bristled with castles and towers; and additional fortresses erected in and around the capital, showed his distrust of what was termed, in the language of the Normans, an over-numerous and too proud population. Such operations could not be otherwise than distasteful to the English, who

were further irritated by seeing proud foreign lords fixed among them, and married to the widows and heiresses of their old lords, who had fallen at Hastings. The rapacious followers of William were hard to satisfy; and, to secure their attachment, he was frequently obliged to go beyond those bounds of moderation he was inclined to set for himself. A most numerous troop of priests and monks had come over from the Continent, and their avidity was scarcely inferior to that of the barons and knights. Nearly every one of them wanted a church, a rich abbey, or some higher promotion. It was, however, to these foreign churchmen that our country was chiefly indebted for whatever intellectual improvement or civilisation was imported at the Conquest.

#### THE REGENCY OF ODO

In the month of March, 1067, the English in the north and west being yet untouched, William resolved to pass over into Normandy. Had he determined to vex and rouse the English, he could scarcely have left a more fitting instrument than his half-brother Odo, to whom he confided the royal power during his absence. On the other hand, as if to make an English revolt hopeless, should it be attempted, he carried in his train Stigand, the archbishop of Canterbury, Eadgar Ætheling, Edwin, earl of Mercia, Morcar, earl of Northumbria, and many others of high nobility. He set sail with a fair wind for Normandy, just six months after his landing in England.

The rule of Odo and the barons left in England pressed harshly on the people, whose complaints and cries for justice they despised. Without punishment or check, their men-at-arms were permitted to insult and plunder, not merely the peasants and burgesses, but people of the best condition, and the cup of misery and degradation was filled up, as usual in such cases, by violence offered to the women. The English spirit was not yet so depressed, and, in fact, never sank so low as to tolerate such wrongs. Several popular risings took place in various parts of the subjugated territory, and many a Norman, caught beyond the walls of his castle or garrison town, was cut to pieces. These partial insurrections were followed by concerted and extensively combined movements. The men of Kent, who had been the first to submit, were the first to attempt to throw off the yoke.

A singular circumstance attended their effort. Eustace, count of Boulogne, the same who had caused such a stir at Dover in the time of Edward the Confessor, was then in open quarrel with William the Norman, who kept one of his sons in prison. Forgetting their old grievances, the people of Kent sent a message to Count Eustace, promising to put Dover into his hands if he would help them wage war on their Norman oppressors. Eustace accepted the invitation, and, crossing the Channel with a small band, he landed, under favour of a dark night, at a short distance from Dover, where he was presently joined by a host of Kentish men in arms. A contemporary says that had they waited but two days, these insurgents would have been joined by the whole population of those parts; but they imprudently made an attack on the strong castle of Dover, were repulsed with loss, and then thrown into a panic, by the false report that Bishop Odo was approaching them with all his forces. Count Eustace fled, and got safely on board ship, but most of his men-at-arms were slain or taken prisoners by the Norman garrison, or broke their necks by falling over the cliffs on which Dover Castle stands. The men of Kent, with a few exceptions, found their way home in safety, by taking by-paths and roads with which the Normans were unacquainted.



[1067-1068 A.D.]

In the west Eadric the Forester, the lord of extensive possessions that lay on the Severn and the confines of Wales, being provoked at the depredations committed by some Norman captains who had garrisoned the city of Hereford, took up arms, and forming an alliance with two Welsh princes, he was enabled to shut the foreigners close up within the walls of the town, and to range undisputed master of all the western part of Herefordshire.

At this favourable moment the two sons of King Harold sailed over from Ireland with a considerable force, embarked in sixty ships. They ascended the Bristol Channel and the river Avon, and, landing near Bristol, plundered that fertile country. Whatever were their prettexts and claims, they acted as common enemies, and were met as such by the English people, who repulsed them when they attempted to take the city of Bristol, and soon after defeated them upon the coast of Somersetshire, whither they had repaired with their ships and plunder. The invaders, who suffered severely, took to their ships, and returned immediately to Ireland. In Shropshire, Nottinghamshire, and other parts of the kingdom, bodies of English rose in arms, and urged their neighbours to join them. Rumours spread that a simultaneous massacre, like that perpetrated on the Danes, was intended.

## THE RETURN OF WILLIAM

Letter after letter, and message after message, were sent in to Normandy; but the Conqueror lingered there for more than eight months. When at last he departed, it was in hurry and agitation. He embarked at Dieppe on the 6th of December, and sailed for England by night. On arriving, he placed new governors, whom he had brought from Normandy, in his castles and strongholds in Sussex and Kent. On reaching London he was made fully sensible of the prevailing discontent; but with his usual crafty prudence he applied himself to soothe the storm for a while, deeming that the time had not yet arrived for his openly declaring that the fickle, faithless English were to be exterminated, or treated as slaves, and all their possessions and honours given to the Normans. He celebrated the festival of Christmas with unusual pomp, and invited many Saxon chiefs to London to partake in the celebration. He received these guests with smiles and caresses, giving the kiss of welcome to every comer. If they asked for anything, he granted it; if they announced or advised anything, he listened with respectful attention; and it should seem that they were nearly all the dupes of these royal artifices. He then propitiated the citizens of London by a proclamation, which was written in the Saxon language, and read in all the churches of the capital. "Be it known unto you," said this document, "what is my will. I will that all of you enjoy your national laws as in the days of King Edward; that every son shall inherit from his father, after the days of his father; and that none of my people do you wrong." William's first public act after all these promises was to impose a heavy tax, which was made more and more burdensome as his power increased.

The Conqueror's second campaign in England (1068) opened in the fertile province of Devonshire, where the people refused to acknowledge his government, and prepared to resist the advance of his lieutenants. Some of the thanes to whom the command of the insurrection had been intrusted proved cowards or traitors; the Normans advanced, burning, and destroying, and breathing vengeance; but the men of Exeter, who had had a principal share in organising the patriotic resistance, were resolute in the defence of their city.

Githa, Harold's mother, had fled there after the battle of Hastings, and carried with her considerable riches. When the Conqueror came within four miles of Exeter, he summoned the citizens to submit, and take the oath of fealty. They replied, "We will not swear fealty to this man, who pretends to be our king, nor will we receive his garrison within our walls; but if he will receive as tribute the dues we were accustomed to pay to our kings, we will consent to pay them to him."

To this somewhat novel proposal William said, "I would have subjects, and it is not my custom to take them on such conditions." Some of the magistrates and wealthiest of the citizens then went to William, and, imploring his mercy, proffered the submission of the city, and gave hostages; but the mass of the population either did not sanction this proceeding, or repented of it; and when William rode up at the head of his cavalry, he found the gates barred and the walls manned with combatants, who bade him defiance. The Normans, in sight of the men on the ramparts, then tore out the eyes of one of the hostages they had just received; but this savage act did not daunt the people, who were well prepared for defence, having raised new turrets and battlements on the walls, and brought in a number of armed seamen both native and foreigners, that happened to be in their port. The siege continued for eighteen days, and cost William a great number of men. The brave men of Exeter, however, obtained much more favourable terms than were then usual; for, though they were forced to take the oath, and admit a Norman garrison, their lives, property, and privileges were secured to them, and successful precautions were taken by the Conqueror to prevent any outrage or plunder. William returned to Winchester, where he was joined by his wife Matilda, who had not hitherto been in England. At the ensuing festival of Whitsuntide she was publicly crowned by Eadred, the archbishop of York. On the surrender of Exeter, the aged Githa, with several ladies of rank, escaped to Bath, and finding no safety there, they fled to the small islands at the mouth of the Severn, where they lay concealed until they found an opportunity of passing over to Flanders.

Harold's sons, Godwine and Eadmund, with a younger brother named Magnus, again came over from Ireland, and with a fleet hovered off the coast of Devonshire and Cornwall, landing occasionally, and inviting the people to join them against the Normans. Nothing could be more absurdly concerted than these movements. Having rashly ventured too far into the country, they were suddenly attacked by a Norman force from Exeter, and defeated with great slaughter. Their means were now exhausted, and, wearied by their ill success, their Irish allies declined giving any further assistance to these exiles. The sons of Harold next appeared as suppliants at the court of Svend, king of Denmark.

During the spring and early summer of this same year (1068), William established his authority in Devonshire, Somersetshire, and Gloucestershire, and besides taking Exeter, made himself master of Oxford and other fortified cities which he had left in his rear when he advanced into the west. Wherever his dominion was imposed, the mass of land was given to his lords and knights, and fortresses and castles were erected and garrisoned by Normans and other foreigners, who continued to cross the Channel in search of employment, wealth, and honours. Meanwhile, the accounts of the sufferings of the conquered people, as given by the native chroniclers, are thus condensed in a striking passage of Holinshed:<sup>b</sup>

"He took away from divers of the nobility, and others of the better sort, all their livings, and gave the same to his Normans. Moreover, he raised

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great taxes and subsidies through the realm; nor anything regarded the English nobility; so that they who before thought themselves to be made forever by bringing a stranger into the realm, did now see themselves trodden under foot, to be despised, and to be mocked on all sides, insomuch that many of them were constrained (as it were, for a further testimony of servitude and bondage) to shave their beards, to round their hair, and to frame themselves, as well in apparel as in service and diet, at their tables, after the Norman manner, very strange and far differing from the ancient customs and old usages of their country. Others, utterly refusing to sustain such an intolerable yoke of thralldom as was daily laid upon them by the Normans, chose rather to leave all, both goods and lands, and, after the manner of outlaws, got them to the woods with their wives, children, and servants, meaning from thenceforth to live upon the spoil of the country adjoining, and to take whatsoever came next to hand. Whereupon it came to pass within a while that no man might travel in safety from his own house or town to his next neighbours." The bands of outlaws thus formed of impoverished, desperate men, were not suppressed for several successive reigns; and while the Normans considered and treated them as banditti, the English people long regarded them in the light of unfortunate patriots.

Men of higher rank and more extended views were soon among the fugitives from the pale of the Conqueror. When in his conciliating mood, William had promised Edwin, earl of Mercia, one of his daughters in marriage; and, flattered by the prospect of such a prize, this powerful brother-in-law of Harold had rendered important services to the Norman cause; but now, when he asked his reward, the Conqueror not only refused the fair bride, but insulted the suitor. Upon this, Edwin, with his brother Morecar, went to the north of England, there to join their incensed countrymen, and make one general effort for the recovery of their ancient liberties. No foreign soldier had as yet passed the Humber; and it was behind that river that Edwin and Morecar fixed the great camp of independence, the most southern bulwark of which was the fortified city of York. Among the men of Yorkshire and Northumbria they found some thousands of hardy warriors, who swore they would not sleep under the roof of a house till the day of victory, and they were joined by some allies from the mountains of Wales and other parts.

The ever-active Conqueror, however, came upon them before they were prepared. His march, considering the many obstacles he had to overcome, was wonderfully rapid. Advancing from Oxford, he took Warwick and Leicester, the latter of which places he almost entirely destroyed. Then, crossing the Trent, which he had not seen till now, he fell upon Derby and Nottingham. From Nottingham he marched upon Lincoln, which he forced to capitulate and deliver hostages, and thence pressing forward might and main, he came to the river Ouse, near the point where it falls into the Humber. Here he found Edwin and Morecar drawn up to oppose him.<sup>d</sup>

But William gained his point without having to fight a pitched battle. Edwin and Morecar were pacified by promises and submitted without striking a blow. But, as Freeman says, the favour at William's hands to which they were now admitted was a favour only in name. William continued to advance after the submission of the earls practically unopposed. The English fled from every town. As he approached York, a deputation of its citizens met him with the keys of the city. The more resolute of the English collected at Durham; others fled into the country of the Scots which became the refuge for thousands of English patriots.<sup>a</sup> The Normans who were



not prepared to advance farther, built a strong citadel at York, which became their advanced post and bulwark towards the north.

In spite of his successes in the north, and his firm establishment in the midland counties, where he built castles and gave away earldoms, the Conqueror's throne was still threatened, and the country still agitated from one end to the other. The English chiefs, who had hitherto adhered to his cause, fell off, at first one by one, and then in troops together, following up their defection with concerted plans of operation against him. To these was added a fugitive of still higher rank, of whose custody the Conqueror was very negligent. Eadgar Ætheling fled by sea into Scotland, taking his mother, Agatha, and his two sisters, Margaret and Christina, with him. These royal fugitives were received with great honour and kindness, and conducted to his castle of Dunfermline by the Scottish monarch, Malcolm Canmore. Eadgar's sister Margaret was young and handsome; "and in process of time the said King Malcolm cast such love unto the said Margaret, that he took her to wife." Some of the English nobles had preceded Eadgar to Scotland; many followed him; and these emigrants, and others that arrived from the same quarter on various subsequent occasions, became the founders of a principal part of the Scottish nobility.

It is probable that William did not mourn much for the departure of the English thanes; but presently he was vexed and embarrassed by the departure of some of his Norman chiefs who had followed him from the Continent. The king punished this desertion by immediately confiscating all the possessions they had obtained in England. At the same time he invited fresh adventurers and soldiers of fortune from nearly every country in Europe; and, allured by his brilliant offers, bands flocked to him from the banks of the Rhine, the Seine, the Loire, the Garonne, and the Tagus—from the Alps, and the Italian peninsula beyond the Alps.

The strong garrison which the Conqueror had left at York could scarcely adventure a mile in advance of that post without being attacked by the natives, who lay constantly in ambush in all the woods and glens. The governor, William Malet, was soon fain to declare that he would not answer for the security of York itself unless prompt succour was sent him. On receiving this alarming news, William marched in person, and arrived before York just as the citizens, in league with all the country people of the neighbourhood, were besieging the Norman fortress. Having raised this siege by a sudden attack, he laid the foundations of a second castle in York, and, leaving a double garrison, returned southward. Soon after his departure, the English made a second attempt to drive the enemy from their fortress, but they were repulsed with loss; and the second castle and other works were finished without further interruption. Thinking themselves now secure in this advanced post, the Normans resumed the offensive, and made a desperate attempt to extend their frontier as far north as Durham. The advance was made by a certain Robert de Comines, to whom William had promised a vast territory yet to be conquered.

This Robert set out from York with much pomp and circumstance, having assumed, by anticipation, the title of earl of Northumberland. His army was not large, consisting only of 1,200 lances; but his confidence was boundless. He crossed the Tees, and was within sight of the walls of Durham, which the Normans called "the stronghold of the rebels of the north," when Æthelwine, the English bishop of that place, came forth to meet him, and informed him that the natives had vowed to destroy him, or be destroyed, and warned him not to expose himself with so small a force. Comines treated

[1069 A.D.]

the warning with contempt, and marched on. The Normans entered Durham, massacring a few defenceless men. The soldiers quartered themselves in the houses of the citizens, plundering or wasting their substance; and the chief himself took possession of the bishop's palace. But when night fell, the people lighted signal-fires on the hills, that were seen as far as the Tees to the south, and as far northward as the river Tyne; and, at the summons, the inhabitants gathered in great numbers, and hurried to Durham. At the point of day they rushed into the city, and attacked the Normans on all sides. Many were killed before they could well rouse themselves from the deep sleep induced by the fatigue of the preceding day's march, and the revelry and debauch of the night. The rest attempted to rally in the bishop's house, where their leader had established his quarters. They defended this post for a short time, discharging their arrows and other missiles on the heads of their assailants, but the English ended the combat by setting fire to the house, which was burned to the ground, with Robert de Comines and all the Normans in it. The chroniclers relate that of all the men engaged in the expedition only two escaped.

When the Northumbrians struck the blow at Durham, they were expecting powerful allies, who soon arrived. As we have so often had occasion to repeat, these men, with the inhabitants of most of the Danelagh, were exceedingly fierce and warlike, and chiefly of Danish blood. Many of the old men had followed the victorious banner of the great Canute into England, or had served under his sons, kings Harold Harefoot and Harthacnut; and the sons of these old warriors were now in the vigour of mature manhood. They had always maintained an intercourse with Denmark, and as soon as they saw themselves threatened by the Normans, they applied to that country for assistance. The court of the Danish king was soon crowded by supplicants from the Danelagh, from Norwich and Lincoln, to York, Durham, and Newcastle. There were also envoys from other parts of the kingdom, where the Saxon blood predominated, and the sons of King Harold added their efforts to urge the Danish monarch to the invasion of England.

At the same time the men of Northumberland had opened a correspondence with Malcolm Canmore and his guest Eadgar Ætheling, and allied themselves with the English refugees in Scotland and on the Border. Even supposing that the sons of Harold made no pretensions to the crown, there must have been some jealousy and confusion in this confederacy; for while one party to it held the weak Eadgar as legitimate sovereign, another maintained that by right of succession the king of Denmark was king of England. It seems well established that the Danish monarch, Svend Estridsen (Estrithson), held the latter opinion; and the ill success of the confederacy may probably be attributed to the disunion inevitably arising from such clashing interests and pretensions. As soon as the battle of Hastings was known, and before any invitations were sent over, Svend had contemplated a descent on England. To avert this danger, William had recourse to Adalbert, the archbishop of Bremen, who, won by persuasion and presents of large sums of money, undertook the negotiation, and endeavoured to make the Danish king renounce his project.

Two years passed without anything more being heard of the Danish invasion; but when in this, the third year after the battle of Hastings, the solicitations of the English emigrants were more urgent than ever; and the men of the north, his natural allies, were up in arms, the powerful Dane despatched a fleet of 240 sail, with orders to act in conjunction with the king of Scotland and the Northumbrians. The army embarked in this fleet was composed of

almost as many heterogeneous materials as the mercenary force of William; besides Danes and Holsteiners, there were Frisians, Saxons, Poles, and adventurers from other countries, tempted by the hope of plunder. The Danish king gave the supreme command of the fleet to his brother Asbiorn. After alarming the Normans in the southeast, at Dover, Sandwich, and Ipswich, the Danes went northward to the Humber, and sailed up that estuary to the Ouse, where they landed about the middle of August. It appears that Asbiorn was not able to prevent his motley army from plundering and wasting the country.

As soon, however, as the Anglo-Danes, the men of Yorkshire and Northumberland, were advised of the arrival of the armament, they flocked to join it from all parts of the country; and Eadgar Ætheling, with Marleswine, Gospatrick, Waltheof the son of Siward, the great enemy of Macbeth, and many others, arrived from the frontiers of Scotland, bearing the consoling assurance that, in addition to the force they brought with them, Malcolm Canmore was advancing with a Scottish army to support the insurgents. York was close at hand, and they determined to commence operations by the attack of the Norman fortifications in that city. The Normans had rendered the walls of the town so strong that they defended them seven days; on the eighth day of the siege they set fire to the houses that stood near their citadels, in order that their assailants might not use the materials to fill up the ditches of the castles, and then they shut themselves up within those lines. A strong wind arose—the flames spread in all directions; the minster, or cathedral church, with its famous library, and great part of the city, were consumed; and even within their castles the Normans saw themselves threatened with a horrid death by the fire they had kindled. Preferring death by the sword and battle-axe to being burned alive, they made a sally, and were slain, almost to a man, by an enemy far superior in number, and inflamed with the fiercest hatred.

They had suffered no such loss since the fight of Hastings; three thousand Normans and mercenaries of different races fell; and only William Malet, the governor of York, with his wife and children, and a few other men of rank, were saved and carried on board the Danish fleet, where they were kept for ransom. Such parts of the city of York as escaped the conflagration were occupied by or for Eadgar Ætheling. A rapid advance to the south, after the capture of York, with no enemy in their rear, might have insured the confederates a signal and perhaps a decisive success; but the king of Scotland did not appear with his promised army, and at the approach of winter the Danes retired to their ships in the Humber, or took up quarters between the Ouse and the Trent. William was thus allowed time to collect his forces and bring over fresh troops from the Continent.

#### THE DEVASTATION OF THE NORTH [1069 A.D.]

The Conqueror was hunting in the forest of Dean when he received the first news of the catastrophe of York; and then and there he swore, by the splendour of the Almighty, that he would utterly exterminate the Northumbrian people, nor ever lay down his lance when he had once taken it up, until he had done the deed.<sup>d</sup>

He had collected about him a new body of auxiliary troops, and he marched to the north with an overwhelming force. But he trusted not to force alone. His agents were busy amongst the Danish chiefs; and their powerful army



[1069 A.D.]

retired to their ships. The English, who had joined the Danes at the Humber, fell back to the Tyne. York was left to be defended by Earl Waltheof alone. The insurrectionary spirit had spread upon the news of the Danish landing, and William had to fight his way through a hostile population in the mid-land counties. At length he reached Pontefract. The winter was come with rain and snow. The river Aire had become a torrent, and was impassable by boats. Three weeks was the fiery king detained; till at length a ford was found and the army crossed. Their march was through the wild hills and the pathless forests of a district now rich with modes of industry then undreamt of—by paths so narrow that two soldiers could not walk abreast. He entered York, which he found abandoned. But there he sat down, to spend the festival of Christmas in the organisation of a plan of vengeance that would have better fitted one who had never had the name of the great teacher of mercy on his lips. He dispersed his commanders in separate divisions over a surface of a hundred miles, with orders to destroy every living man, and every article that could minister to the sustenance of life. Houses were to be burned; the implements of husbandry were to be broken up; the whole district from the Humber to the Tees, from the Wear to the Tyne, was to be made a desert. And it was made a desert. Throughout this region, when, fourteen years after, the survey recorded in *Doomsday Book* was completed, the lands of Edwin and Morcar were entered as *wasta*—laid waste. Many others belonging to the sees of York and Durham, and to Waltheof, Gospatrick, and Siward, the Saxon lords, had the terrible word *wasta* written against them. Malmesbury,<sup>c</sup> writing half a century afterwards, says: "Thus, the resources of a province, once flourishing, were cut off, by fire, slaughter, and devastation. The ground for more than sixty miles, totally uncultivated and unproductive, remains bare to the present day."

Ordericus<sup>g</sup> winds up the lamentable story with these words: "There followed, consequently, so great a scarcity in England in the ensuing years, and severe famine involved the innocent and unarmed population in so much misery, that, in a Christian nation, more than a hundred thousand souls, of both sexes and all ages, perished of want. On many occasions, in the course of the present history, I have been free to extol William according to his merits, but I dare not commend him for an act which levelled both the bad and the good together in one common ruin, by the infliction of a consuming famine. For when I see that innocent children, youths in the prime of their



RUINS OF ANCIENT CHURCH OF RECULVER, KENT

age, and gray-headed old men perished from hunger, I am more disposed to pity the sorrows and sufferings of the wretched people, than to undertake the hopeless task of screening one by lying flatteries who was guilty of such wholesale massacre. I assert, moreover, that such barbarous homicide could not pass unpunished. The Almighty Judge beholds alike the high and low, scrutinising and punishing the acts of both with equal justice, that his eternal laws may be plain to all."

Detestable as these cruelties appear to us, it is satisfactory to find that they were held in detestation by those who lived near the times in which they were perpetrated. It was not a characteristic of these ages, which we are accustomed to think barbarous, that the monastic writers, who possessed all the knowledge of the period, should speak with indifference of men eating human flesh, under the pressure of famine; of perishing creatures selling themselves into perpetual slavery to obtain food; of corpses rotting in the highways, because none were left to bury them. Nor are we quite warranted in believing that the great Norman chieftains, even whilst they received enormous grants of confiscated properties, could look with unmixed satisfaction upon pasture lands without herds, and arable lands without men to till them.

On his return from Hexham to York, by an imperfectly known and indirect route across the Fells, William was well-nigh perishing. The snow was still deep in those parts, and the rivers, torrents, ravines, and mountains continually presented obstacles to which the Normans had been little accustomed in the level counties of England. The army fell into confusion, the king lost the track, and passed a whole night without knowing where he was, or what direction his troops had taken. He did not reach York without a serious loss, for he left behind him most of his horses, which were said to have perished in the snow; his men also suffered the severest privations.

Confiscation now became almost general. All property in land, whether belonging to patriotic chiefs, or to men who had taken no active part in the conflict, began to pass into the possession of the Normans and other foreigners. Nor was movable property safer or more respected. William's commissioners, who in many places performed their work sword in hand, did not always draw a distinction between the plate and jewels left in deposit, and the treasures that belonged to the monasteries themselves, but carried off the church ornaments, and the vessels of silver or gold that were attached to the service of the altar. They also removed or destroyed all deeds and documents, charters of immunities, and evidences of property. The newly conquered territory in the north was distributed in immense lots. In *Doomsday Book*, which was drawn up fifteen years after the Norman occupation of them, most of these domains are described as lying fallow or waste. Every baron erected his castle; and in every populous town there was a strong fortress, where the Normans confined the principal natives as hostages, and into which they could retire in case of an insurrection.

The nominal government of Northumberland was, however, intrusted to a native who had recently borne arms against William. This was Gospatrick, who came in with Waltheof, the brave son of Siward, with Morcar and Edwin, the brothers-in-law of King Harold, and submitted to William for the second time, being probably induced thereto by liberal promises from the Conqueror, who then considered them as the main prop of the English cause, wanting whom Eadgar Ætheling would at once fall into insignificance. Waltheof was made earl of Huntingdon and Northampton, and received the hand of Judith, one of King William's nieces; and Morcar and Edwin were restored

[1070 A.D.]

to their paternal estates. In reality, however, these four men were little better than prisoners, and three of them perished miserably in a very short time.

The insurrections which broke out in William's rear, during his march to York, were partially suppressed by his lieutenants, who suffered some reverses, and perpetrated great cruelties. The garrison of Exeter, besieged by the people of Cornwall, was relieved by Fitz-Osborne; Montacute (Montague) repulsed the insurgents of Devonshire and Somersetshire; and Eadric the Forester, who took the town of Shrewsbury, with the help of the men of Chester and some Welsh, was foiled in his attempt to reduce the castle. The whole of the northwest was, however, in a very insecure state; and the haste with which William marched thither on his return to York from Hexham, seems to denote some greater peril on the side of the Normans than is expressed by any of the annalists. The weather was still inclement, and his troops were fatigued by their recent exertions, their rapid marches and counter-marches in Northumberland; yet he led them, amidst storms of sleet and hail, across the mountains which divide our island lengthwise, and which have been called, not inappropriately, the Apennines of England. The roads he took, as being those which led direct to Chester, were scarcely passable for cavalry, and his troops were annoyed and disheartened by actual difficulties and prospective hardships and dangers.

The auxiliaries, particularly the men of Anjou and Brittany, began to murmur aloud; and not a few of the Normans, complaining of the hard service to which their chief was exposing them, talked of returning beyond sea. William silenced their murmurs with his wonted art; and on the rough way over the wealds he partook in the fatigues of the common soldiers, marching on foot with them, and faring as they fared. Chester, which still retained the outer features of a Roman city, and where the Conqueror gazed on Roman walls and gates then comparatively entire, had not yet been invaded by the Normans. No defence, however, was attempted there; and, after entering in triumph, William proceeded to lay the foundations of a new and strong castle, while detachments of his army reduced the surrounding country. During the Conqueror's stay Eadric the Forester submitted, and was received into favour. To retain the newly conquered province in the northwest, he had left a strong body of troops behind him. Hugh the Wolf and his ferocious followers shed the blood of the Welsh like water. The fearful tragedy of Northumberland and Yorkshire was repeated on a smaller scale in this corner of the island, and famine and pestilence stalked along the banks of the Clwyd, the Dee, and the Mersey, as they had done by the rivers of the northeastern coast.



THE HOLY WELL IN CRYPT OF CHAPEL OF  
ST. JOSEPH, GLASTONBURY ABBEY

(Founded in the sixth century. The crypt is of the  
fifteenth century.)



## THE RESISTANCE OF HEREWARD [1071 A.D.]

The disturbances on the eastern coast, which had been overlooked, now grew to such importance as to demand attention. Hereward, "England's darling," as he was called by his admiring countrymen, was lord of Brunn or Bourn, in Lincolnshire, and one of the most resolute chiefs the Normans ever had to encounter. Having expelled the foreigners, who had taken possession of his patrimony, he assisted his neighbours in doing the like, and then established a fortified camp in the Isle of Ely, where he raised the banner of independence, and bade defiance to the Conqueror. His power or influence soon extended along the eastern sea-line, over the fen country of Lincolnshire, Huntingdon, and Cambridge; and English refugees of all classes—thanes dispossessed of their lands, bishops deprived of their mitres, abbots driven from their monasteries to make room for foreigners—repaired from time to time to his "camp of refuge."

The jealous fears of the king increased the danger they were intended to lessen. Though Edwin and Morcar remained perfectly quiet, and showed every disposition to keep their oaths of allegiance, he dreaded them, on account of their great popularity with their countrymen, and he finally resolved to seize their persons. The two earls received timely notice of this intention, and secreted themselves. When he thought the vigilance of the Normans was lulled, Edwin endeavoured to escape to the Scottish border; but he was betrayed by three of his attendants, and fell on the road, gallantly fighting against his Norman pursuers, who cut off his head, and sent it as an acceptable present to the Conqueror.<sup>1</sup> Morcar effected his escape to the morasses of Cambridgeshire, and joined Hereward, whose camp was further crowded about this time by many of the English chiefs of the north, who had been driven homeless into Scotland. Among the ecclesiastics who took this course was Egelom, the Bishop of Durham. Even Stigand, the primate of all England, but now degraded by king and pope, and replaced by Lanfranc, an Italian, is mentioned among the refugees of Ely.

William at length moved with a formidable army. The difficulties of this war on the eastern coast were different from but not inferior to what the Normans had encountered in the west and the north. There were no mountains and defiles, but the country was in good part a swamp, on which no cavalry could tread; it was cut in all directions by rivers, and streams, and broad meres; and the few roads that led through this dangerous labyrinth were little known to the foreigners. The country, too, where the banner of independence floated was a sort of holy land to the English; the abbeys of Ely, Peterborough, Thorney, and Croyland, the most ancient, the most revered of their establishments, stood within it; and the monks, however professionally timid or peaceful, were disposed to resistance—for they well knew that the coming of the Normans would be the signal for driving them from their monasteries.

During two or three years the Conquest was checked in this direction. The Normans, surprised among the bogs and the tall rushes that covered

[<sup>1</sup> "Edwin's career was not a brilliant one," says Ramsay,<sup>i</sup> "but in face of the obloquy that has been heaped upon him, if the judgment of a man's own time is worth anything, we must recognise that the last earl of Mercia had inherited good and lovable qualities that endeared him to English, French, and Norman alike." William's reception of the gift of Edwin's head has been differently related by different historians. He affected to shed tears we are told. At any rate he seems to have shown no pleasure at the deed, and refused to reward the murderers. He is even said to have expressed his displeasure by banishing the perpetrators.]

[1071 A.D.]

them, suffered many severe losses. The sagacious eye of William at last saw that the proper way of proceeding would be by a blockade that should prevent provisions and succour from reaching the Isle of Ely. He accordingly stationed all the ships he could collect in the Wash, with orders to watch every inlet from the sea to the fens; and he so stationed his army as to block up every road that led into the fens by land. When he resumed more active operations, he undertook a work of great note and difficulty. In order to approach the fortified camp in the midst of marshes, and an expanse of water in some places shallow, in others deep, he began to build a wooden causeway, two miles long, with bridges over the beds of the rivers. Hereward frequently interrupted these operations, and in a manner so murderous, sudden, and mysterious, that the affrighted workmen and soldiers became firmly convinced that he was leagued with the devil, and aided by some necromancer. William, who had brought over with him from Normandy a conjurer and soothsayer as an essential part of his army of invasion, was readily induced to employ a sorceress on the side of the Normans, in order to neutralise or defeat the spells of the English. This sorceress was placed, with much ceremony, on the top of a wooden tower at the head of the works; but Hereward, watching his opportunity, set fire to the dry reeds and rushes; the flames were rapidly spread by the wind, and tower and sorceress, workmen and soldiers, were consumed.

When the Isle of Ely had been blockaded three months, provisions became scarce there. Those whose profession and vowed duties included frequent fasting, were the first to become impatient under privation. The monks of Ely sent to the enemy's camp, offering to show a safe passage across the fens, if the king would only promise to leave them in undisturbed possession of their houses and lands. The king agreed to the condition, and two of his barons pledged their faith for the execution of the treaty. Under proper guides the Normans then found their way into the Isle of Ely, and took possession of the strong monastery which formed part of Hereward's line of defence. They killed one thousand Englishmen, that either occupied an advanced position, or had made a sortie; and then, closing round the "camp of refuge," they finally obliged the rest to lay down their arms. Some of these brave men were liberated on paying heavy fines or ransoms; some were put to death; some deprived of their sight; some maimed and rendered unfit for war, by having a right hand or a foot cut off; some were condemned to perpetual imprisonment.

Hereward, the soul of the confederacy, would not submit; but, making an effort which appeared desperate to all, he rushed from the beleaguered camp, and escaped by throwing himself into the marshes, where the Normans would not venture to follow him. Passing from fen to fen, he gained the low, swampy lands in Lincolnshire, near his own estate, where he was joined by some friends, and renewed a partisan or guerilla warfare, which lasted four or five years, and cost the Normans many lives, but which could not, under existing circumstances, produce any great political result. At last, seeing the hopelessness of the struggle, he listened to terms from William, who was anxious to pacify an enemy his armies could never reach, and who probably admired, as a soldier, his wonderful courage and address. Hereward made his peace, took the oath of allegiance, and was permitted by the Conqueror to preserve and enjoy the estates of his ancestors. The exploits of the last hero of Anglo-Saxon independence formed a favourite theme of tradition and poetry; and long after his death the inhabitants of the Isle of Ely showed with pride the ruins of a wooden tower, which they called the castle of Hereward.

## THE CONSOLIDATION OF NORMAN POWER

After the destruction of the camp of refuge in Ely, the Norman forces, naval as well as military, proceeded to the north, to disperse some bands which had again raised the standard of independence, and invoked the presence of Eadgar Ætheling, who was enjoying the tranquillity and obscurity for which he was fitted in Scotland. After some bloody skirmishes, the confederates were driven beyond the Tweed; and then William crossed that river, to seize the English emigrants and punish Malcolm Canmore. A Scottish army, which had been so anxiously expected by the English insurgents at York two years before, when its weight in the scale might have proved fatal to the Normans, had tardily marched, at a moment when the Northumbrians and people of Yorkshire were almost exterminated, and when it could do little more than excite the few remaining inhabitants to a hopeless rising, and burn the houses of such as refused to join in it. The want of provisions in a land



NORMAN KEEP, PEVENSEY

laid waste soon made the Scots recross the Border. To avenge this mere predatory inroad, however, William now advanced from the Tweed to the Firth of Forth, as if he intended to subdue the whole of the "land of the mountain and flood," taking with him the entire mass of his splendid cavalry, and nearly every Norman foot-soldier he could prudently detach from garrison duty in England. The emigrants escaped his pursuit, nor would Malcolm deliver them up; but, intimidated by the advance of an army infinitely more numerous and better armed than his own, the Scottish king, says the *Saxon Chronicle*,† "came and agreed with King William, and delivered hostages, and was his man; and the king went home with all his force."

The Normans had now been seven years in the land, engaged in almost constant hostilities; and at length England, with the exception of Wales, might fairly be said to be conquered. In most abridgments and epitomes of history, the events we have related, in not unnecessary detail, are so faintly indicated, and huddled together in so narrow a space, as to leave an impression that the resistance of our ancestors after the battle of Hastings was trifling and brief—that the sanguinary drama of the Conquest was almost wholly included in one act. Nothing can be more incorrect than this impression, or more unfair to that hardy race of men, who were the fountain-source of at least nine-tenths of the blood that flows in the large and generous veins of the English nation.



[1073 A.D.]

Not long after his return from Scotland circumstances imperatively called for the presence of William in his continental dominions. His talents as a statesman and warrior are indisputable, yet few men have owed more to good fortune. Their wrongs and provocations were the same then as now, and policy would have suggested to the people of Maine to exert themselves a year or two before, when William, engaged in difficult wars in England, would have been embarrassed by their insurrection on the Continent. But they made their great effort just as England was reduced to the quietude of despair, and when William could proceed against them unencumbered by any other war. Héribert, the last count or national chief, bequeathed the county of Maine, bordering on Normandy, to Duke William, who, to the displeasure of the people, but without any important opposition, had taken possession of it several years before he invaded England. Instigated by Fulk, count of Anjou, and vexed by a tyrannical administration, the people of Maine now rose against William, expelled the magistrates he had placed over them, and drove out from their towns the officers and garrisons of the Norman race. Deeming it imprudent to remove his Norman forces from this island, he collected a considerable army among the English population, and carrying them over to Normandy he joined them to some troops levied there, and putting himself at their head, marched into the unfortunate province of Maine. The national valour, which so often opposed him, was now exerted, with a blind fury, in his favour. The English beat the men of Maine, burned their towns and villages, and did as much mischief as the Normans (among whom was a strong contingent from Maine) had perpetrated in England.

While these things were passing on the Continent, Eadgar Ætheling received an advantageous offer of services and co-operation from Philip, king of France, who at last, and too late, roused himself from the strange sloth and indifference with which he had seen the progress made by his overgrown vassal, the duke of Normandy. The events in Maine, the dread inspired in all the neighbouring country, even to the walls of Paris, and William's exhibition of force, were probably the immediate causes that dispelled Philip's long sleep. He invited Eadgar to come to France and be present at his council, promising him a strong fortress, situated on the Channel, at a point equally convenient for making descents upon England or incursions or forays into Normandy. Closing with the proposals, Eadgar got ready a few ships and a small band of soldiers—being aided therein by his sister, the queen of Scotland, and some of the Scottish nobility—and made sail for France.

His usual bad luck attended him; he had scarcely gained the open sea when a storm arose and drove his ships ashore on the coast of Northumberland, where some of his followers were drowned, and others taken prisoners by the Normans. He and a few of his friends of superior rank escaped and got into Scotland, where they arrived in miserable plight, with nothing but the clothes on their backs, some walking on foot, some mounted on sorry beasts. After this misfortune, his brother-in-law, King Malcolm, advised him to seek a reconciliation with William, and Eadgar accordingly sent a messenger to the Conqueror, who at once invited him to Normandy, where he promised proper and honourable treatment. Instead of sailing direct from Scotland, the Ætheling, whose feelings were as obtuse as his intellect, took his way through England, feasting at the castles of the Norman invaders as he went along. William received him with a show of kindness, and allotted him an apartment in the palace of Rouen, with a pound of silver a day for his maintenance; and there the descendant of the great Alfred passed eleven years of his life, occupying himself with dogs and horses.

## THE BARONS' REVOLT (1075 A.D.)

The king, who had gone to the Continent to quell one insurrection, was recalled to England by another of a much more threatening nature; planned, not by the English, but by the Norman barons, their conquerors and despoilers. William Fitzosbern, the prime favourite and counsellor of the Conqueror, had died a violent death in Flanders, and had been succeeded in his English domains, and the earldom of Hereford, by his son, Roger Fitzosbern. This young nobleman negotiated a marriage between his sister Emma and Ralph or Raoul de Gaël, a Breton by birth, and earl of Norfolk in England by the right of the sword. For some reason not explained, this alliance was displeasing to the king, who sent from Normandy to prohibit it. The parties were enraged by this prohibition, which they also determined not to obey; and on the day which had been previously fixed for the ceremony, Emma, the affianced, was conducted to Norwich, where a wedding-feast was celebrated, that was fatal to all that were present at it. Among the guests who had been invited, rather for the after-act than to do honour to the bride and bridegroom, was Waltheof, the husband of Judith [whom William had recently created earl of Northumbria]. A sumptuous feast was followed by copious libations; and when the heads of the guests were heated by wine, the earls of Hereford and Norfolk, who were already committed by carrying the forbidden marriage into effect, and who knew the implacable temper of William, opened their plans with a wild and energetic eloquence.

The great object of the Norman conspirators was to gain over Earl Waltheof, whose warlike qualities and great popularity with the English were well known to them, and when they proceeded to divulge the particulars of their plan, the earls of Hereford and Norfolk allured him with the promise of a third of England, which was to be partitioned into the old Saxon kingdoms of Wessex, Mercia, and Northumberland. With the fumes of wine in his head, and a general ardour and enthusiasm around him, Waltheof, it is said, gave his approval to the conspiracy; but, according to one version of the story, the next morning, "when he had consulted with his pillow, and awaked his wits to perceive the danger whereunto he was drawn, he determined not to move in it," and took measures to prevent its breaking out. A more generally received account, however, is, that Waltheof, seeing from the first the madness of the scheme, and the little probability it offered of benefiting the English people, refused to engage in it, and only took an oath of secrecy. The whole project, indeed, was insane; the discontented barons had scarcely a chance of succeeding against the established authority and the genius of William; and their success, had it been possible, would have proved a curse to the country; a step fatally retrograde; a going back towards the time of the Saxon Heptarchy, when England was fractured into a number of petty hostile states. It is quite certain that Waltheof never took up arms, nor did any overt act of treason, but in his uneasiness of mind, and his confidence in so dear a connection, he disclosed to his wife Judith all that had been done in Norwich Castle; and this confidence is generally believed to have been the main cause of his ruin.

Roger Fitzosbern and Ralph de Gaël, the real heads of the confederacy, were hurried into action before their scheme was ripe, for their secret was betrayed by some one. The first of these earls, who had collected his followers and a considerable number of Welsh, was checked in his attempt to cross the Severn at Worcester, nor could he find a passage at any other point. Walter

[1075 A.D.]

de Lacy, a great baron in those parts, soon brought up a mixed host of English and Normans, that rendered the earl of Hereford's project of crossing the Severn, to co-operate with his brother-in-law in the heart of England, altogether hopeless. Lanfranc, the Italian archbishop of Canterbury, who acted as viceroy during William's absence, proceeding with the greatest decision, also sent troops from London and Winchester to oppose Fitzosbern, at whose head he hurled, at the same time, the terrible sentence of excommunication. In writing to the king in Normandy, the primate said: "It would be with pleasure, and as envoy of God, that we could welcome you among us; but," added the energetic old priest, "do not hurry yourself to cross the sea, for it would be putting us to shame to come and aid us in destroying such traitors and thieves." The earl of Hereford fell back from the Severn, and his brother-in-law, the earl of Norfolk, left to himself, and unable to procure in time assistance, for which he had applied to the Danes, was suddenly attacked by a royal army of very superior force, led by Odo, the bishop of Bayeux, who obtained a complete victory, and cut off the right foot of every prisoner he made. The earl retreated to Norwich, garrisoned his castle with the most trusty of his followers, and, leaving his bride to defend it, passed over to Brittany, in hopes of obtaining succour from his countrymen. The daughter of William Fitzosbern defended Norwich Castle with great bravery; and when, at the end of three months, she capitulated, she obtained mild terms for her garrison, which was almost entirely composed of Bretons. They did not suffer in life or limb, but were shipped off to the Continent within forty days.

The Bretons generally had rendered themselves unpopular at William's court. With the true character of their race, they were irascible, turbulent, factious, and much more devoted to the head of their clan than to the king.

When they were embarked, Lanfranc wrote to his master, "Glory be to God, your kingdom is at last purged of the filth of these Bretons." The king invaded Brittany, in the hope of exterminating the fugitive earl of Norfolk in his native castle, and reducing that province to entire subjection; but, after laying an unsuccessful siege to the town of Dol, he was obliged to retire before an army of Bretons, who were supported by the French king. William then crossed the Channel to suppress the insurrection in England; but by the time he arrived there was little left for him to do except to punish the principal offenders. The earl of Hereford had been followed, defeated, and taken prisoner, and many of his adherents, Welsh, English, and Normans, hanged on high gibbets, or blinded, or mutilated. At a royal court De Gaël was outlawed, and his brother-in-law, Fitzosbern, condemned to perpetual imprisonment and the forfeiture of his property. Scarcely one of the guests at the ill-augured marriage of Emma escaped with life, and even the inhabitants



ANGLO-NORMAN COSTUME

(Before 1200 A.D.)



of the town of Norwich felt the weight of royal vengeance. The last and most conspicuous victim was Waltheof, who had been guilty, at most, of a misprision of treason. His secret had been betrayed by his wife Judith, who is said, moreover, to have accused him of inviting over the Danish fleet, which now made its appearance on the coast of Norfolk. The motive that made this heartless woman seek the death of her brave and generous husband, was a passion she had conceived for a Norman nobleman, whom she hoped to marry if she could but be made a widow. Others, however, although acting under different impulses, were quite as urgent as the Conqueror's niece for the execution of the English earl. These were Norman barons, who had cast the eyes of affection on his honours and estates—"his great possessions being his greatest enemies."

The judges were divided in opinion as to the proper sentence, some of them maintaining that, as a revolted English subject, Waltheof ought to die; others, that as an officer of the king, and according to Norman law, he ought only to suffer the minor punishment of perpetual imprisonment. These differences of opinion lasted nearly a whole year, during which the earl was confined in the royal citadel of Winchester. At length his wife and other enemies prevailed, the sentence of death was pronounced, and confirmed by the king, who is said to have long wished for the opportunity of putting him out of his way. The unfortunate son of that great and good Earl Siward, whom Shakespeare has immortalised, was executed on a hill, a short distance from the town of Winchester, at a very early hour in the morning, and in great haste, lest the citizens should become aware of his fate and attempt a rescue. His body was thrown into a hole dug at a cross-road, and covered with earth in a hurry; but the king was induced to permit its removal thence, and the English monks of Croyland, to whom the deceased earl had been a benefactor, took it up and carried it to their abbey, where they gave it a more honourable sepulture. The patriotic superstition of the nation soon converted the dead warrior into a saint, and the universal grief of the English people found some consolation in giving a ready credence to the miracles said to be performed at his tomb. The Anglo-Saxon hagiology seems to have abounded, beyond that of most other nations, in unfortunate patriots and heroes who had fallen in battle against the invaders of the country.

And what became of the widow of the brave son of Siward—of the "infamous Judith," as she is called by nearly all the chroniclers? So far from permitting her to marry the man of whom she was enamoured, her uncle William, who was most despotic in these matters, and claimed as part of his prerogative the right of disposing of female wards, insisted on her giving her hand to one Simon, a Frenchman of Senlis, a very brave soldier, but lame and deformed; and when the perverse widow rejected the match with insulting language, he drove her from his presence, deprived her of all Waltheof's estates, and gave them to Simon, without the incumbrance of such a wife. Cast from the king's favour, and reduced to poverty, she became almost as unpopular with the Normans as she was with the English; and the wretched woman, hated by all, or justly contemned, passed the rest of her life in wandering in different corners of England, seeking to hide her shame in remote and secluded places.

The Normans had been gradually encroaching on the Welsh territory, both on the side of the Dee and on the side of the Severn, and now William in person led a formidable army into Wales, where he is said to have struck such terror, that the native princes performed feudal homage to him at St. David's, and delivered many hostages and Norman and English prisoners,

[1077-1079 A.D.]

with which he returned as a "victorious conqueror." In the north of England he made no further progress, and had considerable difficulty in retaining the land he had occupied. The Scots again crossed the Tweed and the Tyne, and much harassed the Norman barons. At the approach of a superior army they retired; but William's officers did not follow them, and the only result of the expedition, on the king's side, was the founding of the city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The impression made upon Scotland by the Conqueror when he had marched in person must have been of the slightest kind, and his circumstances never permitted him to return.

## THE REVOLT OF ROBERT (1077-1079 A.D.)

He was now wounded by the sharp tooth of filial disobedience, and obliged to be frequently, and for long intervals, on the Continent, where a fierce and unnatural war was waged between father and son. When William first received the submission of the province of Maine, he had promised the inhabitants to make his eldest son, Robert, their prince; and before departing for the conquest of England he stipulated that, in case of succeeding in his enterprise, he would resign the duchy of Normandy to the same son. So confident was he of success, that he permitted the Norman chiefs, who consented to and legalised the appointment, to swear fealty and render homage to young Robert as their future sovereign. But all this was done to allay the jealousy of the king of France, and his other neighbours, uneasy at the prospect of his vastly extending power; and when he was firmly seated in his conquest, and had strengthened his hands, William openly showed his determination of keeping and ruling both his insular kingdom and his continental duchy. Grown up to man's estate, Robert claimed what he considered his right. "My son, I wot not to throw off my clothes till I go to bed," was the homely but decisive answer of his father.

Robert was brave to rashness, ambitious, impatient of command; and a young prince in his circumstances was never yet without adherents and counsellors, to urge him to those extreme measures on which they found their own hopes of fortune and advancement. He was suspected of fanning the flames of discontent in Brittany as well as in Maine, and to have had an understanding with the king of France, when that monarch frustrated William's attempt to seize the fugitive Breton, Ralph de Gaël, and forced the king of England to raise the siege of Dol. Some circumstances, which added to the number of the unnatural elements already engaged, made Robert declare himself more openly. In person he was less favoured by nature than his two younger brothers, William and Henry, who seemed to engross all their father's favour, and who probably made an improper use of the nickname of *Courte-heuse*,<sup>1</sup> which was given to Robert on account of the shortness of his legs. By the mediation of his mother, who seems to have been fondly attached to him, Robert was reconciled to his father; but the reconciliation did not last long, for the prince was as impatient for authority as ever. At length Robert went to his father and again demanded possession of Normandy; but the king again refused him, exhorting him, at the same time, to change his associates for serious old men, like the royal counsellor and prime minister, Archbishop Lanfranc. "Sire," said Robert bluntly, "I came here to claim my right, and not to listen to sermons; I heard plenty of them, and tedious

<sup>1</sup> Literally "short-hose," or "short-boot"—*Brevis Ocrea*.—*Orðeric. Vital.*

ones, too, when I was learning my grammar." The king wrathfully replied that he would never give up Normandy, his native land, nor share with another any part of England which he had won with his own toil and peri.

"Well, then," said Robert, "I will go and bear arms among strangers, and perhaps I shall obtain from them what is refused to me by my father." He set out accordingly, and wandered through Flanders, Lorraine, Gascony, and other lands, visiting dukes, counts, and rich burgesses, relating his grievances and asking assistance; but all the money he got on these eleemosynary circuits he dissipated among minstrels and jugglers, parasites and prostitutes, and was thus obliged to go again a-begging, or borrow money at an enormous interest. Queen Matilda, whose maternal tenderness was not estranged by the follies and vices of her son, contrived to remit him several sums when he was in great distress. William discovered this, and sternly forbade it for the future. But her heart still yearning for the prodigal the queen made further remittances, and her secret was again betrayed. The king then reproached her, in bitter terms, for distributing among his enemies the treasures he gave her to guard for himself, and ordered the arrest of Samson, her messenger who had carried the money.

After leading a vagabond life for some time, Robert repaired to the French court, and King Philip, still finding in him the instrument he wanted, openly espoused his cause, and established him in the castle of Gerberoy, on the very confines of Normandy, where he supported himself by plundering the neighbouring country, and whence he corresponded with the disaffected in the duchy. Burning with rage, the king crossed the Channel with a formidable English army, and came in person to direct the siege of the strong castle of Gerberoy. With all his faults, Robert had many good and generous qualities, which singularly endeared him to his friends when living, and which, along with his cruel misfortunes, caused him to be mourned when dead. Ambition, passion, and evil counsel had lulled and stupefied, but had not extirpated his natural feelings. One day, in a sally from his castle, he chanced to engage in single combat with a stalwart warrior clad in mail, and concealed, like himself, with the visor of his helm. Both were valiant and well skilled in the use of their weapons; but, after a fierce combat, Robert wounded and unhorsed his antagonist. In the voice of the fallen warrior, who shouted for assistance, the prince, who was about to follow up his advantage with a death-stroke, recognised his father, and, instantly dismounting, fell on his knees, craved forgiveness with tears, and helping him to his saddle, saw him safely out of the *mêlée*. William rode away to his camp on Robert's horse, smarting with his wound, and still cursing his son, who had so seasonably mounted him. He relinquished the siege of Gerberoy in despair, and went to Rouen, where, as soon as his temper permitted, his wife and bishops, with many of the Norman nobles, laboured to reconcile him again to Robert.

For a long time the iron-hearted king was deaf to their entreaties, or only irritated by them. "Why," cried he, "do you solicit me in favour of a traitor who has seduced my men—my very pupils in war, whom I fed with my own bread, and invested with the knightly arms they wear?" At last he yielded, and Robert, having again knelt and wept before him, received his father's pardon, and accompanied him to England. But even now the reconciliation on the part of the unforgiving king was a mere matter of policy, and Robert, finding no symptoms of returning affection, and fearing for his life or liberty, soon fled for the third time, and never saw his father's face again. His departure was followed by another paternal malediction, which was never revoked.



[1080 A.D.]

## THE UPRISING AT DURHAM

Walcher of Lorraine, installed in the bishopric of Durham and his strong castle "on the highest hill," united to his episcopal functions the political and military government of Northumberland. The earl-bishop boasted that he was equally skilful in repressing rebellion with the edge of the sword, and reforming the morals of the English by eloquent discourse. But the Lorrainer was a harsh taskmaster to the English, laying heavy labours and taxes upon them, and permitting the officers under him and his men-at-arms to plunder, insult, and kill them with impunity. Ligulf, an Englishman of noble birth, and endeared to the whole province, ventured, on being robbed by some of Walcher's satellites, to lay his complaint before the bishop. Shortly after making this accusation, Ligulf was murdered by night in his manor-house, near the city of Durham, and it was well proved that one Gilbert, and others in the bishop's service, were the perpetrators of the foul deed.

"Hereupon," says an old writer, "the malice of the people was kindled against him, and when it was known that he had received the murderers into his house, and favoured them as before, they stomached the matter highly." Secret meetings were held at the dead of night, and the Northumbrians, who had lost none of their old spirit, and were absolutely driven to madness, because, among other causes of endearment, Ligulf had married the widow of Earl Siward, the mother of the unfortunate Earl Waltheof, resolved to take a sanguinary vengeance. Both parties met by agreement at Gateshead, the bishop, who protested his innocence of the homicide, in the pomp of power, surrounded by his retainers; the Northumbrians in humble guise, as if to petition their lord for justice, though every man among them carried a sharp weapon hid under his garment. The bishop, alarmed at the number of English that continued to flock to the place of rendezvous, retired with all his retinue into the church. The people then signified in plain terms that, unless he came forth and showed himself, they would fire the place where he stood. As he did not move, the threat was executed. Then, seeing the smoke and flames arising, he caused Gilbert and his accomplices to be thrust out of the church. The people fell with savage joy on the murderers of Ligulf, and cut them to pieces. Half-suffocated by the heat and smoke, the bishop himself wrapped the skirts of his gown over his face, and came to the threshold of the door. There seems to have been a moment of hesitation; but a voice was heard among the crowd, saying, "Good rede, short rede! slay ye the bishop!" and the bishop was slain accordingly.

The foreigners had nothing left but the alternative of being burned alive or perishing by the sword. The bishop's chaplain [Leofwine] seemed to give a preference to the former death, for he lingered long in the burning church; but in the end he was compelled, by the raging fire, to come out, and was also slain and hacked to pieces—"as he had well deserved," adds an old historian, "being the main promoter of all the mischief that had been done in the country." Of all who had accompanied the bishop to the tragical meeting at Gateshead, only two were left alive, and these were menials of English birth. Above one hundred men, Normans and Flemings, perished with Walcher.

William intrusted to one bishop the office of avenging another. His half-brother, Odo, the fierce bishop of Bayeux, marched to Durham with a numerous army. He found no force on foot to resist him, but he treated the whole country as an insurgent province, and making no distinction of persons,

and employing no judicial forms, he beheaded or mutilated all the men he could find in their houses. Some persons of property bought their lives by surrendering everything they possessed. By this exterminating expedition Odo obtained the reputation of being one of the greatest "dominators of the English"; but it seems to have been the last he commanded, and disgraced with cruelty, during the reign of William.

#### THE ARREST OF ODO. (1082 A.D.)

This churchman, besides being bishop of Bayeux in Normandy, was earl of Kent in England, and held many high offices in this island, where he had accumulated enormous wealth, chiefly by extortion, or a base selling of justice. For some years a splendid dream of ambition, which he thought he could realise by means of money, increased his rapacity. There were many instances in those ages of kings becoming monks, but not one of a priest becoming a king. Profane crowns being out of his reach, Odo aspired to a sacred one—that triple crown of Rome, which gradually obtained, in another shape, a homage more widely extended than that paid to the Cæsars. His dream was cherished by the predictions of some Italian astrologers, who, living in his service, and being well paid, assured him that he would be the successor of Gregory VII, the reigning pope. Odo opened a correspondence with the Eternal City by means of English and Norman pilgrims who were constantly flocking thither, bought a palace at Rome, and sent rich presents to the senators. His project was not altogether so visionary as it has been considered by most writers, and we can hardly understand why his half-brother, William, should have checked it, unless indeed his interference proceeded from his desire of getting possession of the bishop's wealth. The influence of gold had been felt before now in the college of cardinals and the elections of popes. It is quite certain that a considerable number of the Norman chiefs entered into Odo's views; and when he made up his mind to set out for Italy in person, a brilliant escort was formed for him.

The king was in Normandy when he heard of this expedition, and being resolute in his determination of stopping it, he instantly set sail for England. He surprised the aspirant to the popedom at the Isle of Wight, seized his treasures, and summoned him before a council of Norman barons hastily assembled at that island. Here the king accused his half-brother of "untruth and sinister dealings"—of having abused his power, both as viceroy and judge, and as an earl of the realm—of having maltreated the English beyond measure, to the great danger of the common cause—of having robbed the churches of the land—and finally, of having seduced and attempted to carry out of England, and beyond the Alps, the warriors of the king, who needed their services for the safe keeping of the kingdom. Having exposed his grievances, William asked the council what such a brother deserved at his hands. No one durst answer. "Arrest him, then!" cried the king, "and see that he be well looked to!" If they had been backward in pronouncing an opinion, they were still more averse to lay hands on a bishop; not one of the council moved, though it was the king that ordered them. William then advanced himself, and seized the prelate by his robe. "I am a clerk—a priest," cried Odo; "I am a minister of the Lord: the pope alone has the right of judging me!" But his brother, without losing his hold, replied, "I do not arrest you as bishop of Bayeux, but as earl of Kent." Odo was carried forthwith to Normandy, and, instead of crossing the Alps and the Apennines, was shut up in a castle.

[1082-1085 A.D.]

## WILLIAM'S LAST YEARS

Soon after imprisoning his brother, William lost his wife, Matilda, whom he tenderly loved; and after her death it was observed or fancied he became more suspicious, more jealous of the authority of his old companions-in-arms, and more avaricious than ever. The coming on of old age is, however, enough in itself to account for such a change in such a man. After a lapse of ten years the Danes were again heard of, and their threats of invading England kept William in a state of anxiety for nearly two whole years, and were the cause of his laying fresh burdens upon his English subjects. He revived the odious Danegeld; and because many lands and manors, which had been charged with it in the time of the Anglo-Saxon kings, had been specially exempted from this tax when he granted them in fief to his nobles, he made up the deficiency by raising it upon the other lands, to the rate of six shillings a hide.

The money he thus obtained, with part of the treasures he had amassed, was employed in hiring and bringing over foreign auxiliaries; for though he could rely on an English army when fighting against Frenchmen, or the people of Normandy, Maine, and Brittany, he could not trust them at home; and he well knew that many of them on the eastern and northeastern shores would join the Danish invaders heart and hand, instead of opposing them. These hordes of foreigners sorely oppressed the natives, for William quartered them throughout the country, to be paid as well as supported. To complete the miseries inflicted upon England at this time, William ordered all the land lying near the sea-coast to be laid waste, so that if the Danes should land they would find no ready supply of food or forage.

Another domestic calamity afflicted the later years of the Conqueror—for he saw a violent jealousy growing up between his favourite sons, William and Henry. Robert, his eldest son, continued an exile or fugitive; and Richard, his second son in order of birth (but whom some make illegitimate), had been gored to death by a stag, some years before, as he was hunting in the New Forest; and he was noted by the old English annalists as being the first of several of the Conqueror's progeny that perished in that place—"the justice of God punishing in him his father's dispeopling of that country."

Perhaps no single act of the Conqueror inflicted more misery within the limits of its operation, and certainly none has been more bitterly stigmatised, than his seizure and wasting of the lands in Hampshire, to make himself a hunting-ground. Like most of the great men of the time, who had few other amusements, William was passionately fond of the chase. The Anglo-Saxon kings had the same taste, and left many royal parks and forests in all parts of England, wherein he might have gratified a reasonable passion; but he was not satisfied with the possession of these, and resolved to have a vast hunting-ground "for his insatiate and superfluous pleasure," in the close neighbourhood of the royal city, Winchester, his favourite place of residence. In an early part of his reign he therefore seized all the south-western part of Hampshire, measuring thirty miles from Salisbury to the sea, and in circumference not much less than ninety miles. It included many fertile and cultivated manors, which he caused to be totally absorbed in the surrounding wilderness, and many towns or villages, with no fewer than thirty-six mother or parish churches, all which he demolished, and drove away the people, making them no compensation. According to the indisputable authority of Domesday Book, in which we have an account of the state of this territory both before and after its "afforestation," the damage done to private prop-



erty must have been immense. In an extent of nearly ninety miles in circumference, one hundred and eight places, manors, villages, or hamlets suffered in a greater or less degree. The seizure of a waste or wholly uninhabited district would have been nothing extraordinary: it was the sufferings of the people, who were driven from their villages, the wrongs done the clergy, whose churches were destroyed—that made the deep and inefaceable impression.

At the same time that the Conqueror thus enlarged the field of his own pleasures at the expense of his subjects, he enacted new laws, by which he prohibited hunting in any of his forests, and rendered the penalties more severe than ever had been inflicted for such offences. At this period the killing of a man might be atoned for by payment of a moderate fine or composition; but not so, by the New Forest laws, the slaying of one of the king's beasts of chase. "He ordained," says the *Saxon Chronicle*,<sup>f</sup> "that whosoever should kill a stag or a deer should have his eyes torn out." These forest laws, which were executed with rigour against the English, caused great misery; for many of them depended on the chase as a chief means of subsistence. By including in his royal domain all the great forests of England, and insisting on his right to grant or refuse permission to hunt in them, William gave sore offence to many of his Norman nobles, who were as much addicted to the sport as himself, but who were prohibited from keeping sporting dogs, even on their own estates, unless they subjected the poor animals to a mutilation of the forepaws, that rendered them unfit for hunting.<sup>d</sup>

#### DOMESDAY BOOK AND THE GEMOT AT SALISBURY (1085-1086 A.D.)

Of William's changes in the possession of landed property, Domesday Book is the great record. This unique and invaluable document was drawn up in pursuance of a decree passed in the Christmas assembly of 1085-1086, and the necessary survey was made in the course of the first seven months of 1086. The immediate object of the survey was a fiscal one, to insure that the tax on the land known as *Danegeld*<sup>1</sup> might be more regularly paid and more fairly assessed. But William further took care to have a complete picture of his kingdom drawn up. We are told in all cases by whom the land was held at the time of the survey, and by whom it had been held in the time of King Edward.

We are told what was the value of the land at those two dates. This is the essence of the inquiry; but we also get a mass of statistics, and a mass of personal and local detail of every kind. As a mere list of landowners under Edward and under William, it enables us to trace the exact degree to which land had passed from Englishmen to Normans. And the incidental notices of tenures, customs, personal anecdotes, the local institutions of districts and towns, are at least as valuable as the essential parts of the survey. With their help we can see England as it was in 1086 more clearly than we can see it at any earlier time, more clearly than we can see it at any later time for a long while after. And not the least instructive thing about the survey is the light which it throws on the general character of William's government, the system of legal fictions, the strict regard to a formal justice. William is assumed throughout as the lawful and immediate successor of

<sup>1</sup> The more correct name is *Heregeld*, that is, a tax for the support of a paid military force. *Danegeld* is, in strictness, money paid to the Danes as blackmail by Æthelred and others. But, as both payments were unpopular, the two names got confounded, and *Danegeld* became the received name of the chief direct tax paid in those times.

[1086 A.D.]

Edward. The reign of Harold is ignored. The grant of William is assumed as the one lawful source of property; but there is throughout a clear desire to do justice according to that doctrine, to secure every man in his right, as William understood right, without any regard to race or rank. Powerful Normans, William's own brothers among them, are entered as withholding lands wrongfully, sometimes from other Normans, sometimes from Englishmen. Domesday, in short, may be set alongside of the English Chronicle as one of the two great and unique sources of English history. They are possessions which have no parallel elsewhere.<sup>c</sup>

When in 1086 work on the Domesday Book was completed, William summoned a great assembly or *gemot* of all the landowners of all England to meet him at Salisbury. William's experience as a continental feudal lord probably determined the taking of such steps as would forever preclude the introduction of the evils of the French system into England. Therefore to



DOVER CASTLE

(Founded by the Romans)

every landholding man in his kingdom, whether as tenant-in-chief he held his grant of the king, or whether as sub-tenant he held of an intermediate lord, a summons was directed. When they were all gathered together, great and small, William made each tenant kneel before him and swear fealty to him, and make oath that he would be "faithful to him against all other men." It was this *gemot* at Salisbury that marks the difference between the feudalism of England and the feudalism of the Continent. According to the continental system every tenant swore fealty to the lord of whom he held his land. But only such tenants as held directly of the crown swore fealty to the king. The result of this system was that the sub-tenants felt their allegiance to their lord of more weight than their allegiance to the king, and in case the lord rebelled against the king they were bound by their oaths to assist him. In England, from 1086 on, every landowner owed his services first to the king, and by his oath was bound to forsake his immediately superior lord if the latter revolted against the king.

"No one act in English history," says Freeman,<sup>c</sup> "is more important than this. By it William secured his realm against the growth of feudal doctrines and their abuses. It established the principle that, whatever duty a man might owe to an inferior lord, his duty to his sovereign lord, the king, came first. When this rule was once established, the mightiest earl in England could never be to William what William himself was to his own lord, the king of the French. This one act of the wisdom of the Conqueror secured the unity of England forever,"<sup>a</sup>

## THE DEATH OF THE CONQUEROR (1087 A.D.)

Shortly after receiving these new pledges, William, accompanied by his two sons, passed over to the Continent, followed by the numberless curses of the English people. The enterprise he had on hand was a war with France, for the possession of the city of Mantes, with the territory situated between the Epte and the Oise, which was then called the country of Vexin. William at first entered into negotiations for this territory, which he claimed as his right; but Philip, the French king, after amusing his rival for a while with quibbles and sophisms, marched troops into the country, and secretly authorized some of his barons to make incursions on the frontiers of Normandy.

During the negotiations William fell sick, and kept his bed. As he advanced in years he grew excessively fat; and, spite of his violent exercise, his indulgence in the pleasures of the table had given him considerable roundness of person. On the score of many grudges, his hatred of the French king was intense; and Philip now drove him to frenzy by saying, as a good joke among his courtiers, that his cousin William was a long while lying-in, but that no doubt there would be a fine churching when he was delivered. On hearing this coarse and insipid jest, the conqueror of England swore by the most terrible of his oaths—by the splendour and birth of Christ—that he would be churched in Notre Dame, the cathedral of Paris, and present so many wax torches that all France should be set in a blaze.

It was not until the end of July (1087) that he was in a state to mount his war-horse, though it is asserted by a cotemporary that he was convalescent before then, and expressly waited that season to make his vengeance the more dreadful to the country. The corn was almost ready for the sickle, the grapes hung in rich ripening clusters on the vines, when William marched his cavalry through the corn-fields, and made his soldiery tear up the vines by the roots, and cut down the pleasant trees. His destructive host was soon before Mantes, which either was taken by surprise and treachery, or offered but a feeble resistance. At his orders the troops fired the unfortunate town, sparing neither church nor monastery, but doing their best to reduce the whole to a heap of ashes. As the Conqueror rode up to view the ruin he had made, his horse put his forefeet on some embers or hot cinders, which caused him to swerve or plunge so violently that the heavy rider was thrown on the high pommel of the saddle and grievously bruised.

The king dismounted in great pain, and never more put foot in stirrup. He was carried slowly in a litter to Rouen and again laid in his bed. The bruise had produced a rupture; and being in a bad habit of body, and somewhat advanced in years, it was soon evident to all, and even to himself, that the consequence would be fatal. He had himself carried to the monastery of St. Gervase, outside of the city walls, where he lingered for six weeks, surrounded by doctors, who could do him no good, and by priests and monks, who, at least, did not neglect the opportunity of doing much good for themselves. Becoming sensible of the approach of death, his heart softened for the first time, and he is said to have felt a keen remorse for the crimes and cruelties he had committed. He sent money to Mantes, to rebuild the churches he had burned, and he ordered large sums to be paid to the churches and monasteries in England. At length he consented to the instant release of his state-prisoners, some of whom had pined in dungeons for more than twenty years. Of those that were English among these captives, the most conspicuous were Earl Morcar, Beorn, and Uloth or Wulfnoth, the brother



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of Harold; of the Normans, Roger Fitzosbern, formerly earl of Hereford, and Odo, bishop of Bayeux, his own half-brother. The pardon which was wrung from him with most difficulty was that of Odo, whom, at first, he excepted in his act of grace, saying he was a firebrand that would ruin both England and Normandy if set at large.

His two younger sons, William and Henry, were assiduous round the death-bed of the king, waiting impatiently for the declaration of his last will. A day or two before his death, the Conqueror assembled some of his chief prelates and barons in his sick chamber, and declared in their presence that he bequeathed the duchy of Normandy, with Maine and its other dependencies, to his eldest son, Robert, whom, it is alleged, he could not put aside in the order of succession, as the Normans were mindful of the oaths they had taken, with his father's consent, to that unfortunate prince, and were much attached to him. "As to the crown of England," said the dying monarch, "I bequeath it to no one, as I did not receive it, like the duchy of Normandy, in inheritance from my father, but acquired it by conquest and the shedding of blood with mine own good sword. The succession to that kingdom I therefore leave to the decision of God, only desiring most fervently that my son William, who has ever been dutiful to me in all things, may obtain it, and prosper in it."

"And what do you give unto me, O my father?" impatiently cried Prince Henry, who had not been mentioned in this distribution. "Five thousand pounds' weight of silver out of my treasury," was his answer. "But what can I do with five thousand pounds of silver, if I have neither lands nor a home?" "Be patient," replied the king, "and have trust in the Lord; suffer thy elder brothers to precede thee—thy time will come after theirs."<sup>g</sup> Henry went straight, and drew the silver, which he weighed with great care, and then furnished himself with a strong coffer, well protected with locks and iron bindings, to keep his treasure in. William left the king's bedside at the same time, and, without waiting to see the breath out of the old man's body, hastened over to England to look after his crown.

About sunrise on the 9th of September the Conqueror was for a moment roused from a stupor into which he had fallen by the sound of bells; he eagerly inquired what the noise meant, and was answered that they were tolling the hour of prime in the church of St. Mary. He lifted his hands to heaven, and saying, "I recommend my soul to my lady Mary, the holy mother of God," instantly expired.<sup>d</sup>

#### THE BURIAL OF THE CONQUEROR

The monkish historian, Ordericus Vitalis,<sup>g</sup> who lived during the latter part of William's reign, has left in his *Ecclesiastical History* a startling picture of the events which followed the king's death.<sup>a</sup>

The physicians and others who were present, who had watched the king all night while he slept, his repose neither broken by cries nor groans, seeing him now expire so suddenly and unexpectedly, were much astonished, and became as men who had lost their wits. Notwithstanding, the wealthiest of them mounted their horses and departed in haste to secure their property. But the inferior attendants, observing that their masters had disappeared, laid hands on the arms, the plate, the robes, the linen, and all the royal furniture, and leaving the corpse almost naked on the floor of the house, hastened away. Observe then, I pray you, my readers, how little trust can be

placed in human fidelity. All these servants snatched up what they could of the royal effects, like so many kites, and took to their heels with their booty. Roguery thus came forth from its hiding-place the moment the great justiciary was dead, and first exercised its rapacity round the corpse of him who had so long repressed it.

Intelligence of the king's death was quickly spread, and, far and near, the hearts of those who heard it were filled with joy or grief. Behold this mighty prince, who was lately obsequiously obeyed by more than a hundred thousand men in arms, and at whose nod nations trembled, was now stripped by his own attendants, in a house which was not his own, and left on the bare ground from the hour of primes to that of tierce.

Meanwhile, the citizens of Rouen having heard of the death of their prince, were in the greatest state of alarm; almost all of them lost their reason, as if they had been intoxicated, and were thrown into as much confusion as if the city had been threatened with an assault by a powerful army. Each quitted the place where he received the news, and ran to confer with his wife, or the first friend or acquaintance he met, as to what was to be done. Everyone removed, or prepared to remove, his valuables, concealing them with alarm, lest they should be discovered.

At length the religious, both clergy and monks, recovering their courage and the use of their senses, formed a procession; and, arrayed in their sacred vestments, with crosses and censers, went in due order to St. Gervais, where they commended the spirit of the departed king to God, according to the holy rites of the Christian faith. Then William, the archbishop, ordered the body to be conveyed to Caen, and interred there in the abbey of St. Stephen, the protomartyr, which the king himself had founded. His brother and other relations had already quitted the place, and all his servants had deserted him, as if he had been a barbarian; so that not one of the king's attendants was found to take care of his corpse. However, Herlouin, a country knight, was induced by his natural goodness to undertake the charge of the funeral, for the love of God and the honour of his country. He therefore procured at his own expense persons to embalm and carry the body, and, hiring a hearse, he caused it to be carried by water and land to Caen.

Gilbert, the lord abbot, with the whole convent of monks, met the hearse in solemn procession, accompanied by a sorrowing multitude of clerks and laymen, offering prayers. But at this moment a sudden calamity filled the minds of all with alarm. For a fire broke out in one of the houses, and, shooting up prodigious volumes of flame, spread through a great part of the town of Caen, doing great damage. The crowds, both of clergy and laity, hastened with one accord to extinguish the fire, so that the monks were left alone to finish the service they had begun.

When the mass ended, and the coffin was already lowered into the grave, but the corpse was still on the bier, the great Gilbert, bishop of Évreux, ascended the pulpit, and pronounced a long and eloquent discourse on the distinguished character of the deceased prince. When he had concluded his discourse he addressed himself to the congregation, who were shedding affectionate tears, and added this supplication: "As in this present life no man can live without sin, I beseech you, for the love of Christ, that you earnestly intercede with Almighty God on behalf of our deceased prince, and that you kindly forgive him, if in aught he has offended against you."

Then Ascelin, son of Arthur, came forward from the crowd, and preferred the following complaint with a loud voice, in the hearing of all: "The land," he said, "on which you stand was the yard belonging to my father's house,

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which that man for whom you pray, when he was yet only duke of Normandy, took forcible possession of, and in the teeth of all justice, by an exercise of tyrannical power, here founded this abbey. I therefore lay claim to this land, and openly demand its restitution, and in God's name I forbid the body of the spoiler being covered with earth which is my property, and buried in my inheritance." The bishops and other great men, on hearing this, and finding from inquiries among his neighbours that he spoke the truth, drew the man aside, and, instead of offering him any violence, appeased his resentment with gentle words and came to terms with him. For the small space in which the grave was made, they paid him on the spot sixty shillings, and promised him a proportionable price for the rest of the land which he claimed.

I have thus carefully investigated, and given a true narrative of the various events. In the midst of prosperity adverse circumstances were permitted to arise, that the hearts of men might be impressed with the fearful warnings. A king once potent, and warlike, and the terror of the numberless inhabitants of many provinces, lay naked on the floor, deserted by those who owed him their birth, and those he had fed and enriched. He needed the money of a stranger for the cost of his funeral, and a coffin and bearers were provided at the expense of an ordinary person, for him, who till then had been in the enjoyment of enormous wealth. He was carried to the church, amidst flaming houses, by trembling crowds, and a spot of freehold land was wanting for the grave of one whose princely sway had extended over so many cities, and towns, and villages. Beholding the corruption of that foul corpse, men were taught to strive earnestly, by the rules of a salutary temperance, after better things than the delights of the flesh, which is dust, and must return to dust.<sup>9</sup>

## THE CHARACTER OF WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR

We are fortunately in possession of an estimate of the character of William from the pen of one who knew him in the flesh as he lived, and paused in writing the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* to describe what manner of man he was. Though the great Conqueror is portrayed with the lack of historical perspective inevitable to a contemporary, it yet gives us the measure of the man with a massive sincerity that cannot be surpassed by any flight of the rhetorician.<sup>a</sup>

If any would know what manner of man King William was, the glory he obtained and of how many lands he was lord, then will we describe him as we have known him, we, who have looked upon him, and who once lived in his court. This King William, of whom we are speaking, was a very wise and a great man, and more honoured and more powerful than any of his predecessors. He was mild to those good men who loved God, but severe beyond measure towards those who withstood his will. He founded a noble monastery on the spot where God permitted him to conquer England, and he established monks in it, and he made it very rich. In his days the great monastery at Cunterbury was built, and many others also throughout England. King William was also held in much reverence; he wore his crown three times every year when he was in England: at Easter he wore it at Winchester, at Pentecost at Westminster, and at Christmas at Gloucester. And at these times, all the men of England were with him, archbishops, bishops, abbots, and earls, thanes, and knights. So also was he a very stern and a



wrathful man, so that none durst do anything against his will, and he kept in prison those earls who acted against his pleasure. He removed bishops from their sees and abbots from their offices, and he imprisoned thanes, and at length he spared not his own brother Odo.

Amongst other things, the good order that William established is not to be forgotten; it was such that any man, who was himself aught, might travel over the kingdom with a bosom-full of gold unmolested; and no man durst kill another, however great the injury he might have received from him. He reigned over England, and being sharp-sighted to his own interest, he surveyed the kingdom so thoroughly that there was not a single hide of land throughout the whole of which he knew not the possession, and how much it was worth, and this he afterwards entered in his register. The land of the Britons (Wales) was under his sway, and he built castles therein; moreover, he had full dominion over the Isle of Mann (Anglesea): Scotland also was subject to him from his great strength; the land of Normandy was his by inheritance, and he possessed the earldom of Maine; and had he lived two years longer he would have subdued Ireland by his prowess, and that without a battle. Truly there was much trouble in these times, and very great distress; he caused castles to be built, and oppressed the poor. The king was also of great sternness, and he took from his subjects many marks of gold, and many hundred pounds of silver, and this, either with or without right, and with little need. He was given to avarice and greedily loved gain. He made large forests for the deer, and enacted laws therewith, so that whoever killed a hart or a hind should be blinded. As he forbade killing the deer, so also the boars; and he loved the tall stags as if he were their father. He also appointed concerning the hares, that they should go free.

The rich complained and the poor murmured, but he was so sturdy that he recked naught of them; they must will all that the king willed, if they would live; or would keep their lands; or would hold their possessions; or would be maintained in their rights. Alas! that any man should so exalt himself, and carry himself in his pride over all! May Almighty God show mercy to his soul, and grant him the forgiveness of his sins! We have written concerning him these things, both good and bad, that virtuous men might follow after the good and wholly avoid the evil, and might go in the way that leadeth to the kingdom of heaven.<sup>f</sup>

#### CHARACTER AND RESULTS OF THE NORMAN CONQUEST

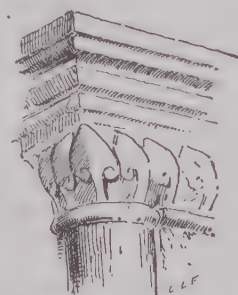
Looking at the Norman Conquest simply as an event, it is most important to bear in mind its gradual nature. Nothing can be farther from the truth than the notion that England passed at once into the hands of the Normans after a single battle. Still there is a sense in which it is not untrue to say that England was conquered in a single battle. After the fall of Harold, at all events after the northern earls withdrew their forces from the service of Eadgar, the conquest of England was only a question of time. Just as in the days of Æthelred, there was no acknowledged leader; and throughout that age, under a worthy leader, the English people could do everything; without such an one, they could do nothing. There was no man who could gather the whole force of the nation around him. There was no man who could stand up as William's rival either in military or in political skill.

Hence, after the one great battle, there was no common effort. The west resisted valiantly; the north resisted valiantly; but the resistance of each

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was isolated, without any intelligent concert. Help came from Denmark; but it was of no avail when there was no generalship, no common plan, and when the Danish leaders were actually bribed by William. In all these ways the strength of the country was frittered away. After Harold fell in the first battle, there was no real leader left, and the first pitched battle was the last. Next to the fall of Harold and his brothers in the first battle, William's greatest advantage was the submission of London and of the chief men assembled in London. This enabled him to be crowned king at an early stage of the war, when not more than a third of the country was in his actual possession. From that time his government had a show of legality. The resistance of the west and north was, in fact, as truly resistance to an invading enemy as the fight on Senlac itself. But when William was once crowned, when there was no other king in the land, resistance to him took the outward form of rebellion. The gradual nature of the conquest, together with William's position as crowned king at the head of an established government, even enabled him to turn the force of the conquered districts against those which were still unconquered, and to subdue England in some measure by the arms of Englishmen. Thus, within five years from his landing, anything like real resistance had come to an end. William was full king throughout the land.

We must here, in considering the effects of the Norman Conquest, distinguish between those immediate effects, which are rather the form which the Conquest itself took, and those lasting effects, which the peculiar nature of the Conquest caused it to have upon the whole future history of England. The peculiar nature of William's claim, and the personal character of William himself, had the deepest influence both on the character of the Conquest itself as an event, and on the character of its permanent results.



NORMAN MOULDINGS

### *Influences of Territorial Conquest*

The effect of the peculiar position and character of William was that his settlement was in truth a territorial conquest veiled under legal forms. In William's reading of the law, if he was not himself actually king from the moment of Edward's death, yet at least he was the one lawful successor to the kingdom. It was therefore treason to fight against him, or to put any hindrance in the way of his taking possession of the crown. The lands and goods of traitors were confiscated to the crown; therefore the lands and goods of all who had opposed William, living or dead, were confiscated to him. The crown lands—and, in William's reading of the law, the folkland was crown land—of course passed to the new king. The whole folkland, then, together with the lands of all who had fallen on Senlac, including the vast estates of Harold and his brothers, all passed to William, and was at his disposal. But as no Englishmen had supported his claims, as many Englishmen had

opposed him in arms, the whole nation was involved either in actual or in constructive treason.

The whole soil of England, then, except the property of ecclesiastical corporations, was forfeited to the new king. But William was not inclined to press his claims to the uttermost; at his first entry he allowed the mass of the English landowners to redeem the whole or a part of their possessions. Gradually, after each conquest of a district, after each suppression of a revolt, more land came into the king's power. That land was dealt with according to his pleasure. It was restored, wholly or in part, to its former owners; it was granted away, wholly or in part, to new owners, as William thought good in each particular case. But in every case, whether a man kept his own land, or received land which had belonged to some one else, all land was held as a grant from the king. The only proof of lawful ownership was either the king's written grant, or else evidence that the owner had been put in possession by the king's order. Of this process of confiscation and regrant, carried out bit by bit during the whole reign of William, Domesday is the record. We see that, in the course of William's twenty-one years, by far the greater part of the land of England had changed hands. We see further, as we might take for granted in such a case, that by far the greater part of the land which was granted to new owners was granted to William's foreign followers. By the end of William's reign all the greatest estates in England had passed into the hands of Normans and other strangers. But we see, also, that it is an utter mistake to believe that Englishmen were indiscriminately turned out of hearth and home. A few Englishmen who had, in whatever way, won William's special favour, kept great estates. A crowd of Englishmen kept small estates or fragments of great ones. In a vast number of cases the English owner kept his lands as tenant under a Norman grantee. Altogether, the actual occupants of the soil must have been much less disturbed than might have seemed possible in so great a transfer of lands from one set of owners to another.

The special feature of this great transfer of land from men of one nation to men of another is that it was done gradually and under legal form. It was not a mere scramble for what every man could get; nor was it like those cases in the early Teutonic invasions when the lands of the conquered, or a part of them, were systematically divided among the conquering army. Every step in William's great confiscation was done regularly, and according to his notion of law. Every man, Norman or English, held his land only by a grant from King William. No general change was made in the tenure of land. William took lands here, and granted them there, according to the circumstances of each case. Most commonly he took from Englishmen and gave to Normans. But he took from Englishmen and gave to Normans, not by virtue of any legal distinction between Englishmen and Normans, but because it was, as a rule, Englishmen who incurred forfeiture by resisting him, Normans who deserved reward by serving him.

As William dealt with land, so he dealt with offices. The two processes were to some extent the same; for most ecclesiastical and many temporal offices carried with them land, or rights over land. Gradually, and under cover of law, the highest offices in church and state were taken from Englishmen and bestowed on Normans. At the end of William's reign there was no English earl, but one English bishop, and only a few English abbots. But this change was not made all at once. In the appointment of earls William brought in a new policy which reversed that of Canute. The great earldoms were broken up. There were no more earls of the West-Saxons or of the Mercians, and



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the earldom of Northumberland now meant only the modern county. Other officers, sheriffs, stallers, and the like, were in the same way gradually changed. But smaller posts largely remained in the hands of Englishmen.

The same system was carried on with ecclesiastical offices also, although in this case a greater degree of caution was needed. The king might by himself, or at all events with the consent of his witan, renounce a sheriff, an earl, or any temporal officer: to remove a bishop or abbot needed, in William's view, full ecclesiastical sanction. Throughout William's reign, when a bishop died, a foreign successor was found for him, and those English bishops against whom any canonical charge could be devised were removed without waiting for their death. The same general rule was applied to the abbots, though here the exclusion of Englishmen was not quite so strict. Though the greater number of the newly appointed abbots were strangers, a few Englishmen were appointed to abbeys, even down to the end of William's reign.

### *Institutional and Legal Innovations*

In the constitution of England William made no formal change, and the particular laws of his enacting were few. The direct changes of his reign had some analogy to the direct changes which followed on the introduction of Christianity. No old institutions were abolished; but some new institutions were set up by the side of the old ones. The old national assemblies went on, without any change in the former constitution. The real change in their character was not a formal but a practical one. The assembly, which at the beginning of William's reign was an assembly of Englishmen, with here and there a Norman, had, before the end of his reign, changed into an assembly of Normans, with here and there an Englishman. The assemblies, as before, were in ordinary times mere gatherings of the great men of the realm; but, as before, on special occasions, a vast multitude was brought together.

Of the few actual changes in the law which William made, the most part were mere ordinances enacted to meet the immediate needs of the time. Thus, for instance, in the appeal to the judgment of God, the English ordeal and the Norman wager of battle were alike legalised and regulated. Provisions were made for the safety of William's foreign followers, especially by the singular law of Murder and Englishry, according to which, if an unknown man was found dead, he was held to be a Norman, unless he could be proved to be English. The chief permanent change in our law, which was due to an actual ordinance of William's, was a part of his ecclesiastical reformation, the separation of the temporal and spiritual jurisdictions. Hitherto the bishop and the earl had sat together in the *scírgemót*, and had heard both ecclesiastical and temporal causes. This was now forbidden, and separate ecclesiastical courts began. The strict forest law of William's reign must also have been an innovation; but it does not exist in the shape of a code; we know it only by the complaints of the contemporary chronicles, and by the practice of later times. In all legal matter the ancient assemblies and the ancient forms went on; nor was there any direct change in the language of the law. English remained, as before, an alternative language with Latin.

### *Lasting Results of the Conquest*

But the immediate and formal changes which followed on William's coming were of small account when compared with the indirect, and far more important, changes which came, as it were, of themselves, as the natural

result of his coming. A revolution was gradually wrought in everything that touched the relations of the kingdom within and without. But it was a revolution of a strange kind. It was a revolution which seemed, if not to root up our ancient institutions, at least practically so to transform them that they might be deemed to have in truth passed away. It was a revolution which seemed to have broken down the spirit of Englishmen forever under the yoke of strangers. But what that revolution really did was to call forth the spirit of Englishmen in a stronger and more abiding shape, and to enable us to bring back under new forms the substance of the institutions which seemed for a moment to have passed away. This will be, then, the best place to go through the chief lasting results of the Conquest, and to show how deeply, and in what ways, that event has influenced our institutions and the general course of English history down to our own day.

*England linked to the Continent.*

First of all, the Norman Conquest altogether changed the European position of England. As soon as England was ruled by a continental prince who kept his dominions on the Continent, Britain ceased to be that separate world which it had hitherto been. And though after events brought us back in no small degree to our older, insular character, yet Britain has never again become so completely another world as it was in the older day. In ecclesiastical matters this took the form of a far closer connection with the see of Rome than had been known before. The insular position of Britain had hitherto made the English church far more independent of the see of Rome than the western churches generally. One great effect of the Conquest was to weaken this insular church more nearly into the same position as the churches of the mainland. In this, as in many other things, the Conquest did but confirm and hasten tendencies which were already at work. The reforms of Dunstan's day marked one step Romewards. Another, we may say, was marked by the pilgrimage of Canute. The reign of Edward (the Confessor), a special devotee of the Roman church, wrought still more strongly in the same direction. But the great step of all was taken by William himself. When he sought for a papal confirmation of his claim to the crown of England, he went very far towards clothing the pope with a power to dispose of that crown. In William's own hands the rights of his crown were safe. When Hildebrand (Gregory VII) himself called on him to do homage for his crown, he refused to do what no king of the English had done before him.

So, while the great struggle of investitures was raging in Germany and Italy, William went on in England and in Normandy investing bishops and abbots with the staff, as the kings and dukes before him had done. Nor did Hildebrand ever blame William for doing what he branded as such deadly sin in his own sovereign, the emperor. Under William the old ecclesiastical supremacy of the crown remained untouched; but it is none the less true that two acts of his had a direct tendency to undermine it. The separation of the ecclesiastical and temporal jurisdictions led the way to those claims on the part of churchmen to be exempted from all temporal jurisdiction which were unheeded in his day, but which became matter of such important controversy under his successors. And, though he himself firmly refused all homage for his crown, yet, when he made the pope a judge between himself and Harold, he led the way for the day when his descendant took his crown back again as a fief of the Roman see.

[1066-1087 A.D.]

*The Crown and Feudalism*

With regard to the effects of the Conquest on English institutions, the Norman king stepped into the position of his English predecessors. As king he claimed their rights, and no more. But the circumstances of the Conquest worked in every way to increase his power, and to provide him with new means of influence and new sources of revenue. The notion that William introduced a "feudal system" into England is a delusion which shows utter ignorance both of the position of William and of the general history of Europe. If by a "feudal system" is meant the state of things in Germany and Gaul, a state of things in which every great vassal became a rival to the king, William took direct care that no such "feudal system" should ever be introduced into his kingdom. But if by a "feudal system" is meant merely the holding of land by military tenure, subject to the burthens of reliefs, wardships, marriage, and the like, though William certainly did not introduce such a "system" ready made, yet the circumstances of his reign did much to promote the growth of that kind of tenure, and of the whole class of ideas connected with it.

Such tendencies were already growing in England, and his coming strengthened them. Under him the doctrine that all land is a grant from the crown became a fact. The doctrine of military tenure began in his reign, and was put into a systematic shape, and carried out to its logical consequences in the reign of his son. The Norman kings ruled in a twofold character: they were all that their English predecessors had been, and something more. The Norman king was the chief of the state; he was also the personal lord of every man in his kingdom. In the one character he could call out the military force of the state; in the other he could call on his tenants for the military service due from their lands. As chief of the state he levied the ancient taxes due to the state; as lord he levied the new-fangled profits which, according to the new-fangled ideas, were due to the lord from his tenants. In short, William brought in that side of feudal doctrine which helped to strengthen the crown, and kept out that side which helped to weaken it. The doctrine that a man was bound to follow his immediate lord had destroyed the royal power in other lands. William, by making himself the immediate lord of all his subjects, turned that doctrine into the strongest support of his crown.

This union of two sources of power in the Norman kings made their rule practically despotic. But their very despotism preserved English freedom. They had no temptation to uproot institutions which they found means to turn into instruments of their power. But there was no sweeping away, no sudden revolution; all was done gradually, and by force of circumstances at particular times. At some points of our history, the freedom of England



THE COMMANDERY, WORCESTER

(Founded by St. Wulfstan, bishop of Worcester, 1085)



seems sometimes to slumber; but it never died. The seeming slumber under Norman despotism led to the awakening of the thirteenth century.

The king was thus in possession of two sources of power, of two sources of revenue. One source came by inheritance from his English predecessors; another came from the circumstances of William's conquest. He was both king and lord of all men within his realm. To the English he was in the first place king; to the Normans he was in the first place lord. Each race had need of him, and the Norman kings knew how to play off each race against the other. In the first days of the Conquest, the king, if he was not the friend of his English subjects, was, at least, not their worst enemy. His power was some protection against local oppressors.

### *National Assemblies*

The greatest effect of the Norman Conquest is really to be looked for, not in any sudden changes, least of all in any great and immediate legislative changes, but in a complete, though gradual, change of the administrative system, and in such changes of the law as followed upon those changes in the administration. And even the administrative changes seldom took the form of the utter abolition of anything old. They, too, rather took the form, sometimes of setting up something new by the side of the old, sometimes only of increasing the importance of one old institution at the expense of another. Thus the national assemblies themselves changed their character, and a variety of institutions were developed out of the national assemblies, by no cause so much as by the growth of the summons. Wherever it becomes usual specially to summon particular members of an assembly, the first step is taken towards the exclusion of all who are not so specially summoned.

In the great assembly at Salisbury, where all the landowners of England became the "men" of the king, we see the first germs of lords and commons. The witan are distinguished from the "land-sitting men." By the witan, so called long after the Conquest, we are doubtless to understand those great men of the realm who were usually summoned to every assembly. The vast multitude who came to do their homage to the king were summoned only for that particular occasion. The personal right of summons is the essence of the peerage. It is the distinctive mark round which all the other honours and privileges of the peer have grown. The earls and the bishops of England, by never losing their right to the personal summons, have kept that right to personal attendance in the national assembly, which was once common to all freemen, but which other freemen have lost. The house of lords represents, by unbroken succession, the witan of the assembly of Salisbury; that is, it represents by unbroken succession the old assemblies of the Teutonic democracy. Never did any institution so utterly change its character. But the change has been the gradual result of circumstances, without any violent break. The "land-sitting men," on the other hand, not summoned personally or regularly, but summoned in a mass when their attendance was specially needed, gradually lost the right of personal attendance, till in the end they gained, instead, the more practical right of appearing by their representatives. Thus grew the commons. The steps by which the national assemblies took their final shape do not begin till a later time. But it is important to notice that the first glimpse of something like lords and commons—a distinction which doubtless already existed in practice, but which is nowhere before put into a formal shape—dates from the last years of the Conqueror.

[1066-1087 A.D.]

The practice of summons thus gave birth to our final parliamentary constitution. It gave birth also to a vast number of administrative and judicial institutions, of which we see traces before the Conquest, but which put on their definite shape under the Norman kings. The practice of summons produced the house of lords. It produced also the *curia regis*, the king's court, out of which so many institutions grew. The king's court is properly the national assembly itself; but the name gradually came to be confined to a kind of judicial and administrative committee of the assembly. Even before the Norman Conquest, we get a faint glimpse of a body of the king's immediate counsellors, bearing the name of the *theningmannagemót*. Out of this body, to which was gradually attached the name of *curia regis*, grew, on the one side, the privy council, and out of that the modern cabinet, and on the other side the courts of law.

Along with the practice of summons grew the importance of those who were most specially and habitually summoned, the great officers of the king's court and household. Soon after the Conquest these officers began to rise into an importance which they had never held before. Nothing is so important under the Norman reigns as the exchequer. But the exchequer is simply an old institution with a new name, and the treasurer is simply an old officer with a new name. The king's hoard or treasury must always have had a keeper; but the hoarder, under the Latin name of treasurer, grew into increased importance in times when the main object of government seemed to be to fill the king's hoard. The hoard or treasury got the playful name of exchequer,<sup>1</sup> and it grew into two departments of state, administrative and judicial.

The chancellor again is found by that title under Edward the Confessor, and his office must have existed under some title as early as there was any settled government at all. But it is under the Norman kings that he gradually grew to great importance and dignity, an importance and dignity which have been more lasting in his case than in the case of any other of the great officials of those days. But the greatest dignitary of the Norman reigns, the justiciar, really seems to have been wholly new. The name is first given to the regents who represented William in his absence from England; and the office may well have grown up through the need which was felt for some such representative when the king visited his dominions beyond sea. The modern judicial system of England begins, in something like its present shape, in the reign of Henry II. But its growth is one of the direct results of the Norman Conquest. The older judicial system is essentially local and popular. After the Conquest this system grows, till in the end the local chiefs, the earl and the bishop, are wholly displaced by the king's judges. Thus grew up the lawyers' doctrine that the king is the fountain of justice. But the popular element survived in the various forms of the jury. It is idle to debate about the invention or introduction of trial by jury. The truth is that it never was invented or introduced; that, even more than other institutions, it emphatically grew. Its germ may be seen in all those cases, compurgation or any other, where a matter is decided by the oaths of men taken from the community at large. The Conquest caused a step in advance by the more constant employment of recognitions taken on oath.

In this way justice became more centralised in England than anywhere else. All the weightier causes came to be tried either in the king's own

<sup>1</sup> The older names are *fiscus* and *thesaurus*. *Scaccarium* or exchequer was the established name by the time of Henry II. It comes from the party-coloured cloth with which the table was covered, which suggested the notion of a chess-board.

courts or by judges immediately commissioned by him. The local chiefs gave way to the king's representatives. One local officer indeed grew into increased activity. This was the officer who in each shire had always been specially the king's officer, the shire-reeve or sheriff, who looked after the interests of the king, while the ealdorman or earl represented the separate being of the shire. Under William, earls ceased to be appointed save where they had distinct military duties. Under his successors earldoms gradually sank into merely honorary dignities. But the sheriff was in the Norman reigns the busiest of all officers; for he had to collect and bring in all that was due to the royal exchequer from the endless sources of income by which it was fed.

### *The Changed Idea of Kingship*

The main political result of the Norman Conquest thus was to strengthen every tendency that was already in being—and such tendencies have been powerfully at work ever since the beginning of the growth of the thegnhood—by which the king, his authority, his officers, took the place of the nation and its authority. Thus, for instance, there was a strong tendency at work to turn the folkland, the land of the nation, into the land of the king. To this process the Conquest gave the finishing touch. The stroke by which the whole lay soil of England was held to be forfeited to the Conqueror turned all folkland into terra regis. From Domesday onward the folkland vanishes. And while the king, the highest lord, was thus encroaching on the nation, that is, on the community which took in all others, smaller lords were doing the like to the lesser communities which made up the nation. Under the older system all grants of *sac* and *soc*, that is, all grants to a particular person of any special jurisdiction, exempt from the ordinary local courts, were in their own nature exceptional. As the new ideas grew, the manor, as it was called by the Normans, finally supplanted the township.

Both as regarded the greater lord and the lesser, the tendency of the ideas which the Norman Conquest strongly confirmed was to put the notion of property before the notion of office. Kingship, the highest office in the commonwealth, came to be looked on mainly as a possession. The king of the people has now put on the character of the lord of the land; his title gradually changes into a form which better expresses this new position. The king of the English gradually changes into the king of England. William himself is still almost always *rex Anglorum*. But the new territorial title now begins to creep into use, and from the beginning of the thirteenth century it altogether displaces the older style. But the new ideas did much more than merely change the royal style. As soon as office had changed into property, as soon as the chief of the people had changed into the lord of the land, the old rule that the king should be chosen out of the one kingly house began to stiffen into the doctrine of strict hereditary right. The general results of the Conquest were all in favour of that doctrine; but the circumstances of the reigns which immediately followed the Conquest all told the other way, and helped to keep up the elective character of the crown for some time longer. The ancient doctrine died out very slowly, but it did die out in the end. And then lawyers found out that the crown had been hereditary from the beginning, and ruled that the king never died, and that the throne never could be vacant. The doctrine of primogeniture also now naturally supplanted the old principle of division of lands. No doctrine could be more opposite to the old doctrine of nobility than the doctrine which gave everything to a single son in the family.



[1066-1087 A.D.]

*Ecclesiastical and Social Changes*

The immediate ecclesiastical effects of the Norman Conquest, those which in truth formed part of the process of conquest, have been already spoken of. But the introduction of foreign prelates, and the closer relations with Rome, worked in many ways. The foreign bishop naturally stood at a greater distance from the native clergy than his English predecessor had done. Moreover, the new theories as to the tenure of land turned the bishop into a baron, holding as a tenant-in-chief of the crown. The bishop became in his own diocese more of a lord and less of a father, while he was often kept away from his diocese by holding high temporal office. It gives a false view of the case to say that the prelates grasped at high temporal office; the case rather is that, in a time when education was chiefly confined to the clergy, public business was mainly in the hands of the king's clerks, and that they received bishoprics as the reward of their temporal services. Under such bishops the church was secularised and feudalised. The relation of the parish priest to his bishop put on the likeness of the relation between a man and his lord.

The social results of the Conquest were such as naturally followed on the general transfer of the greatest estates and highest offices of the country. The Conquest itself, the military occupation of William, was followed by a peaceful immigration of Normans and other strangers into England, especially into the merchant towns. London, above all, received a crowd of citizens of Norman birth. That these men, and the Norman settlers generally, turned into Englishmen in a wonderfully short time is one of the great features of our history. The causes are easy to see: with most men, if there be no special reason to the contrary, place of birth goes for more than descent by blood, and the stranger is gradually assimilated by the people among whom he dwells. And in the case of Normans and English, we can hardly doubt that original kindred went for something. The Norman was simply a Dane who had adopted the French tongue and some French fashions; he was easily won back into the Teutonic fold. The Norman settled in England was driven to become in some sort an Englishman. He held his estates of the king of the English, according to English law. The fusion of the two races was so speedy that a writer little more than a hundred years after the Conquest, the author of the famous *Dialogus de Scaccario*, could say that, among the free population, it was impossible to tell who was of Norman and who was of English birth. That is to say, the great nobles must still have been all but purely Norman; the lowest classes must have been all but purely English. In the intermediate classes, among the townsmen and the smaller landowners, the two races were so intermixed, and they had so modified one another, that the distinction between them had been forgotten. We might say that the effect of the Norman Conquest was to thrust every class, save one, of the older English society a step downwards. The churl, the simple freeman, had been gradually sinking for a long time before the Conquest. In the course of the century after the Conquest, he finally sank into the villein. On the other hand, if the churl gradually sank into the state of villeinage, the slave gradually rose to it. The Norman Conquest, while thrusting down every other class, undoubtedly helped to raise the most wretched and helpless class of all.

But while the Normans who settled in England changed into Englishmen with remarkable speed, they of course, by the very fact of their fusion, did much to modify the character of Englishmen. A way was now opened for all that

class of ideas which, for want of better names, may be called feudal and chivalrous. Chivalry is rather French than Norman; and its development comes rather under the Angevin than under the Norman kings. Still, so far as Normandy was influenced by France, so far as the Norman Conquest opened a way for French influence, and, we may add, French kings, in England, so far this whole class of ideas and feelings may be set down as results of the Norman Conquest. But in England chivalry never was really dominant. Teutonic notions of right and common sense were never wholly driven out. For the man unassisted by birth to rise was harder in some ages than in others. There was no age in England when it was wholly impossible.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE ACCESSION OF WILLIAM RUFUS

William Rufus, or William the Red, who left his father at the point of death, was informed of his decease as he was on the point of embarking at Wissant, near Calais. The news only made him the more anxious to reach England, that he might, by the actual seizure of the succession, set at defiance the pretensions of any other claimant to the crown. Arriving in England, he scoured the important fortresses of Dover, Pevensey, and Hastings, concealing his father's death, and pretending to be the bearer of orders from him. He then hastened to Winchester, where, with a proper conviction of the efficacy of money, he claimed his father's treasures, which were deposited in the castle there. William de Pont-de-l'Arche, the royal treasurer, readily delivered him the keys, and Rufus took possession of £60,000 in pure silver, with much gold and many precious stones.

His next step was to repair to Lanfranc, the primate, in whose hands the destinies of the kingdom may almost be said to have at that moment been. Bloet, a confidential messenger, had already delivered a letter from the deceased king, commending the cause and guidance of his son William to the archbishop, already disposed by motives both of affection and self-interest in favour of William, who had been his pupil, and for whom he had performed the sacred ceremonies on his initiation into knighthood. It is stated, however, that Lanfranc refused to declare himself in favour of Rufus till that prince promised, upon oath, to govern according to law and right, and to ask and follow the advice of the primate in all matters of importance. It appears that Lanfranc then proceeded with as much activity as Rufus could desire. He first hastily summoned a council of the prelates and barons, to give the semblance of a free election.<sup>1</sup> Though a strong feeling of opposition existed, none was shown at this meeting; and Lanfranc crowned his pupil at Westminster, on Sunday, the 26th of September, 1087, the seventeenth day after the Conqueror's death.

William's first act of royal authority was the imprisonment of the unfortunate Englishmen whom his father had liberated on his death-bed. Earls Morcar and Wulfnoth, who had followed him to England in the hope of obtaining some part of the estates of their fathers, were arrested at Winchester and confined in the castle. He then gave a quantity of gold and silver, a part of the treasure found at Winchester, to "Otho, the goldsmith," with orders to work it into ornaments for the tomb of that father whom he had abandoned on his death-bed.

[<sup>1</sup> "Of any election to the crown," says Ramsay <sup>4</sup>, "nothing is said. Some form of the sort may have been gone through. But at any rate the appeal to the people in the coronation office would preserve the memory of the constitutional doctrine."<sup>1</sup>]

[1067-1088 A.D.]

When Robert Courte-house heard of his father's death, he was living, an impoverished exile, at Abbeville. He, however, soon appeared in Normandy, and was joyfully received at Rouen, the capital, and recognised as their duke by the prelates, barons, and chief men. Henry, the youngest brother of the three, put himself and his five thousand pounds of silver in a place of safety, waiting events, and ready to seize every chance of gaining either the royal crown or the ducal coronet.

It was not perhaps easy for the Conqueror to make any better arrangement, but it was in the highest degree unlikely, under the division he had made of England and Normandy, that peace should be preserved between the brothers. Even if the unscrupulous Rufus had been less active, and the personal qualities of Robert altogether different from what they were, causes independent of the two princes threatened to lead to inevitable hostilities. The great barons, the followers of the Conqueror, were almost all possessed of estates and fiefs in both countries: they were naturally uneasy at the separation of the two territories, and foresaw that it would be impossible for them to preserve their allegiance to two masters; and that they must very soon resign or lose either their ancient patrimonies in Normandy, or their new acquisitions in England. A war between the two brothers would at any time embarrass them as long as they held territory under both. Every inducement of interest and of local attachment made them wish to see the two countries united under one sovereign; and their only great difference of opinion on this head was as to which of the two brothers should be that sovereign.

A decision of the question was inevitable; and the first step was taken, not in Normandy, to expel Robert, but in England, to dethrone William. Had he been left to himself, the elder brother, from his love of ease and pleasure, would in all probability have remained satisfied with his duchy, but he was beset on all sides by men who were constantly repeating how unjust and disgraceful to him it was to see a younger brother possess a kingdom while he had only a duchy; by Norman nobles that went daily over to him complaining of the present state of affairs in England; and by his uncle Odo, the bishop, who moved with all his ancient energy and fierceness in the matter, not so much out of any preference of one brother to the other, as out of his hatred of the primate Lanfranc, whom he considered as the chief cause of the disgrace, the imprisonment, and all the misfortunes that had befallen him in the latter years of the Conqueror.<sup>d</sup>

#### THE REVOLT OF ODO

According to custom the king held his court at the festival of Easter. The discontented barons employed the opportunity to mature their plans, and departed to raise the standard of rebellion in their respective districts. The duke of Normandy was already acquainted with their intention; but instead of waiting for his arrival, or of uniting their forces against their enemy, they contented themselves with fortifying their castles and ravaging the king's lands in the neighbourhood.

In this emergency William owed the preservation of his crown to the native English, whose eagerness to revenge the wrongs which their country had received from the Norman chieftains led them in crowds to the royal standard. The earl bishop, Odo, conceiving that the first attempt of his nephew would be directed against the strong castle of Rochester, had in-



trusted that fortress to the care of Eustace, count of Boulogne, with a garrison of five hundred knights; and retiring to Pevensey, awaited with impatience the promised arrival of Robert. The king followed him thither, shut him up within the walls, and after a siege of seven weeks compelled him to surrender. His life and liberty were granted him on the condition that he should swear to deliver up the castle of Rochester, and to quit England forever. Odo was conducted with a small escort to the fortress: but Eustace easily discerned the contradiction between his words and his looks, and pretending that he was a traitor to the cause, made both the bishop and his guard prisoners. The success of this artifice inflamed the indignation of William: messengers were despatched to hasten reinforcements; and the place was vigorously attacked, and as obstinately defended, till the ravages of a pestilential disease compelled the count of Boulogne to propose a capitulation. It was with difficulty that the Normans in the king's service prevailed on him to spare the lives of the garrison; but the request of Odo, that at his departure the besiegers should abstain from every demonstration of triumph, was contemptuously refused. The moment he appeared, the trumpets were ordered to flourish; and as he passed through the ranks, the English sounded the words "halter" and "gallows" in his ears. He slunk away, muttering threats of vengeance, and embarking on board the first vessel he could procure, directed his course to Normandy.

The hopes of the insurgents were now at an end. The characteristic indolence of Robert had caused him to procrastinate his voyage to England till the favourable opportunity had passed away; and the scanty succours which he had sent to his partisans had been intercepted by the English mariners. The principal insurgents, reduced to despair, escaped to Normandy: their estates were divided among the faithful friends of the king.

#### THE WARS IN NORMANDY

Normandy at this period presented a wide scene of anarchy and violence. Robert held the reins of government with a feeble grasp, and his lenity and indecision exposed him to the contempt of his turbulent barons. The Conqueror had compelled them to admit his troops into their castles; but, at his death, they expelled the royal garrisons, levied forces, and made war on each other. The new duke would not, or dared not, interfere. He consumed his revenue in his pleasures, and by improvident grants diminished the ducal demesnes. His poverty compelled him to solicit the assistance of Henry, to whom he sold for three thousand pounds the Cotentin, almost the third part of the duchy; and his jealousy induced him to order the arrest and confinement of the same prince, as soon as he returned from England, where he had gone to claim the dower of his mother Matilda. To William, who sought to be revenged on Robert, and who never refused to employ the aid of bribery or fraud, this disturbed state of things offered an alluring prospect; and, by means of a judicious distribution of presents, he obtained through the perfidy of his Norman adherents possession of St. Valery, of Albemarle, and of almost every fortress on the right bank of the Seine. Alarmed at so dangerous a defection, the duke solicited the interference of the king of France, who marched a powerful army to the confines of Normandy, but on the receipt of a considerable sum from England returned into his own dominions.

At the same time Robert nearly lost Rouen, the capital of Normandy. Conan, the wealthiest and most powerful of the citizens, had engaged to

[1090-1091 A.D.]

deliver it up to William; and the duke, to defeat the project, solicited the aid of Henry, whom he had lately released. On the third of November Gilbert de l'Aigle was seen to the south of the city leading a body of men to the assistance of Robert; while Rainald de Warrenne appeared on the north with three hundred knights in the service of the king of England. The adherents of Conan instantly divided to receive their friends, and repulse their foes; Robert and Henry (who were now reconciled) descended from the castle with their followers; and the streets of the city were filled with confusion and bloodshed. So doubtful was the issue that the duke, at the request of his friends, withdrew to a place of safety; but at last the English were expelled, and Conan was conducted a captive into the fortress. By Robert he was condemned to perpetual confinement; but Henry, who was well acquainted with the lenity of his brother, requested and obtained the custody of the prisoner. He immediately led him to the highest tower, bade him survey the beauty of the surrounding scenery, and then, seizing him by the waist, hurled him over the battlements. The unhappy Conan was dashed to pieces; the prince turning to the bystanders coolly observed that treason ought never to go unpunished.

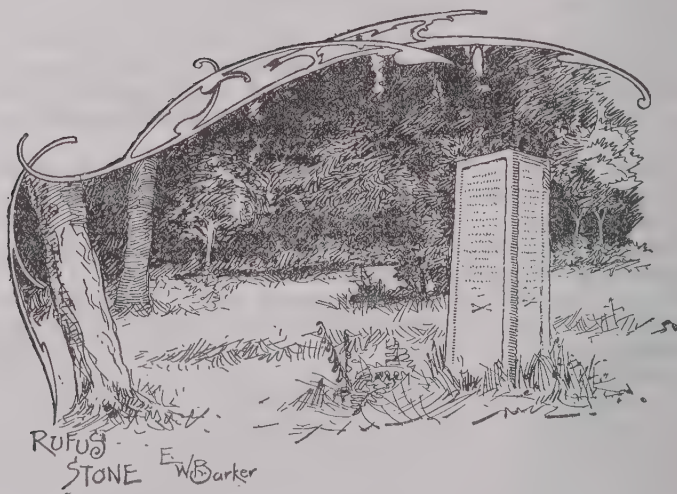
In the following January William crossed the sea with a numerous army, but the barons who held lands under both the brothers laboured to effect a reconciliation, and a treaty of peace was negotiated under the mediation of the French monarch. The policy of William again triumphed over the credulity of Robert. He retained possession of the fortresses which he had acquired in Normandy, but promised to indemnify his brother by an equivalent in England, and to restore to their estates his friends, who had been attainted for the late insurrection. By an additional article it was stipulated that, on the decease of either of the two princes, the survivor should succeed to his dominions.

The principal sufferers by this treaty were Eadgar Ætheling and Prince Henry. Eadgar had been the confidential friend of Robert; but at the demand of William he was deprived of his estates in Normandy, and compelled to seek an asylum with his brother-in-law, the king of Scotland. The abilities and pretensions of Henry had long been subjects of alarm to both the king and the duke. They now united their forces, took possession of his castles, and besieged him on Mont St. Michel, a lofty rock, which by the influx of the tide was insulated twice in the day. The place was deemed impregnable; but the want of water caused it to be evacuated by the garrison at the end of a fortnight; and Henry with difficulty obtained permission to retire into Brittany. For two years he wandered in the Vexin, suffering the privations of poverty, and attended only by a knight, a chaplain, and three esquires. At length he accepted from the inhabitants of Domfront the government of their town, and gradually recovered the greater part of his former possessions.

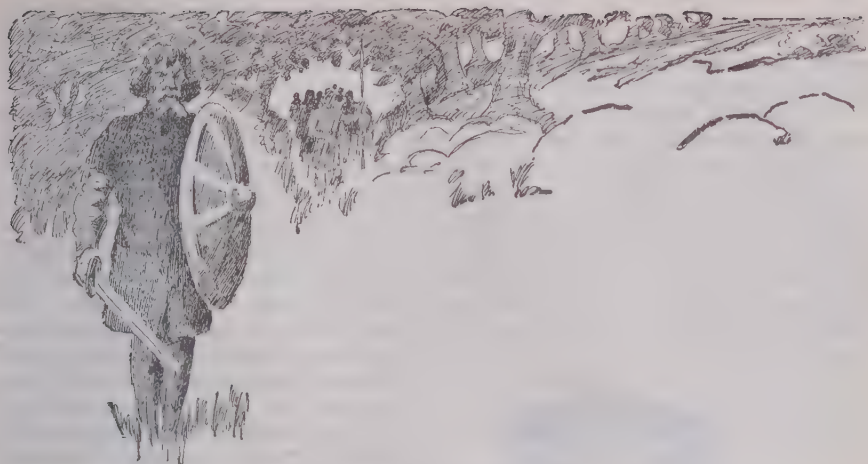
The siege of Mont St. Michel was distinguished by an occurrence which has been celebrated by our historians as a proof of William's magnanimity. Riding alone, he espied at a distance a few cavaliers belonging to the enemy, whom he immediately charged with his usual intrepidity. In the shock he was beaten to the ground; and his horse, which had been wounded, dragged him some paces in the stirrup. His adversary had already raised his sword to take the life of the fallen monarch, when William exclaimed: "Hold, fellow! I am the king of England." Awed by his voice, his opponents raised him from the ground; a fresh horse was offered him; and the king, vaulting into the saddle, inquired which of them was his conqueror. The man apologised

for his ignorance. "Make no excuse," replied William, "you are a brave and worthy knight. Henceforth you shall fight under my banner."<sup>k</sup>

Another incident of the same siege which illustrates the good-heartedness of Robert is related by Malmesbury.<sup>e</sup> At one time water ran short in the fortress, and Henry sent a messenger to Robert expostulating with him and declaring that it was wrong to deprive him of water, "the common right of mankind." Robert was moved, and gave orders that the vigilance of the besiegers should be relaxed sufficiently to allow the garrison to obtain a supply of water. When Robert's action was related to William Rufus, he was enraged, and scornfully taunted his kind-hearted brother with lacking a knowledge of the customs of warfare. "How can you expect to conquer an enemy if you supply him with that which he most needs to continue the strife?" he demanded. To which Robert replied: "Shame! Shall I suffer our brother to die of thirst? Where shall we find another, if we lose him?"<sup>a</sup>







## CHAPTER VI

### THE SONS OF THE CONQUEROR AND STEPHEN

[1087-1154 A.D.]

THE problem was to reconcile the English nation to the Norman Conquest, to nationalise, so to speak, the Conquest and the dynasty which the Conquest had brought in. The means thereto was to find a prince of the foreign stock who should reign as an English king, with the good-will of the English people, in the interest of the English people. William Rufus might have held that place if he had been morally capable of it. His crown was won for him from Norman rebels by the valour and loyalty of Englishmen. But Rufus forsook his trust; he belied his promises. Thirteen years later the same drama was acted over again. Henry, who reigned by a more direct choice of the English people than William, owed his crown also to the loyalty of Englishmen. This time the problem was solved. After the election at Winchester, the fight at Tinchebray, England could no longer be called a conquered land. Though the Norman was to reign in England, he was to reign only by putting on the character of an English king, called to his throne by the voice of Englishmen, and guarded there by their loyalty against the plots and assaults of Norman rebels.—FREEMAN. *p*

By what pretexes the king eluded the execution of his treaty with Robert we are ignorant. It was in vain that the duke accompanied him to England to receive the promised indemnity; in vain that he repeated his demand by successive messengers.<sup>b</sup> At last, in 1094, Robert had recourse to a measure deemed very efficacious in the court of chivalry. He sent two heralds, who, having found their way into the presence of the Red King, denounced him before his chief vassals as a false and perjured knight, with whom his brother, the duke, would no longer hold friendship. To defend his honour, the king followed the two heralds to Normandy, where, hoping at least for the majority of voices, he agreed to submit the matter in dispute to the arbitration of the twenty-four barons, who had sworn to do their best to enforce the faithful observance of the treaty of Caen. The barons, however, decided in favour of Robert; and then William appealed to the sword. The campaign went so

much in favour of the Red King, that Robert was again obliged to apply for assistance to the king of France; and Philip once more marched with an army into Normandy.

Rufus then sustained some serious losses; and trusting no longer to the appeal of the sword, he resolved to buy off the French king. He sent his commission into England for the immediate levying of 20,000 men. By the time appointed these men came together about Hastings, and were ready to embark, "when suddenly there came his lieutenant with a counter-order, and signified to them that the king, minding to favour them, and spare them for that journey, would that every of them should give him ten shillings towards the charges of the war, and thereupon depart home with a sufficient safe-conduct; which the most part were better content to do than to commit them-

selves to the fortune of the sea and bloody success of the wars in Normandy." The king's lieutenant and representative in this cunning device was Ranulf Flambard. Some considerable sum was raised, and King Philip accepted it and withdrew from the field, leaving Robert, as he had done before, to shift for himself.<sup>d</sup>

At this time Robert was filled with a great desire to join the crusade of Peter the Hermit. But with so much splendour were the western princes arming themselves for the war in defence of the Holy Sepulchre, that Robert found his poverty an obstacle for which his devoutness of heart could not atone. However, burning with ardour for the enterprise, he finally had recourse to the avarice of William Rufus, to whom he offered, for the sum of 10,000 marks, the government of his dominions dur-



WILLIAM RUFUS

[1056-1100 A.D.]

ing the five following years.<sup>a</sup> The proposal was instantly accepted. William summoned a great council, and, alleging his poverty, appealed to the generosity of his faithful barons; they, on their return home, required in the same manner the aid of their tenants; and the whole amount, wrung in reality from the lower orders in the state, was paid into the exchequer, and transmitted to Normandy. Robert departed with a joyful heart in quest of dangers and glory; William sailed to the Continent, and demanded immediate possession of Normandy and of Le Maine.

By the Normans he was received without opposition; the Manceaux unanimously rejected his authority in favour of Hélie de la Flèche. Though Hélie had taken the cross, the claims and menaces of William detained him at home; but one day, having incautiously entered a wood with no more than seven knights, he was made prisoner; and the king immediately marched at the head of fifty thousand horsemen into his territories. Fulk [of Anjou] had already arrived to protect his vassal; a few skirmishes were succeeded by a negotiation; and Hélie obtained his liberty by the surrender of Mans. Being

[1099 A.D.]

thus dispossessed of his dominions, he offered his services to William; but at the instigation of Robert of Meulan, they were indignantly refused. "If you will not have me for a friend," exclaimed Hélie, "you shall learn to fear me as an enemy."

The next summer (1099) William was hunting in the New Forest in Hampshire, when a messenger arrived to inform him that Hélie had defeated the Normans and surprised the city of Mans; that the inhabitants had again acknowledged him for their count; and that the garrison, shut up in the castle, would soon be reduced to extremity. The impatience of the king could hardly wait for the conclusion of the tale, when, crying out to his attendants, "Let those that love me, follow," he rode precipitately to the sea-shore, and embarked in the first vessel which he found. The master remonstrated that the weather was stormy and the passage dangerous. "Hold thy peace," said William, "kings are never drowned." He landed the next day at Barfleur, assembled his troops, and advanced with such rapidity that Hélie could scarcely find time to save himself by flight. The king ravaged the lands of his enemies, and returned to England.

## WARS WITH THE SCOTS AND WELSH (1091-1095 A.D.)

Of the hostilities between England and Scotland the blame must rest with the king of Scots, who lost his life in the contest. William was in Normandy prosecuting his designs against Robert, when Malcolm suddenly crossed the frontiers and gratified the rapacity of his followers with the spoil of the northern counties. After the reconciliation of the two brothers, the king of England undertook to revenge the insult. His fleet was dispersed in a storm; but his cavalry traversed the Lothians, and penetrated as far as the great river, which the Scots called "the water." The hostile armies were ranged on the opposite shores; and the two kings had mutually defied each other, when a peace was concluded through the mediation of Robert of Normandy on the one side, and of Eadgar Ætheling on the other. Malcolm submitted to do homage to the English monarch, and to render him the services which he had rendered to William's father; and William engaged to grant to the Scottish king the twelve manors, and the annual pension of twelve marks of gold, which he had enjoyed under the Conqueror. Nor was the interest of the Ætheling forgotten in the negotiation. He was permitted to return to England, and obtained a distinguished place in the court of William.

William on his return visited Carlisle, expelled the lord of the district, peopled the city with a colony of Englishmen from the southern counties, and built a castle for their protection. It is possible that, as Cumberland was formerly held by the heir of the Scottish crown, Malcolm might consider the settlement of an English colony at Carlisle as an invasion of his rights; it is certain that a new quarrel was created between the two nations, of which we know not the origin nor the particulars. The Scottish king was invited or summoned to attend William's court at Gloucester (1093), and at his arrival found himself excluded from the royal presence, unless he would consent to plead his cause, and submit to the judgment of the English barons. Malcolm indignantly rejected the proposal. The kings of Scotland, he said, had never been accustomed "to do right" to the kings of England but on the borders of the two realms, and according to the joint decision of the barons of both countries. He retired in anger, assembled his retainers, and burst with a numerous force into Northumberland, where he perished, a victim to the wiles



of his enemy, perhaps to the treachery of his own subjects. The Scottish army was surprised by Robert de Mowbray. Malcolm fell by the sword of Morel, Mowbray's steward; his eldest son Edward shared the fate of his father; and of the fugitives who escaped the pursuit of their foes, the greater number were lost in the waters of the Alne and the Tweed. The bodies of the king and his son were found by peasants, and brought by them for burial to the abbey of Tynemouth. The mournful intelligence hastened the death of his consort, Queen Margaret, who survived her husband only four days.<sup>1</sup>

The children of Malcolm, too young to assert their rights, sought the protection of their uncle, Eadgar Ætheling, in England; and the Scottish sceptre was seized (1094) by the ambition of Donald Bain, the brother of the deceased monarch. He found a competitor in Duncan, a son, perhaps illegitimate, of Malcolm, who had long resided as an hostage in the English court. The nephew, with the aid of William, to whom he swore fealty, proved too strong for the uncle; and Donald secreted himself in the Highlands, till the murder of Duncan by Malpeder, Mormaer of Mearns, replaced in his hands the reins of government. He held them only three years. The Ætheling by order of the English king conducted an army into Scotland, seated his nephew Edgar [the son of Margaret] on the throne, as feudatory to William, and restored the children of his sister Margaret to their former honours. Donald, who had been taken in his flight and committed to prison, died of grief.

Ever since Harold had effected the reduction of Wales, the natives had acknowledged themselves the vassals of the king of England; but their ancient hostility was not yet extinguished, and the prospect of plunder, with the chance of impunity, led them repeatedly to ravage the neighbouring counties. To repress their inroads the Conqueror had ordered castles to be built on the borders, which he intrusted to the care of officers, denominated marquesses, or lords of the marches. These marches were the constant theatre of predatory warfare and barbarian revenge. But in 1094 the natives of every district in Wales rose in arms: the Isle of Anglesea was reduced; and Cheshire, Shropshire, and Herefordshire, from one extremity to the other, were desolated with fire and sword. The next year the insurgents surprised the castle of Montgomery and massacred the inhabitants. The resentment of William urged him to retaliate; and, in imitation of Harold, he undertook to traverse the whole principality at the head of an army.

But the heavy cavalry of the Normans was ill adapted to the invasion of a rugged and mountainous country. The Welsh had the wisdom not to oppose his progress; but they hovered on his flanks, drove forward his rear, and cut off his detachments; and when the king, after a slow and tedious march of five weeks, had reached the mountains of Snowdon, he found to his mortification that the loss of the conquerors exceeded that of the vanquished. The next year (1095) the lords of the marches prosecuted the war by ravaging the lands in the neighbourhood; and the following summer the king resumed his operations, but with similar results. The loss of men, of horses, and of baggage, convinced him of the inutility of the enterprise. He retired out of Wales in despair, adopted the policy of his father, and by drawing a chain of castles round the country, endeavoured to put a stop to the incursions of these restless and inaccessible enemies.

<sup>1</sup> The Scottish historians pretend that Malcolm was killed at the siege of Alnwick by the perfidy of the governor, who, pretending to offer him the keys of the place at the end of a spear, pushed the spear into his brain. It may be granted that there was something of fraud or treachery in the transaction; but the Scottish account seems inconsistent with the fact that the bodies of Malcolm and Edward were found on the ground by peasants, and buried by them at Tynemouth, a considerable distance from Alnwick.

[1095 A.D.]

## MOWBRAY'S REBELLION

The most powerful of the Anglo-Norman barons was Robert de Mowbray, earl of Northumberland. He had inherited from his uncle, the bishop of Coutances, no fewer than two hundred and eighty manors: the first families in the nation were allied to him by blood or affinity; and his command in the north had placed at his disposal the services of a numerous and warlike population. By his orders four Norwegian merchantmen of considerable value had been detained and plundered; and when the king, at the petition of the owners, summoned him to answer for the offence, the royal mandate was repeatedly slighted and disobeyed.<sup>1</sup>

William undertook to chastise his vassal; his rapidity disconcerted the friends of the earl; the principal of the Northumbrian chieftains were surprised



KENILWORTH CASTLE

(Founded 1120 A. D.)

and made prisoners; and the strong castle of Tynemouth [Newcastle-on-Tyne], after a siege of two months, was compelled to surrender. Still from the walls of Bamborough Mowbray continued to defy the arms of his sovereign; nor did William undertake the hopeless task of reducing that impregnable fortress; but in the vicinity erected another castle, which he appropriately denominated Malvoisin, or the bad neighbour. At length the earl was decoyed from his asylum. An insidious offer to betray into his hands the town of Newcastle induced him to quit Bamborough in the dead of the night with no more than thirty horsemen. The garrison of Malvoisin immediately followed; the gates of Newcastle were shut; and the earl fled from his pursuers to the monastery of St. Oswine. During five days he valiantly

[<sup>1</sup> The earl's seizure of the Norwegian ships could not in itself have been sufficient cause for the king to lead an army against him. But it served at least as an excuse. Ramsay, holding this view, points out that the morality of the seas in those days, and at a very much later date, was very lax. "The plunder of merchant shipping on a distant shore would not from a political point of view," he says, "seem a very serious offence. We would rather suppose that the king, aware that mischief was brewing, seized the opportunity of bringing Mowbray to book. Again, Mowbray's reluctance to come to court implied a consciousness of some guilt deeper than that involved in the offence for which he was called to account."]

defended himself against the repeated assaults of a superior enemy; on the sixth he was wounded in the leg, and made prisoner.

The captive, by the royal order, was conducted to Bamborough, and his countess Matilda was invited to a parley. From the walls she beheld her lord in bonds, with the executioner by his side, prepared to put out his eyes if she refused to surrender the fortress. Her affection (they had been married only three months) subdued her repugnance; the gates were thrown open; and Morel, the governor, to ingratiate himself with the conqueror, revealed the particulars of an extensive and dangerous conspiracy to place on the throne Stephen of Aumale—[nephew of the Conqueror and] brother to Judith of infamous memory. Hugh, earl of Shrewsbury, purchased his pardon for three thousand pounds; Walter de Lacy escaped to the Continent; Odo, earl of Holderness, forfeited his estates and was imprisoned; Mowbray himself was condemned to perpetual confinement, and lived nearly thirty years in the castle of Windsor. William, count of Eu, a near relation of the king, fought his accuser, was vanquished, and lost his eyes. William of Alder, the king's godfather, was sentenced to be hanged; but the integrity of his life and his asseverations at the gallows convinced the public that he was innocent.<sup>b</sup>

#### RALPH FLAMBARD

Lanfranc's death (1089) was mourned as the heaviest loss which could befall England. Lanfranc had been placed over the British churches, an alien, yet he lived to become the protector of the English people. Strange in blood to the Norman, strange in blood to the Englishman, both now loved him as their kinsman: his station and disposition combined to render him the mediator between the conquerors and subjugated. So long as Lanfranc lived, Rufus had, in all open and public affairs, been guided by his counsel. His proud and angry temper, though not completely restrained, was mitigated and sweetened by Lanfranc's kindly intervention. But Lanfranc's death released him from all control.<sup>g</sup> Lanfranc had been both primate and chief minister. At his death, the see of Canterbury was for some time left vacant and its rich revenues turned into the coffers of the king. And the man who undoubtedly suggested to the king this means of increasing his wealth was himself appointed the successor of Lanfranc as chief minister.

This man was Ralph or Ranulf, one of the chaplains of the royal household. He was born of mean parentage in Bayeux, and entered the church as the only possible avenue in that time through which a poor man might reach a position of influence or power. He probably crossed the Channel to England in the time of Edward the Confessor. After the Conquest he seems to have prospered, for in *Domesday* we find him recorded as the holder of lands in Oxford and Hampshire. From certain remarks in contemporary writers it seems likely that he had a hand in the compilation of *Domesday*, and from what we know of his organising ability, it is even possible that he directed the work. Indeed, a passage in Ordericus Vitalis<sup>g</sup> even seems to point to him as having suggested the undertaking. From the service of the bishop of London he had been transferred to that of the Conqueror, where his cleverness, his genius for administration, his handsome person and good fellowship won for him friends and rapid promotion. It was either at that time or later that he was given by Robert, the dispenser of the king's household, the significant name of Flambard—"the fiery or devouring torch." He was



[1089 A.D.]

a man after Rufus' own heart, and as soon as Lanfranc was out of the way he was advanced to the post of greatest authority in the kingdom, next to the king. To the positions of justiciar and royal treasurer, in which he had supreme control over both the judicial and financial affairs of the kingdom, was added, during the king's absences on the Continent, that of regent.<sup>a</sup>

## FEUDAL INNOVATIONS OF FLAMBARD

None of the three reigns [of the sons and grandson of the Conqueror] was a time of great legislative changes, but the reigns of Rufus and Henry were the time in which the new system of administration grew up. Under Rufus the doctrine of military tenures, and of the incidents consequent on such tenures, was put into systematic shape by his rapacious minister Ralph Flambard. This man is distinctly charged with having first subjected ecclesiastical property to these burthens, and there can be little doubt that it was he who laid them on lay property also. The evidence is this. Under the Conqueror we see the germs and beginnings of certain usages, but nothing more. At the accession of Henry I they appear in a systematic shape as established usages. The feudal burthens were a logical deduction from the doctrine of military tenure. The land is held of the lord on condition of certain services being rendered. It passes from father to son; but in order that each successive tenant may strictly hold it as a grant from the lord, the heir must receive it again. For the new grant he must pay a relief, the price of the *relevatio*, the taking up again, of the estate which has lapsed to the lord.

But it may be that the heir is from age or sex incompetent to discharge the services due to the lord. In the case of the minor heir, the lord takes the fief into his own hands till the heir is of age to discharge them. The heiress can never discharge them in person; she must discharge them through a husband. But the interests of the lord require that she shall marry only with his approval, lest she should carry the fief into the hands of an enemy. All these occasions were turned by the perverse ingenuity of Ralph Flambard into means for increasing the royal revenue. The wardship—that is, the temporary possession of the minor's estate—might be granted or sold. So might the marriage of the heiress. The lord might either sell her and her estate for money, or else he might take money from the heiress herself for leave to marry according to her own inclinations. So with bishoprics and abbeys: Flambard found out that they too were held of the king by military service. During the vacancy of the benefice there was no one to discharge the service; the king therefore took temporary possession of the ecclesiastical estate. And, as the new prelate could not be chosen without the royal consent, the king might prolong that temporary possession as long as he chose. All these inferences were logically drawn out and sternly carried into practice by the minister of Rufus. The claims went on, to the oppression and sorrow of successive generations of heirs and heiresses, till, as regards lay tenures, the whole system was swept away by the famous Act of Charles II.<sup>n</sup>

"Ralph's policy," says Stubbs, "seems to have been to tighten as much as possible the hold which the feudal law gave to the king on all feudatories temporal and spiritual, taking the fullest advantage of every opportunity, and delaying by unscrupulous chicanery the determination of every suit. He saw no other difference between an ecclesiastical and a lay fief than the superior facilities which the first gave for extortion; the dead bishop left no

heir who could importunately insist on receiving seisin of his inheritance, and it was in his master's power to determine how soon or at what price an heir should be created and admitted." <sup>h</sup>

#### WILLIAM RUFUS AND ANSELM

After the death of Lanfranc the king retained in his own hands the revenues of Canterbury, as he did those of many other vacant bishoprics: but, falling into a dangerous sickness, the clergy represented to him that he was in danger of eternal perdition, if before his death he did not make atonement for those multiplied sacrileges of which he had been guilty. He resolved, therefore, to supply instantly the vacancy of Canterbury; and sent for Anselm, a Piedmontese by birth, abbot of Bec in Normandy, who was much celebrated for his learning and piety. The abbot earnestly refused the dignity, fell on his knees, wept, and entreated the king to change his purpose; and when he found the prince obstinate in forcing the pastoral staff upon him, he kept his fist so fast clenched that it required the utmost violence of the bystanders to open it, and force him to receive that ensign of spiritual dignity. William soon after recovered, and returned to his former violence and rapine. He detained in prison several persons whom he had ordered to be freed; he still preyed upon the ecclesiastical benefices; the sale of spiritual dignities continued as open as ever; and he kept possession of a considerable part of the revenues belonging to the see of Canterbury. But he found in Anselm that persevering opposition which he had reason to expect from the ostentatious humility which that prelate had displayed in refusing his promotion.

The opposition made by Anselm was the more dangerous on account of the character of piety which he soon acquired in England, by his great zeal against all abuses, particularly those in dress and ornament. A mode in that age prevailed throughout Europe, both among men and women, to give an enormous length to their shoes, to draw the toe to a sharp point, and to affix to it the figure of a bird's bill, which was turned upwards, and which was often sustained by gold or silver chains tied to the knee. The ecclesiastics took exception to this ornament, which they said was an attempt to belie the Scripture, where it is affirmed that no man can add a cubit to his stature; and they assembled some synods, who absolutely condemned it. But, though the clergy could overturn thrones, and had authority sufficient to send above a million of men on their errand to the deserts of Asia, they could never prevail against these long, pointed shoes: on the contrary, that caprice maintained its ground during several centuries; and, if the clergy had not at last desisted from their persecution of it, it might still have been the prevailing fashion in Europe.

But Anselm was more fortunate in decrying the particular mode which was the object of his aversion. He preached zealously against the long hair and curled locks which were then fashionable among the courtiers; he refused the ashes on Ash Wednesday to those who were so accoutred; and his eloquence had such influence that the young men universally abandoned that ornament, and appeared in the cropped hair that was recommended to them by the primate.

When William's profaneness, therefore, returned to him with his health, he was soon engaged in controversies with this austere prelate. There was at that time a schism in the church between Urban and Clement, who both

[1100 A.D.]

pretended to the papacy; and Anselm, who, as abbot of Bee, had already acknowledged the former, was determined without the king's consent to introduce his authority into England. William, who, imitating his father's example, had prohibited his subjects from recognising any pope whom he had not previously received, was enraged, and summoned a synod at Rockingham, with an intention of deposing Anselm: but the prelate's suffragans declared that, without the papal authority, they knew of no expedient for inflicting that punishment on their primate. The king was at last engaged by other motives to give the preference to Urban's title: Anselm received the pallium from that pontiff; and matters seemed to be accommodated when the quarrel broke out afresh from a new cause.

William had undertaken an expedition against Wales, and required the archbishop to furnish his quota of soldiers; but Anselm, who regarded the demand as an oppression on the church, sent them so miserably accoutred that the king was extremely displeased, and threatened him with a prosecution. Anselm, on the other hand, demanded positively that all the revenues of his see should be restored; appealed to Rome against the king's injustice; and affairs came to such extremities that the primate, finding it dangerous to remain in the kingdom, obtained the king's permission to retire beyond sea. All his temporalities were seized; but he was received with great respect by Urban, who considered him as a martyr in the cause of religion, and even menaced the king with excommunication. Anselm assisted at the council of Bari; where, besides fixing the controversy between the Greek and Latin churches concerning the procession of the Holy Ghost, the right of election to church preferments was declared to belong to the clergy alone; and spiritual censures were denounced against all ecclesiastics who did homage to laymen for their sees or benefices, and against all laymen who exacted it.<sup>c</sup>

#### DEATH OF WILLIAM RUFUS

William's lavish expenditure continued on the increase; but by his exactions and irregular way of dealing with church property he still found means for gratifying his extravagance, and enjoyed abroad the reputation of being a rich as well as a powerful king. But the dread creditor was now at hand whom even kings cannot escape. Popular superstition had long darkened the shades and solitudes of the New Forest. The fiend himself, it was said, had appeared there, announcing the punishment he had in reserve for the Red King. The accidents that happened in that chase, which had been so barbarously obtained, gave strength to the vulgar belief. In the month of May, Richard, an illegitimate son of Duke Robert, was killed while hunting in the forest, by an arrow reported to have been shot at random. This was the second time the Conqueror's blood had been poured out there, and men said it would not be the last time. On the first of August following, William lay at Malwood-keep, a hunting-seat in the forest, with a goodly train of knights. A reconciliation had taken place between the two brothers, and Henry, who had been some time in England, was of the gay party.

The circumstances of the story, as told by the monkish chroniclers, are sufficiently remarkable. At the dead of night the king was heard invoking the blessed Virgin, a thing strange in him; and then he called aloud for lights. His attendants ran at his call, and found him disturbed by a frightful vision, to prevent the return of which he ordered them to pass the rest of the night by his bedside. As he was dressing in the morning an artisan brought him



six new arrows: he examined them, praised the workmanship, and, keeping four for himself, gave the other two to Sir Walter Tyrrel, otherwise called, from his estates in France, Sir Walter de Poix, saying, as he presented them, "Good weapons are due to the sportsman that knows how to make a good use of them." The tables were spread with an abundant collation, and the Red King ate more meat and drank even more wine than he was wont to do. His spirits rose to their highest pitch. All was boisterously gay, when a messenger arrived from Serlon, the Norman abbot of St. Peter's, at Gloucester, to inform the king that one of his monks had dreamed a dream foreboding a sudden and awful death to him. "The man is a monk," cried Rufus, "and to have a piece of money he dreameth such things. Give him, therefore, an hundred pence, and bid him dream of better fortune to our person." Then turning to Tyrrel, he said, "Do they think I am one of those fools that give up their pleasure or their business because an old woman happens to dream or sneeze?"

The king, with his brother Henry, and many other lords and knights, rode into the forest, where the company dispersed; but Sir Walter, his especial favourite in these sports, remained constantly near the king. As the sun was sinking low in the west, a hart came bounding by, between Rufus and his comrade, who stood concealed in the thickets. The king drew his bow, but the string broke. Startled by the sound, the hart paused. The king, being unprovided with a second bow, shouted, "Shoot, Walter! shoot, in the devil's name!" Tyrrel drew his bow—the arrow departed—was glanced aside in its flight by an intervening tree, and struck William in the left breast. The fork-head pierced his heart, and with one groan, and no word or prayer uttered, the Red King fell, and expired. Sir Walter Tyrrel ran to his master's side, but finding him dead he remounted his horse, and, without informing any one of the catastrophe, galloped to the sea-coast, embarked for Normandy, whence he fled for sanctuary into the dominions of the French king, and soon after departed for the Holy Land.

Late in the evening the royal corpse was found alone, where it fell, by a poor charcoal-burner, who put it, still bleeding, into his cart, and drove towards Winchester. At the earliest report of his death his brother Henry flew to seize the royal treasury; and the knights and favourites who had been hunting in the forest dispersed, in several directions, to look after their interest, not one of them caring to render the last sad honours to their master. The next day the body, still in the charcoal-burner's cart, and defiled with blood and dirt, was carried to St. Swithin's, the cathedral church of Winchester. There it was treated with proper respect, and buried in the centre of the cathedral choir, many persons looking on, but few grieving. A proof of the bad opinion which the people entertained of the deceased monarch is that they interpreted the fall of a certain tower in the cathedral, which happened the following year, and covered his tomb with its ruins, into a sign of the displeasure of heaven that he had received Christian burial.

The second king of the Norman line reigned thirteen years, all but a few weeks, and was full of health and vigour, and only forty years of age, when he died. That he was shot by an arrow in the New Forest, that his body was abandoned and then hastily interred, are facts perfectly well authenticated; but some doubts may be entertained as to the precise circumstances attending his death, notwithstanding their being minutely related by writers who were living at the time, or who flourished in the course of the following century. Sir Walter Tyrrel afterwards swore, in France, that he did not shoot the arrow; but he was probably anxious to relieve himself from the odium of killing a king, even by accident. It is quite possible, indeed, that the event did not arise

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from chance, and that Tyrrel had no part in it. The remorseless ambition of Henry might have had recourse to murder, or the avenging shaft might have been sped by the desperate hand of some Englishman, tempted by a favourable opportunity and the traditions of the place. But the most charitable construction is that the party were intoxicated with the wine they had drunk at Malwood-keep, and that, in the confusion consequent on drunkenness, the king was hit by a random arrow.<sup>d</sup>

## THE CHARACTER OF WILLIAM RUFUS

William of Malmesbury,<sup>e</sup> who was born in the reign of William Rufus, gives this graphic description of him: "Greatness of soul was pre-eminent in the king, which, in process of time, he obscured by excessive severity—vices, indeed, in place of virtues, so insensibly crept into his bosom that he could not distinguish them. At last, however, in his later years, the desire after good grew cold, and the crop of evil increased to ripeness; his liberality became prodigality; his magnanimity, pride; his austerity, cruelty. He was, when abroad, and in public assemblies, of supercilious look, darting his threatening eye on the bystander, and with assumed severity and ferocious voice assailing such as conversed with him. From apprehension of poverty and of the treachery of others, as may be conjectured, he was too much given to luere and to cruelty. At home and at table, with his intimate companions, he gave loose to levity and to mirth. He was a most facetious railer at anything he had himself done amiss, in order that he might thus do away with obloquy and make it matter of jest. Military men came to him out of every province on this side of the mountains, whom he rewarded most profusely. In consequence, when he had no longer aught to bestow, poor and exhausted, he turned his thoughts to rapines.

"The rapacity of his disposition was seconded by Ralph, the inciter of his covetousness, a clergyman of the lowest origin, but raised to eminence by his wit and subtilty. If at any time a royal edict issued that England should pay a certain tribute, it was doubled by this plunderer of the rich—this exterminator of the poor—this confiscator of other men's inheritance. He was an invincible pleader, as unrestrained in his words as in his actions, and equally furious against the meek or the turbulent. At this person's suggestion, the sacred honours of the church, as the pastors died out, were exposed to sale. These things appeared the more disgraceful because in his father's time, after the decease of a bishop or abbot, all rents were reserved entire, to be given up to the succeeding pastor; and persons truly meritorious on account of their religion were elected. But in the lapse of a very few years everything was changed. Men of the meanest condition, or guilty of whatever crime, were listened to, if they could suggest anything likely to be advantageous to the king; the halter was loosened from the robber's neck, if he could promise any emolument to the sovereign. All military discipline being relaxed, the courtiers preyed upon the property of the country people and consumed their substance, taking the very meat from the mouths of these wretched creatures.

"Then was there flowing hair and extravagant dress; and then was invented the fashion of shoes with curved points; then the model for young men was to rival women in the delicacy of person—to mince their gait, to walk with loose gesture, and half naked. Enervated and effeminate, they unwillingly remained what nature had made them—the assailers of others' chastity,

prodigal of their own. Troops of pathics and droves of harlots followed the court; so that it was said with justice, by a wise man, 'that England would be fortunate if Henry could reign'; led to such an opinion because he abhorred obscenity from his youth."<sup>e</sup>

#### HENRY BECOMES KING

Four years were now elapsed since Robert of Normandy had abandoned his dominions in Europe to earn a barren wreath of glory in the fields of Palestine. Accompanied by Hugh of Vermandois and Robert of Flanders, he had passed the Alps, received the benediction of the pontiff at Lucca, and joined the crusaders under the walls of Constantinople. At the siege of Nice he held an important command; in the battle of Dorylæum his exhortations and example sustained the fainting courage of the Christians; at the reduction of Antioch the praise of superior prowess was shared between him and Godfrey de Bouillon; and if, during a reverse of fortune, he slunk with several others from the pressure of famine and the prospect of slavery, this temporary stain was effaced by his return to the army, his exploits in the field, and his services in the assault of Jerusalem. The crown of that city was given to Godfrey, the most worthy of the confederate chieftains; but, if we may believe the English historians, it had been previously offered to Robert, who, with more wisdom than he usually displayed, preferred his European dominions to the precarious possession of a throne surrounded by hostile and infidel nations.

By priority of birth, and the stipulation of treaties, the crown of England belonged to Robert. He had already arrived in Italy on his way home; but, ignorant of the prize that was at stake, he loitered in Apulia to woo Sibylla, the fair sister of William of Conversana. Henry, the younger brother, was on the spot: he had followed Rufus into the forest; and the moment that he heard the king was fallen, spurring his horse, he rode to Winchester to secure the royal treasures. William de Breteuil, to whose custody they had been intrusted, arrived at the same time, and avowed his determination to preserve them for Robert, the rightful heir. The prince immediately drew his sword, and blood would have been shed had not their common friends interposed, and prevailed on Breteuil to withdraw his opposition. As soon as Henry had obtained possession of the treasures and castle, he was proclaimed king; and, riding to Westminster, was crowned on the Sunday, August 5, the third day after the death of his brother. The ceremonial was the same which had been observed in the coronation of the Anglo-Saxon kings, and was performed by Maurice, bishop of London, in the absence of Anselm and the vacancy of the archiepiscopal see of York.

On the same day care was taken to inform the nation of the benefits which it would derive from the accession of the new monarch. To strengthen the weakness of his claim by connecting it with the interests of the people, he published a charter of liberties, copies of which were sent to the several counties and deposited in the principal monasteries. In this instrument he restored to the church its ancient immunities, and promised neither to sell the vacant benefices, nor to let them out to farm, nor to retain them in his own possession for the benefit of his exchequer, nor to raise tallages on their tenants. He granted to all his barons and immediate vassals (and required that they should make the same concession to their tenants) that they might dispose by will of their personal property; that they might give their daughters and female relatives in marriage without fee or impediment, provided the intended husband were not his enemy; that for breaches of the peace and other delin-



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quencies they should not be placed at the king's mercy, as in the days of his father and brother, but should be condemned in the sums assigned by the Anglo-Saxon laws; that their heirs should pay the customary reliefs for the livery of their lands, and not the arbitrary compensations which had been exacted by his late brother; that heiresses should not be compelled by the king to marry without the consent of the barons; that widows should retain their dowers, and not be given in marriage against their will; and that the wardship of minors should, together with the custody of their lands, be committed to their mothers, or nearest relations.

To the nation at large he promised to put in force the laws of Edward the Confessor, as they had been amended and published by his father; to levy no moneyage which had not been paid in the Saxon times; and to punish with severity the coiners and vendors of light moneys. He exempted from all taxes and burthens the demesne lands of all his military tenants, forgave all fines due to the exchequer, and the pecuniary mulcts for "murder" committed before his coronation; and ordered, under the heaviest penalties, reparation to be made for all injustices perpetrated in consequence of the death of his brother. Such are the provisions of this celebrated charter; which is the more deserving of the reader's notice because, by professing to abolish the illegal customs introduced after the Conquest, it shows the nature of the grievances which the nation had suffered under the two Williams. Henry, however, retained both the royal forests and the forest laws; but as a kind of apology he declared that in this reservation he was guided by the advice and had obtained the consent of his barons. He added at the same time a very beneficial charter in favour of the citizens of London.

Hitherto the moral conduct of Henry had been as questionable as that of his late brother: policy now taught him to assume the zeal and severity of a reformer. He dismissed his mistresses; drove from his court the men who had scandalised the public by their effeminacy and debaucheries; and sent to hasten the return of Archbishop Anselm with expressions of the highest regard and veneration for his character. At the solicitation of the prelates he consented to marry; and the object of his choice was Matilda or Maud, the daughter of Malcolm, king of Scots, by Margaret, the sister of Eadgar Ætheling—a princess whose descent from the Anglo-Saxon monarchs was expected to add stability to his throne, and to secure the succession to his posterity.<sup>1</sup> An



NORTH DOOR, KIRSTALL ABBEY, NEAR LEEDS  
(Founded in the twelfth century)

[Macaulay,] in emphasising the social gap that separated the Norman and English elements of the population for a century or more after the Conquest, speaks of the marriage of Henry and Matilda in these words: "By many of his barons this marriage was regarded as a marriage between a white planter and a quadroon girl would be regarded in Virginia."]

objection was, however, made to their union, which nearly defeated his hopes. The princess in her childhood had been intrusted to the care of her aunt Christina, abbess of Wilton, who, to preserve the chastity of her niece from the brutality of the Norman soldiers, had compelled her to wear the veil and to frequent the society of the nuns. Hence it was contended that, according to the ecclesiastical canons, she was no longer at liberty to marry; but in a synod of the prelates the objection was overruled in conformity with a former decision of Archbishop Lanfranc on a similar occasion. The marriage was celebrated, and the queen crowned with the usual solemnity by Anselm, who had returned to England and resumed the administration of his diocese.

#### THE INVASION OF ROBERT

To satisfy the clamour of the people, Henry had committed to the Tower Flambard, bishop of Durham, the obnoxious minister of the late king. The prelate lived sumptuously in his confinement on the allowance which he received from the exchequer, and the presents which were sent to him by his friends; and by his wit, cheerfulness, and generosity, won the good-will, while he lulled the vigilance, of his keepers. In the beginning of February he received a rope concealed in the bottom of a pitcher of wine. The knights who guarded him were, as usual, invited to dine: they drank copiously till it was late in the evening; and soon after they had lain down to rest, Flambard, with the aid of his rope, descended from the window, was conducted by his friends to the sea-shore, and thence escaped into Normandy. In Normandy he found Duke Robert, who had married Sibylla, and returned to his duchy within a month after the death of his brother. By his former subjects he had been received with welcome; but his claim to the English crown, though he meant to enforce it, was postponed to a subsequent period. Pleasure, not power, was his present object: he wished to exhibit to his Normans the fair prize which he had brought from Apulia; and her fortune, a very considerable sum, was consumed in feastings and pageantry.<sup>1</sup>

But the arrival and suggestions of Flambard awakened his ambition, and turned his thoughts from pleasure to war. His vassals professed their eagerness to fight under a prince who had gained laurels in the Holy Land; tenders of assistance were received from England; and a powerful force of men-at-arms, archers, and footmen, was ordered to assemble in the neighbourhood of Tréport. On the English barons who had engaged to espouse his cause, Robert de Bellême, William de Warenne, Ivo de Grand-Mesnil, and Walter Giffard, he bestowed some of the strongest fortresses in Normandy. His object was to secure their co-operation; but he had reason to regret a measure which weakened his power and ultimately caused his ruin.

Henry beheld with disquietude the preparations of his brother; but trembled still more at the well-known disaffection of his barons. At Whitsuntide he held his court; every petition was granted; the charter was renewed; and in the hands of Anselm, as the representative of the nation, the king swore faithfully to fulfil all his engagements. His army was collected at Pevensey, on the coast of Sussex: Robert, conducted by the mariners, whom Flambard had debauched from their allegiance, reached the harbour of Portsmouth. To secure the city of Winchester became to each prince an object of the first

<sup>1</sup> Sibylla died in 1102 of poison, administered, it was believed, by Agnes, dowager countess of Buckingham, who, as she possessed the affections, was also ambitious to share the honours of the duke.

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importance. Though Robert was nearer, he was delayed by the debarkation of his troops, and Henry overtook him on his march.<sup>1</sup>

The spirit of revolt was again awakened among the Anglo-Norman barons; but the natives remained faithful to Henry, and Anselm devoted himself to his interests. He harangued the troops on the duty of allegiance, recalled from the camp of Robert some of the deserters, confirmed the wavering loyalty of others, and threatened the invaders with the sentence of excommunication. After several fruitless and irritating messages, Henry demanded a conference with his brother. The two princes met in a vacant space between the armies, conversed for a few minutes, and embraced as friends. The terms of reconciliation were immediately adjusted. Robert renounced all claim to the crown of England, and obtained in return a yearly pension of three thousand marks, the cession of all the castles which Henry possessed in Normandy, with the exception of Damfront, and the revocation of the judgment of forfeiture, which William had pronounced against his adherents. It was moreover stipulated that both princes should unite to punish their respective enemies, and that if either died without legitimate issue, the survivor should be his heir. Twelve barons on each side swore to enforce the observance of these articles.

It was not, however, in the disposition of Henry to forget or forgive. Prevented by the treaty from chastising the public disaffection of his Anglo-Norman barons, he sought pretexts of revenge in their private conduct. Spies were appointed to watch them on their demesnes, and in their intercourse with their vassals: charges of real or pretended transgressions were repeatedly brought against them in the king's court,<sup>2</sup> and each obnoxious nobleman in his turn was, justly or unjustly, pronounced a criminal and an outlaw. Of the great families, the descendants of the warriors who had fought with the Conqueror, the most powerful successively disappeared; and in opposition to the others, Henry's jealousy selected from the needy followers of the court, men, whom he enriched with the spoils of the proscribed, and raised to an equality with the proudest of their rivals. To these he looked as to the strongest bulwarks of his throne; for since they owed their fortunes to his bounty, their own interest, if not their gratitude, would bind them firmly to his support.

## ROBERT DE BELLÊME

Among the outlaws were Robert Malet, Ivo de Grand-Mesnil, Warenne, earl of Surrey, William, earl of Mortain and Cornwall, and Robert de Bellême, earl of Shrewsbury. The last, the son of the great Montgomery, deserves some notice. He was the most powerful subject in England, haughty, rapacious, and deceitful. In these vices he might have many equals: in cruelty he rose pre-eminent among the savages of the age. He preferred the death to the ransom of his captives; it was his delight to feast his eyes with the contortions of the victims, men and women, whom he had ordered to be impaled: he is even said to have torn out the eyes of his godson with his own hands, because the father of the boy had committed some trivial offence,

[Ramsay<sup>1</sup> says that Queen Matilda was at Winchester expecting her confinement, and that, scorning to attack a lady, and his own goddaughter, under such circumstances, Robert turned aside from Winchester and directed his march towards London. At any rate, he soon found himself face to face with Henry.]

<sup>2</sup>This was the great merit of the Conqueror and his sons. They compelled the barons to decide their controversies in the king's court, instead of waging war against each other.



and had escaped from his vengeance. Against this monster, not from motives of humanity but of policy, Henry had conceived the most violent hatred. He was cited before the king's court: the conduct of his officers in Normandy as well as in England, his words no less than his actions, were severely scrutinised; and a long list of five-and-forty offences was objected to him by his accusers. The earl, according to custom, obtained permission to retire, that he might consult his friends: but instantly mounted his horse, fled to his earldom, summoned his retainers, and boldly bade defiance to the power of his prosecutor.

Henry cheerfully accepted the challenge, and began the war with the investment of the castle of Arundel, which, after a siege of three months, surrendered by capitulation. Bellême, in the interval, had fortified Bridgenorth, on the left bank of the Severn, and placed in it a garrison of seven hundred men; but the townsmen, intimidated by the menaces of the king, rose upon their defenders, and opened the gates to the royal forces. Shrewsbury still remained in his possession. From that city to Bridgenorth the country was covered with wood, and the only road ran through a narrow defile between two mountains, the declivities of which he had lined with his archers. Henry ordered the infantry, sixty thousand men, to open a passage: in a few days the trees were felled, and a safe and spacious road conducted the king to the walls of Shrewsbury. At his arrival despair induced Bellême to come forth on foot: he offered the keys of the place to the conqueror, and surrendered himself at discretion. His life was spared, but he was compelled to quit the kingdom, and to promise upon oath never to return without the royal permission.<sup>b</sup>

The country now reaped the fruits of Henry's determined policy of suppression of the great barons. Over all England went up the joyful cry, "Rejoice, King Henry, and return thanks to the Lord God, for you became a free king on the day when you reduced Robert de Bellême to subjection and drove him out of your kingdom." After the earl's banishment, Ordericus<sup>c</sup> tells us "the realm of Albion enjoyed peace and tranquillity, and during the thirty-three years of Henry's subsequent reign no one afterwards dared to revolt in England, nor hold any fortress against him." But Englishmen were not allowed to forget how to fight, and the continental wars of the king furnished a sufficient training in the use of arms to the rising generation.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE BATTLE OF TINCHEBRAY

Hitherto Duke Robert had religiously observed the conditions of peace. He had, even on the first notice of Bellême's rebellion, ravaged the Norman estates of that nobleman. Sensible, however, that the real crime of the outlaws was their former attachment to his interest, he unexpectedly came to England at the solicitation of the earl of Surrey, and incautiously trusted himself to the generosity of an unfeeling brother. He was received indeed with a smile of affection, but soon found that he was in reality a captive: instead of interceding in favour of others, he was reduced to treat for his own liberty; and as the price of his ransom, gladly resigned his annuity of three thousand marks, which, to save the honour of the two princes, was received as a present by the queen Matilda. After such treatment Robert could not doubt of the hostility of his brother; and in his own defence he sought the friendship and accepted the services of the outlaw Bellême, who still possessed thirty-four castles in Normandy. Henry received the intelli-

[1105-1106 A.D.]

gence with pleasure, pronounced the alliance between himself and Robert at an end, accepted, perhaps procured, invitations from the enemies of the duke, and resolved to transfer the Norman coronet to his own head. He had even the effrontery to assume credit for the purity of his motives, and to hold himself out as the saviour of an afflicted country. It may, indeed, be that the duke was weak and improvident, and that he suffered his barons to wage war on each other, and to inflict every species of calamity on his subjects.

Still it will be difficult to believe that it was a hope to relieve the distresses of his countrymen, and not a desire to annex Normandy to his dominions, which induced Henry to unsheathe the sword against his unfortunate brother. The first campaign passed without any important result: in the second the fate of Normandy was decided before the walls of Tinchebray (September 28, 1106). The king had besieged that fortress, and Robert approached with all his forces to its relief.<sup>b</sup>

Henry was strong in his infantry, both English and Norman. There was some negotiation before the decisive battle, which took place on the 28th of September, the anniversary of William the Conqueror's landing at Hastings. When the ranks met, "the troops were thronged so closely, and their weapons so locked together, that it was out of their power to injure each other, and both parties in turn attempted in vain to break the impenetrable phalanx."<sup>c</sup>

The details of the battle are rather meagre, beyond this curious circumstance related by Ordericus. One of Henry's chaplains, Baudri (or Waldric), took the duke prisoner, after he had gallantly fought with unequal numbers. The contest was over.<sup>1</sup> Amongst other prisoners was Eadgar Ætheling, who passed the remainder of his eventful life in England, without molestation, an object of pity rather than of fear. The deposed Duke Robert was kept a prisoner in Cardiff castle. Eleven years later, Pope Calixtus met King Henry at Gisors; and when exhorted by the pontiff to release his brother, said, "I have not caused him to be bound in fetters like a captive enemy, but treating him like a noble pilgrim worn by long sufferings, I have placed him in a royal castle, and supplied his tables and wardrobe with all kinds of luxuries." We may believe in the luxuries or not; but there are entries in the accounts called the Pipe Rolls, which show that in 1111 the count of Normandy, as he is termed, was supplied with new clothes.

The story of his eyes being put out by the organs of sight being seared over a red-hot basin rests upon no contemporary authority. William of Malmesbury, who wrote whilst Duke Robert was alive, says "he endured no evil but solitude, if that can be called solitude where, by the attention of his keepers, he was provided with abundance both of amusement and of food. He was confined, however, till he had survived all his companions in the crusade, and whether he ever will be set free is doubtful." In another manuscript of Malmesbury's chronicle we find this reading: "nor was he liberated till the day of his death." That release from a captivity of twenty-eight years arrived in 1135.<sup>k</sup>

In the course of a few weeks Bellême, through the interest of Hélie de la Flèche, obtained permission to retain a portion of his estates; and Flambarb purchased, with the surrender of Lisieux, the restoration of his bishopric. Henry summoned the Norman barons to that city, where he was acknowledged duke without opposition.

[<sup>1</sup> "The point at issue from the beginning," says Stubbs,<sup>h</sup> in remarking on the importance of the victory of Tinchebray, "had not been the English crown, but the power of enforcing obedience on those Norman barons without whose submission neither country could be at peace."]

## HENRY AND ANSELM

While the king had thus been employed in chastising his enemies, and stripping an unfortunate brother of his dominions, he was engaged in a less successful quarrel with Anselm and the court of Rome concerning the right of investiture. According to ancient practice, the election of bishops had generally depended on the testimony of the clergy and people and the suffrage of the provincial prelates. But the lapse of years, and the conversion of the barbarous nations, had introduced important innovations into this church of ecclesiastical polity. The tenure of clerical was assimilated to that of lay property; the sovereign assumed the right of approving of the prelate elect; and the new bishop or abbot, like the baron or knight, was compelled to swear fealty and to do homage to his superior lord. The pretensions of the crown were gradually extended. As it was the interest of the prince that the spiritual fiefs should not fall into the hands of his enemies, he reserved to himself the right of nomination; and in virtue of that right *invested* the individual whom he had nominated, with the ring and crosier, the acknowledged emblems of episcopal and abbatial jurisdiction.

The church had observed with jealousy these successive encroachments on her privileges: in the general councils of Nicaea in 787, and of Constantinople in 869, the nomination of bishops by lay authority had been condemned: in 1067 the former prohibitions were renewed by Gregory VII, and ten years afterwards Victor III in a synod at Beneventum added the sentence of excommunication both against the prince who should presume to exercise the right of investiture, and the prelate who should condescend to receive his temporalities on such conditions. But it was in vain that the thunders of the church were directed against a practice enforced by sovereigns, who refused to surrender a privilege enjoyed by their predecessors, and defended by prelates who were indebted to it for their wealth and importance. The contest between the two powers continued during half a century; nor was it without mutual concessions that claims so contradictory could be amicably adjusted.

It should, however, be remembered that the right for which the sovereigns contended had at this period degenerated into a most pernicious abuse. William Rufus, for his own profit, refused on many occasions to fill the vacant benefices, and on others degraded the dignities of the church by prostituting them to the highest bidder. In France and Germany similar evils existed even to a greater extent. In Normandy the indigence of Robert had suggested an improvement on the usual practice, by selling the reversion of bishoprics in favour of children, and granting for a proportionate sum more than one diocese to the same prelate. Every good man was anxious to suppress these abuses; and the zeal of the pontiffs was stimulated by the more virtuous of the episcopal order. Amongst these we must number Anselm. During his exile he had assisted at the councils of Bari and Rome, in which the custom of investiture had been again condemned, and the sentence of excommunication against the guilty had been renewed. At his first interview with Henry, he intimated in respectful terms his inflexible resolution to observe the discipline approved in these synods; and the king avowed an equally fixed determination to retain, what he conceived to be, the lawful prerogative of his crown.

He stood, however, at that moment, on very slippery ground. Without the aid of the primate he knew not how to put down the partisans, or to



[1106-1108 A.D.]

resist the forces of his brother Robert; it was more prudent to dissemble than to throw the clergy into the arms of his competitor; and by mutual consent the controversy was suspended, till an answer could be procured from the pope; which answer, as both had foreseen, was unfavourable to the pretensions of the monarch. It would exhaust the patience of the reader to descend into the particulars of this dispute; to notice all the messages that were sent to Rome, and the answers returned to England; the artifices that were employed to deceive, and the expedients suggested to mollify Anselm. At last, by the king's request, he undertook, aged and infirm as he was, a journey to Italy, to lay the whole controversy before the pontiff; on his return he received an order to remain in banishment till he should be willing to submit to the royal pleasure. The exile retired to his friend the archbishop of Lyons, under whose hospitable roof he spent the three following years. In the interval Henry was harassed by the entreaties of his barons and the murmurs



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of the people; his sister Adela, countess of Blois, and his queen, Matilda, importuned him to be reconciled to the primate; and Paschal II, who had already excommunicated his advisers, admonished him that in a few weeks the same sentence would be pronounced against himself.

The king, who was not prepared to push the dispute to this extremity, discovered a willingness to relent. Anselm met him at the abbey of Bee (1108); and both, in the true spirit of conciliation, consented to abandon a part of their pretensions. As fealty and homage were civil duties, it was agreed that they should be exacted from every clergyman before he received his temporalities: as the ring and crosier were considered to denote spiritual jurisdiction, to which the king acknowledged that he had no claim, the collation of these emblems was suppressed. On the whole the church gained little by the compromise. It might check but did not abolish the principal abuse. If Henry surrendered an unnecessary ceremony, he still retained the substance. The right which he assumed of nominating bishops and abbots was left unimpaired, and though he promised not to appropriate to himself the revenues of the vacant benefices, he never hesitated to violate his engagement.<sup>b</sup>

"Whether this settlement would work in favour of the king or the clergy," says Gardiner, "depended on the character of the kings and the clergy. If the

kings were as riotous as the Red King, and the clergy as self-denying as Anselm, the clergy would grow strong in spite of these arrangements. If the kings were as just and wise as Henry, and the clergy as wicked as Ralph Flambard, all advantage would be on the side of the king."<sup>m</sup>

#### AFFAIRS IN NORMANDY

At the time of the battle of Tinchebray Duke Robert had a son five years old, who had been brought up at Falaise. When Henry took possession of the place the little boy was led to him. This possible heir of two kingdoms bore the name of his grandfather; and the William of five years old shrank with terror from his conquering uncle. Henry used no violence to the child, but committed him to an honest guardianship. The king appears, in another year, to have repented of his honesty, and to have desired to get the young prince into his power. But Hélie de Saint-Saens fled with his charge, and put him under the protection of Louis, king of France, and Fulk, count of Anjou. As the boy grew, the interests connected with him became more complicated. He was at first patronised, and afterwards cast off by the count of Anjou. The king of France used him as an instrument to check the growing power of Henry.

At length there was open war between France and Normandy, and in 1119 was fought the battle of Noyon, or Brenneville (Brémule), a place on the road from Rouen to Paris. Louis was here defeated, and fled. The battle was not a sanguinary one, and was remarkable for the comparative safety with which the horsemen in complete harness encountered each other. Ordericus says: "In the battle between the two kings, in which nearly nine hundred knights were engaged, I have ascertained that three only were slain. This arose from their being entirely covered with steel armour, and mutually sparing each other for the fear of God, and out of regard for the fraternity of arms." The knights might spare each other, but the people were little spared. The chronicler adds, "The whole country was a desert in consequence of the wars which raged so furiously." Huntingdon, under the same date, records that "this year the English were grievously burdened with continual taxes and various exactions occasioned by the king's wants."

In 1118 the "good queen Maud" died. Henry was probably not inconsolable; for she had long retired to the monastery of Westminster, where she spent her revenues in the relief of the sick and in acts of penitential piety. Her daughter Matilda had been betrothed to the emperor of Germany in 1108, and was married in 1114; and the king, on the feudal principle, taxed every hide in England three shillings upon that occasion. The story of the son's death has presently to be related.

In 1119, William the Ætheling—the Saxon title being still applied to the heir to the crown—was married to the daughter of Fulk, count of Anjou. The young prince remained in Normandy, and peace having been restored between Henry and the king of France, did homage to that king, Louis the Fat, for the fief of Normandy. At this season there was a general amity, and the most horrible violations of the rights of humanity appear to have left no enduring remorse, and to have presented no impediment to such friendships as the strong may form with the weak. The king of England had many illegitimate daughters, and one was married to Eustace de Breteuil. There had been deadly enmity between the king and his son-in-law, in which his daughter partook with a passion which demands excuse and pity.

[1118-1120 A.D.]

In 1118 Eustace and the king had a dispute about the castle of Ivry; but Henry was desirous to retain the allegiance of Eustace, and it was agreed that hostages should be exchanged. Ralph Harenc, the commander of the fortress, gave his son to Eustace, and Eustace gave his two little daughters to the custody of Henry. The quarrel was not made up, and the count of Breteuil, with a savageness which is even wonderful in that age of ferocity, put out the eyes of the innocent boy. Ralph Harenc, in a transport of rage, presented himself to the king and demanded vengeance. Henry, without hesitation, gave up his two granddaughters. Was that stern heart torn with agony at the danger of these helpless little ones? Or did the honour of chivalry extinguish all natural emotion? The children were sacrificed to the revenge of Ralph Harenc. But the mother's injuries were too deep for a common indignation. She had undertaken the defence of Breteuil in the absence of her husband. The king pressed the siege. Juliana appeared on the walls, and demanded a conference with her father; and when he appeared she launched a bolt at him from a cross-bow. Henry, who was unhurt, broke down the drawbridge, so that escape was difficult. But Juliana dropped from the wall into the fosse, on a freezing night in February. In 1119, when Henry was everywhere victorious, Eustace and his wife knelt before the king in his tent, and there was reconciliation and forgiveness.<sup>k</sup>

## THE WHITE SHIP

An end was put to the war through the praiseworthy mediation of the pope,<sup>1</sup> who, however, laboured in vain to procure a mitigation of the severity exercised on Duke Robert, and a proper settlement for his son William. By this treaty of peace Henry was to preserve undisturbed possession of Normandy; and his pride was saved by Louis consenting to receive the homage due to him for the duchy from the son instead of the father. This son, Prince William, who was in his eighteenth year, had received the oaths of the Norman nobles, as also the hand of his bride, a child only twelve years old, whose father, Fulk of Anjou, had given her a considerable dower.

King Henry now resolved to return triumphantly to England. The place of embarkation was Barfleur. The double retinue of the king and prince-royal was most numerous; and some delay was caused by the providing of accommodation and means of transport for so many noble personages, among whom were counted we scarcely know how many illegitimate children and mistresses of the king. On the 25th of November (1120), however, all was ready, and the sails were joyously bent, as for a short and pleasant voyage. Thomas Fitz-Stephen, a mariner of some repute, presented himself to the king, and tendering a golden mark, said: "Stephen, my father, served yours all his life by sea, and he it was who steered the ship in which your father sailed for the conquest of England. Sire king, I beg you to grant me the same office in fief: I have a vessel called the *Blanche-Nef*, well equipped and manned with fifty skilful mariners." The king replied that he had already chosen a vessel for himself, but that, in order to accede to the prayer of Fitz-Stephen, he would confide to his care the prince, with his companions and attendants. Henry then embarked, and setting sail in the afternoon with a favourable wind, reached the English coast in safety on the following morning.

The prince was accompanied in the *Blanche-Nef*, or "White Ship," by his half-brother Richard; his half-sister the Lady Marie, countess of Perche;

<sup>1</sup> Calixtus II. He was related by marriage to King Henry.



Richard, earl of Chester, and his wife, the king's niece; with a host of gay young nobles, both of Normandy and of England, all these and their retainers amounting, with the crew, to about three hundred persons. On such occasions it was usual to regale the mariners with a little wine, but the prince, and the young men with him, imprudently ordered three whole casks of wine to be distributed among the men, who "drank out their wits and reason." The captain had a sailor's pride in the speed of his craft and the qualities of his crew, and, though hours passed away, he promised to overtake every ship that had sailed before him. The prince certainly did not press his departure, for he spent some hours on deck in feasting and dancing with his company. A few prudent persons quitted the disorderly vessel and went on shore. Night had set in before the *Blanche-Nef* started from her moorings, but it was a bright moonlight, and the wind, though it had freshened somewhat, was still fair and gentle. Fitz-Stephen, proud of his charge, held the helm; every sail was set, and, still to increase the speed, the fifty sturdy mariners, encouraged by their boyish passengers, plied the oars with all their vigour. As they proceeded coastwise they got engaged among some rocks at a spot called Ras de Catte (now Ras de Gatteville), and the White Ship struck on one of these with such violence on her larboard side that several planks were started, and she instantly began to fill.

A cry of alarm and horror was raised at once by three hundred voices, and was heard on board some of the king's ships that had gained the high sea, but nobody there suspected the cause. Fitz-Stephen lowered a boat, and putting the prince with some of his companions in it, advised them to row for the shore and save themselves. This would not have been difficult, for the sea was smooth, and the coast at no great distance; but his sister, Marie, had been left behind in the ship, and her shrieks touched the heart of the prince—the best or most generous deed of whose life seems to have been his last. He ordered the boat to be put back to take her in; but such numbers leaped into it at the same time as the lady that it was upset or swamped, and all in it perished. The ship also went down with all on board. Only two men escaped by rising and clinging to the main-yard, which floated; one of these was a butcher of Rouen, named Berold, the other a young man of higher condition, the son of Gilbert de l'Aigle. Fitz-Stephen, the unfortunate captain, seeing the heads of two men clinging to the yard, swam to them. "And the king's son," said he, "what has happened to him?" "He is gone! neither he, nor his brother, nor his sister, nor any person of his company has appeared above water." "Woe to me!" cried Fitz-Stephen; and then plunged to the bottom. The night was cold, and the young nobleman became exhausted; and after holding on for some hours let go the yard, and sank to the bottom of the sea.

The butcher of Rouen, the poorest of all those who had embarked in the White Ship, wrapped in his sheepskin coat, held on till morning, when he was seen from the shore and saved by some fishermen; and from him, the sole survivor, the circumstances of the fearful event were learned. The tidings reached England in the course of the following day, but no one would venture on communicating them to the king. For three days the courtiers concealed the fact, and at last they sent in a little boy, who, weeping bitterly with "no counterfeit passion," fell at his feet, and told him that the White Ship was lost, and that all on board had perished. The hard heart of Henry was not proof to this shock—he sank to the ground in a swoon; and though he survived it many years, he was never afterwards seen to smile. By the people at large the death of the young prince was regarded with satisfaction; for indepen-

[1121-1126 A.D.]

dently of his hateful vices, by which he had utterly forfeited their sympathy, he had been often heard to threaten that he would yoke the English natives to the plough, and treat them like beasts of burden, when he became king.<sup>d</sup>

## HENRY'S PLANS FOR THE SUCCESSION; HIS CHARACTER

In 1121, King Henry married Adelaide, the daughter of the count of Louvain and duke of Lower Lorraine. They had no issue. The unhappy death of Prince William excited renewed attention to the claims of his cousin, William Clito, the son of Robert. He seemed destined to the throne of England. Fulk of Anjou affianced the Norman prince to his daughter. But Henry set in motion all his instruments of policy and succeeded in preventing the marriage. His enemies in Normandy took up the cause of the son of Robert, and the king of France bestowed on him the hand of his sister-in-law. Finally he succeeded to the countship of Flanders. He was now in a position of great power and prosperity, and stood in the way of the far-seeing designs of the king of England. Henry's only legitimate child, Matilda, was destined by him to inherit his greatness. Matilda, the empress of Germany, had become a widow in 1124; and at the Christmas of 1126, a solemn assembly at Windsor, of nobles, and bishops, and the great tenants of the crown, it was declared that the ex-empress was the next heir, failing any future legitimate male issue to the king. They then all swore to maintain her succession; and amongst the nobles who took the oath was Stephen, count of Boulogne, the son of Adela, the daughter of the Conqueror, and Robert, earl of Gloucester, the illegitimate son of Henry. David, king of Scotland, who was present as an English earl, also swore to maintain the succession of his niece Matilda. That Christmas Day of 1126 was to be fruitful of years of calamity for England.<sup>h</sup>



CHRISTCHURCH, HANTS  
(Twelfth century)

Thus, by an act without precedent either in his kingdom or his duchy, Henry procured that homage should be done to his daughter as his successor. No more striking comment can be needed as to the growth of the new ideas of kingship. The crown was coming to be so thoroughly looked on as a possession that it was deemed that it might pass to a woman. On the other hand no settlement could be more opposed to modern ideas of hereditary right. When homage was first done to Matilda, Robert's son, William, who according to modern notions was the direct heir of the Conqueror, was still living. But in the lack of legitimate male heirs, the choice either of the king's natural son

Robert or of his sister's son Stephen would have been much less opposed to earlier ideas, both English and Norman, than the succession of Matilda.<sup>n</sup>

Fulk, the count of Anjou, had surrendered his European states to his eldest son Geoffrey Plantagenet, for he had accepted the higher dignity of king of Jerusalem. An alliance with the Plantagenets was one of the great objects of Henry's ambition, and he negotiated a marriage of Matilda with the young earl. Their nuptials were solemnised at Rouen at the Whitsuntide of 1127. This marriage of policy was not a happy one. The king had constantly to interfere between the husband and wife. Matilda had much of her father's imperious spirit; and Geoffrey made demands which Henry resisted. There was deep enmity between them. But in 1133 Matilda bore a son, Henry. The oaths to maintain the succession were renewed. Before this period, however, the king had been freed from much disquiet, by the death of his nephew, William, the count of Flanders, who was wounded under the walls of Alost in 1128, in a revolt headed by the count of Alsace, and fomented, no doubt, by the intrigues of the English king.<sup>k</sup>

In 1135 Henry died. His character has been diversely estimated both by his contemporaries and by modern historians. But he was a strong ruler beyond any doubt, and in comparison with the stormy years of anarchy and misrule that followed, his reign was indeed a period of peace and happiness for England; in comparison with the wilful lawlessness of William Rufus and the weakness and incapability of Stephen he well deserves the appellation of the "lion of justice." "He was a good man," says the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*,<sup>i</sup> "and great was the awe of him; no man durst ill-treat another in his time; he made peace for man and deer." "From the eighth year of his reign," writes Ordericus,<sup>g</sup> "in which he acquired firm hold on power on both sides of the sea, he always sought peace for the nations under him, and rigidly punished with austere measures the transgressors of the law." The great constitutional historian, Bishop Stubbs, strikes a happy balance in his judicious estimate. "He was," writes Stubbs,<sup>h</sup> "it is evident, a strong ruler, with a clear view of his own interests, methodical, sagacious, and far-sighted: his selfish aims dictated the policy that gave peace and order to his people; destroying his enemies, he destroyed theirs, and by enforcing order he paved the way for law. Such a king neither expects nor deserves love; but he is regarded with a mixed feeling of confidence and awe, and the result of his rule is better than that of many who are called benefactors."<sup>a</sup>

#### STEPHEN OF BLOIS (1135 A.D.)

Scarcely was Henry I dead, when events proved how fruitless were all his pains and precautions to secure the succession to his daughter. There were several capital obstacles to bar the avenues of the throne to Matilda. The first was her sex. Since the time of the ancient Britons, England had never obeyed a female sovereign. In the same manner, the Normans had never known a female reign. To hold their fiefs "under the distaff" (as it was called) was considered humiliating to a nobility whose business was war, and whose king was little else than the first of many warriors.

Accordingly a loud and general cry was raised by the Anglo-Norman and Norman barons that it would be most disgraceful for so many noble knights to obey the orders of a woman. These all but insurmountable objections would not hold good against her son Henry; but that prince was an infant not yet four years old, and regencies under a long minority were as incompatible



[1135 A.D.]

with the spirit and condition of the times as a female reign. It was something, however, to have confined the right of succession to the legitimately born, for if the case had occurred a little earlier in England, the natural son of the king, Robert, earl of Gloucester, might possibly have been elected without scruple.

No one was better acquainted with the spirit of the times and the obstacles raised against Matilda and Earl Robert than the ambitious Stephen, nephew of the late king. Henry had been unusually bountiful to this nephew. He married him to Maud, daughter and heir of Eustace, count of Boulogne, who brought him, in addition to the feudal sovereignty of Boulogne, immense estates in England. By this marriage Stephen also acquired another close connection with the royal family of England, and a new hold upon the sympathies of the English, as his wife Maud was of the old Saxon stock, being the only child of Mary of Scotland, sister to David, the reigning king, as also to the good queen Maud, the first wife of Henry, and mother of the empress Matilda. Still further to aggrandise this favourite nephew, Henry conferred upon him the great estate forfeited by Robert Mallet in England, and that forfeited by the earl of Mortain in Normandy. He also brought over Stephen's younger brother Henry, who, being a churchman, was created abbot of Glastonbury and bishop of Winchester.

Stephen had resided much in England, and had rendered himself exceedingly popular both to the Normans and the people of Saxon race. The barons and knights admired him for his undoubted bravery and activity—the people for his generosity, the beauty of his person, and his affable, familiar manners. He was the popular favourite in the already important and fast-rising city of London before Henry's death. When that event happened he was nearer England than Matilda, whose rights he had long determined to dispute. Taking advantage of his situation, he crossed the Channel immediately, and though the gates of Dover and Canterbury were shut against him, he was received in London with enthusiastic joy, the populace saluting him as king without waiting for the formalities of the election and consecration. The first step to the English throne in those days, as we have seen in the cases of Rufus and Henry, was to get possession of the royal treasury at Winchester. Stephen's own brother was bishop of Winchester, and by his assistance he got the keys into his hands. The treasure consisted of £100,000 in money, besides plate and jewels of great value. His episcopal brother was otherwise of the greatest use, being mainly instrumental in winning over Roger, bishop of Salisbury, then chief justiciar and regent of the kingdom, and William Corbeil, archbishop of Canterbury. Bishop Roger was easily gained through his constant craving after money; but the primate was not assailable on that side. It was therefore thought necessary to practise a deception upon him, and Hugh Bigod, steward of the late household, made oath before him that the king on his death-bed had adopted and chosen his nephew, Stephen, to be his heir and successor, because his daughter the empress had grievously offended him by her recent conduct. After hearing Bigod's oath, the archbishop seems to have floated quietly with the current, without offering either resistance or remonstrance. Some scruples may have remained, but no opposition was offered to his election, and on the 26th of December, being St. Stephen's Day, Stephen was hallowed and crowned at Westminster by the primate, William Corbeil.

Immediately after his coronation he went to Reading, to attend the burial of the body of his uncle, King Henry, and from Reading abbey he proceeded to Oxford, where he summoned a great council of the prelates, abbots, and lay-barons of the kingdom, that he might receive their oaths of allegiance,

and consult with them on the affairs of the state. When the assembly met, he allowed the clergy to annex a condition, which, as they were sure to assume the right of interpretation, rendered their oaths less binding even than usual. They swore to obey him as their king, so long as he should preserve their church liberties and the vigour of discipline, and no longer. The confirmation of the pope soon followed. The letter of Innocent II, which ratified Stephen's title, was brief and clear. Stephen seems to have laid stress on his election as king, "with the consent of the clergy and people," and on the confirmation

granted him by the pope. He promised to redress all grievances, and grant to the people all the good laws and good customs of Edward the Confessor.

Whatever were his natural inclinations, the circumstances in which he was placed, and the villainous instruments with which he had to work, from the beginning to the end of his troubled reign, put it wholly out of his power to keep the promises he had made, and the condition of the English people became infinitely worse under him than it had been under Henry, or even under Rufus. A concession which he made to the lay barons contributed largely to the frightful anarchy which ensued. To secure their affections and to strengthen himself, as he thought, against the empress, he granted them all permission to fortify their castles and build new ones; and these, almost without an exception, became dens of thieves and cut-throats. At first, probably on account of the large sum of money he had in hand to meet demands, all went on in great peace



STEPHEN, KING OF ENGLAND  
(1105-1154)

and harmony; and the court which the new king held in London during the festival of Easter, in the first year of his reign, was more splendid, and better attended in every respect, than any that had yet been seen in England.

Nor were the prelates and barons in Normandy more averse to the succession of Stephen than their brethren in England. There was an hereditary animosity between Normandy and Anjou, so that when Geoffrey Plantagenet, count of Anjou, marched into the duchy to assert the rights of his wife Matilda, he and his Angevins met with a determined opposition, and he was, soon after, glad to conclude a peace or truce for two years with Stephen, on condition of receiving during that time an annual pension of five thousand marks. When Stephen appeared on the Continent the Normans swore allegiance, and Louis VII formed an alliance by contracting his young sister Constance with Eustace, Stephen's son, and, as suzerain, granted the investiture of Normandy to Eustace, who was then a mere child.

During the first year of Stephen's reign England was disturbed only by the revolt of the earl of Exeter, who was discontented with his share in the new king's liberalities; and by a Scottish incursion made into the northern counties in support of Matilda by her uncle King David, who, however, was bought off for the present by the grant of the lordship of Huntingdon and the castle of Carlisle.

[1137-1138 A.D.]

## ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER

Robert, earl of Gloucester, the late king's natural son, merged his own pretensions to the crown in those of his half-sister Matilda. Pretending to be reconciled to his rule, he came over from the Continent (1137) and took the oaths of fealty and homage to Stephen, by the performance of which ceremony he obtained possession of his vast estates in England. The first use he made of the advantages the oaths procured him was to intrigue with the nobles in favour of his half-sister. The happy calm in which England lay did not last long after the earl of Gloucester's arrival. Several of the barons, alleging their services had not met with due reward, began to seize different parts of the royal demesne, which they said Stephen had promised them. Hugh Bigod, who had sworn that King Henry had appointed Stephen his successor, and who probably put a high price on his perjury, was foremost among the disaffected, and seized Norwich Castle. Other royal castles were besieged and taken, or were treacherously surrendered. They were nearly all soon retaken by the king, but the spirit of revolt was rife among the nobles, and the sedition, suppressed in one spot, burst forth in others. Stephen, however, was lenient and merciful beyond all precedent to the vanquished.

The earl of Gloucester, having settled with his friends the plan of a most extensive insurrection, and induced the Scottish king to promise another invasion of England, withdrew beyond sea, and sent a letter of defiance to Stephen, in which he formally renounced his homage. Other great barons—all pleading that Stephen had not given them enough, nor extended their privileges as he had promised—fell from his side, and withdrew to their castles, which by his permission they had already strongly fortified. He was abandoned, like Shakespeare's Macbeth, but his soul was as high as that usurper's. "The traitors!" he cried, "they themselves made me a king, and now they fall from me; but by God's birth, they shall never call me a deposed king!"

## THE BATTLE OF THE STANDARD (1138 A.D.)

While he was engaged with the revolted barons in the south, King David of Scotland, true to his promise, gathered his forces together from every part of his dominions—from the Lowlands, the Highlands, and the Isles—from the great promontory of Galloway, the Cheviot Hills, and from that nursing-place of hardy, lawless men, the Border-land between the two kingdoms—and crossing the Tweed (March, 1138), advanced boldly into Northumberland, riding with Prince Henry, his son and heir, at the head of as numerous, as mixed, and, in the main, as wild a host as ever trod this ground. These "Scottish ants," as Matthew of Paris<sup>8</sup> calls them, overran the whole of the country between the Tweed and the Tees. "As for the king of Scots himself," says the anonymous author of *Gesta Stephani*,<sup>8</sup> "he was a prince of a mild and merciful disposition; but the Scots were a barbarous and impure nation, and their king, leading hordes of them from the remotest parts of that land, was unable to restrain their wickedness." The Normans conciliated the English people of the north by a strong appeal to the local superstitions—they invoked the names of the saints of Saxon race whom they had been wont to treat with little respect; and the popular banners of St. Cuthbert of Durham (or, according to some, of St. Peter of York), St. John of Beverley, and St. Wilfrid of



Ripon, which had long lain dust-covered in the churches, were produced in the army, as the pledges and means of victory.

So rapid was the advance of King David that Stephen had not time to reach the scene of hostilities; and the defence of the north was, in a great measure, left to Thurstan or Toustain, archbishop of York, an infirm, decrepit old man, but whose warlike energies, address, and cunning were not affected by age and disease. It was mainly he who organised the army of defence, which was got together in a hurry, and though sickness prevented him from putting on his own coat of mail, he sent Ralph, the bishop of Durham, to represent him on the field of battle. As the Scots were already upon the Tees, the Anglo-Norman army drew up between that river and the Humber, choosing their own battle-field at Northallerton, about equidistant from York and Durham. Here they erected a remarkable standard, from which the battle has taken its name. A car upon four wheels was drawn to the centre of the position; the mast of a vessel was strongly fastened in the car; at the top of the mast a large crucifix was displayed, having in its centre a silver box containing the consecrated wafer; and, lower down, the mast was decorated with the banners of the three English saints. Around this sacred standard many of the English yeomanry and peasants from Yorkshire, Nottingham, and Lincolnshire, gathered of their own accord. These men were all armed with large bows and arrows two cubits long; they had the fame of being excellent archers, and the Normans gladly assigned them posts in the foremost and most exposed ranks of the army.

The Scots crossed the Tees in several divisions. Prince Henry commanded the first corps, which consisted of men from the Lowlands armed with cuirasses and long pikes; of archers from Teviotdale and Liddesdale; of troopers from the mountains of Cumberland and Westmoreland, mounted on small but strong and active horses; and of the fierce men of Galloway, who wore no defensive armour, and carried long thin pikes as their chief weapon of war. A body-guard of knights and men-at-arms under the command of Eustace Fitz-John, a nobleman of Norman descent, rode round the prince. The Highland clans and men of the isles came next, carrying a small round shield made of light wood covered with leather as their only defensive armour, and the claymore or broad-sword as their only weapon: some of the island tribes, however, wielded the old Danish battle-axe instead of the claymore. After these marched the king with a strong body of knights, who were all either of English or Norman extraction; and a mixed corps of men from various other parts of the land brought up the rear.

The rapid advance of the Scottish forces was covered by a dense fog; and they would have taken the Anglo-Norman army by surprise, had it not been for Robert de Bruce and Bernard de Baliol, two barons of Norman descent, who held lands both in Scotland and England, and who were anxious for the conclusion of an immediate peace. Having in vain argued with David, and hearing themselves called traitors by William, the king's nephew, they renounced the Scottish allegiance, bade defiance to the king, and putting spurs to their horses, galloped off to the camp at Northallerton, which they reached in good time to tell that the Scots were coming. At the sight and sound of the headlong and tumultuous approach of the Scots the bishop of Durham read the prayer of absolution from the standard-car, the Normans and the English kneeling on the ground the while, and rising to their feet and shouting "Amen" when it was finished.

The Scots came on with the simple war-cry of "Alban! Alban!" The desperate charge of the men of Galloway drove in the English infantry, and

[1138 A.D.]

broke for a moment the Norman centre. "They burst the enemy's ranks," says old Brompton,<sup>t</sup> "as if they had been but spiders' webs." Almost immediately after, both flanks of the Anglo-Normans were assailed by the mountaineers and the men of Teviotdale and Liddesdale; but these charges were not supported in time, and the Norman horse formed an impenetrable mass round the standard-car, and repulsed the Scots. During this fruitless effort of the enemy the English bowmen rallied, and took up good positions on the two wings of the Anglo-Norman army; and when the Scots renewed their attack on the centre, they harassed them with a double flank flight of arrows, while the Norman knights and men-at-arms received them in front on the points of their couched lances. The long thin pikes of the men of Galloway were shivered against the armour of the Normans, or broken by their heavy swords and battle-axes. The Highland clans, still shouting "Alban! Alban!" wielded their claymores, and fighting hand to hand, tried to cut their way through the mass of iron-cased chivalry. For full two hours did the Scots maintain the fight in front of the Norman host, and at one moment the gallant Prince Henry had nearly penetrated to the elevated standard; but at last, with broken spears and swords, they ceased to attack—paused, retreated, and then fled in confusion. The king, however, retained near his person, and in good order, his guards and some other troops, which covered the retreat, and gave several bloody checks to the Anglo-Normans who pursued.

Three days after, he rallied within the walls of Carlisle, and employed himself in collecting his scattered troops and organising a new army. He is said to have lost twelve thousand men at Northallerton. The Normans were not in a situation to pursue their advantages to any extent; and the Scots soon reassumed the offensive. The famous battle of the Standard<sup>1</sup> was fought on the 22d of August, 1138. The Scottish war was concluded in the following year by a treaty of peace, brought about by Alberic, bishop of Ostia, the pope's legate in England, and Stephen's wife, Maud, who had an interview with her uncle, King David, at Durham. Though the Scots were left in possession of Cumberland and Westmoreland, and Prince Henry invested with the earldom of Northumberland, the issue of the war dispirited the malcontents all over England, and might have given some stability to Stephen's throne, had he not, in an evil moment, roused the powerful hostility of the church.

#### ROGER OF SALISBURY

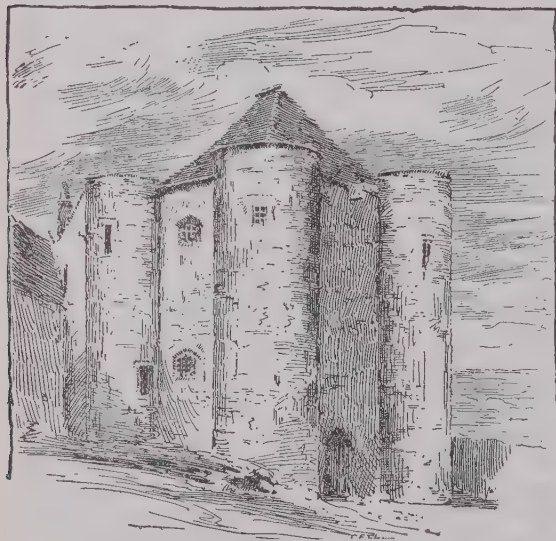
Roger, bishop of Salisbury, though no longer treasurer and justiciar, still possessed great influence in the nation, among laity as well as clergy—an influence not wholly arising out of his great wealth and political abilities, but in part owing to the use he made of his money, to his taste and munificence, and the superior learning of his family and adherents. "It was wonderful to behold," says Malmesbury,<sup>e</sup> "what abundant authority attended, and flowed, as it were, to his hand. He was sensible of his power, and somewhat more harshly than becomed such a character, abused the favour of heaven. Was there anything adjacent to his possessions which he desired, he would obtain it either by treaty or purchase; and if that failed, by force." He

[<sup>f</sup>"The battle of the Standard," says Freeman,<sup>o</sup> "is one of the most striking events in the history of the age. It is one of two or three great actions in the open field in a time when we hear much more of sieges and skirmishes than of pitched battles. And it is an action in which, as at Tinchebray, though the chiefs are Norman, the tactics are English. When the time for fighting comes the horsemen get down from their steeds and fight on foot."]

was in all things a most magnificent person, and one who extended his patronage to men of learning as well as to architects and other artists. He obtained the sees of Lincoln and Ely for his two nephews, Alexander and Nigel. Alexander, the bishop of Lincoln, who, though called his nephew, is significantly said to have been something nearer and dearer, had the same taste for raising splendid buildings; but Nigel, on the contrary, is said to have wasted his wealth on hawks and hounds. Bishop Roger, next to Stephen's own brother, the bishop of Winchester, had contributed more than any churchman to his elevation, and Stephen's consequent liberality for a long time knew no stint. It appeared, however, that his gifts were not the free offerings of gratitude, and that he treated the bishop as one does a sponge which is permitted to fill before it is squeezed. Roger was one of the castle-

builders of that turbulent period: all his stately mansions were, in fact, strongly fortified places, well garrisoned, and provided with warlike stores.

The pomp and power of this family had long excited the envy of Stephen's favourites, who had no great difficulty in persuading their master that Bishop Roger was on the point of betraying him, and espousing the interests of Matilda. Stephen's want of money now drove him into irregular courses, and he probably considered that the bishop's time was ripe. The king was holding his court at Oxford: the town was crowded with prelates and barons, with their numerous and dis-



YPRES CASTLE, RYE

(Erected as a watch-tower in the twelfth century)

orderly attendants; a quarrel, either accidental or preconcerted, arose between the bishop's retainers and those of the count of Brittany, concerning quarters, and swords being drawn on both sides, many men were wounded and one knight was killed. Stephen took advantage of the circumstance and ordered the arrest of the bishop and his nephews. Roger was seized in the king's own hall, and Alexander, the bishop of Lincoln, at his lodging in the town; but Nigel, the bishop of Ely, who had taken up his quarters in a house outside the town, escaped, and threw himself into Devizes, the strongest of all his uncle's castles. The two captives were confined in separate dungeons. The first charge laid against them was a flagrant violation of the king's peace within the precincts of his court; and for this they were assured that Stephen would accept of no atonement less than the unconditional surrender to him of all their castles. They at first refused, but at length surrendered the castles at Malmesbury, Sherborne, and Salisbury.

But the castle of Devizes, the most important of them all, remained; and the warlike bishop of Ely was prepared to bid defiance to the king. To



[1139 A.D.]

overcome this opposition, Stephen ordered Roger and the bishop of Lincoln to be kept without food till the castle should be given up. In case of a less direct appeal, the defenders of Devizes might have been obstinate or incredulous of the fact that Stephen was starving two bishops; but Roger himself, already pale and emaciated, was made to state his own hard fate, in front of his own castle, to his own nephew, whom he implored to surrender. Stephen, though far less cruel by nature than most of his contemporaries, was yet thought to be a man to keep his word in such a case as the present; this was felt by the bishop of Ely, who, overcoming his own haughty spirit, out of affection to his uncle, surrendered to save the lives of the captives after they had been three whole days in a fearful fast.

At these violent proceedings the whole body of the dignified clergy, including even his own brother Henry, the bishop of Winchester, who was now armed with the high powers of papal legate for all England, turned against Stephen, accusing him of sacrilege in laying violent hands on prelates. The legate Henry summoned his brother, the king, to appear before a synod of bishops assembled at Winchester. Stephen would not attend in person, but sent Alberic de Vere as his counsel to plead for him. As their temper was stern and uncompromising, De Vere appealed to the pope in the name of the king and dissolved the council, the knights with him drawing their swords to enforce his orders if necessary. The effects of this confirmed rupture were soon made visible. But Bishop Roger did not live to see the humiliation of Stephen; he was heart-broken; and when, in the following month of December, as the horrors of a civil war were commencing, he died at an advanced age, his fate was ascribed, not to the fever and ague, from which, in Malmesbury's words, he escaped by the kindness of death, but to grief and indignation for the injuries he had suffered. The plate and money which had been saved from the king's rapacity he devoted to the completion of his church at Salisbury, and he laid them upon the high altar, in the hope that Stephen might be restrained, by fear of sacrilege, from seizing them. But these were not times for delicate scruples, and they were carried off even before the old man's death. Their value was estimated at forty thousand marks. Bishop Roger was the Cardinal Wolsey of the twelfth century, and his fate, not less tragic than the cardinal's, made a deep impression on the minds of his contemporaries.

## THE LANDING OF MATILDA (1139 A.D.)

The synod of bishops held at Winchester was dissolved on the first day of September (1139), and towards the end of the same month Matilda landed in England with her half-brother, Robert, earl of Gloucester, and 140 knights. Stephen, by a rapid movement, presently surprised her in Arundel castle, where Adelaide, the queen-widow of Henry I, gave her shelter. Stephen had both in his power, but refining on the chivalrous notions to which he was inclined by nature more perhaps than suited good policy, he left Queen Adelaide undisturbed in her castle, and gave Matilda permission to go free and join her half-brother, Robert, who had repaired to the west country, where at the very moment he was collecting his friends to make war upon Stephen. The king's brother, the bishop of Winchester, escorted Matilda to Bristol, and delivered her safely to Earl Robert. Most of the chiefs in the north and the west renounced their allegiance to Stephen, and took fresh oaths to the empress. There was a moment of wavering, during which many of the barons in other parts of the kingdom weighed the chances of success, or tried both

parties, to ascertain which would grant the more ample recompense to their venal swords.

While this state of indecision lasted, men knew not who were to be their friends, or who their foes, in the coming struggle; "the neighbour," wrote Gervase of Canterbury,<sup>u</sup> "could put no faith in his nearest neighbour, nor the friend in his friend, nor the brother in his own brother;" but at last the more active chiefs chose their sides, the game was made up, and the horrors of civil war, which were to decide it, were let loose upon the land. Still, however, many of the barons kept aloof, and, strongly garrisoning their own castles, took the favourable opportunity of despoiling, torturing, and murdering their weak neighbours. The whole war was conducted in a frightful manner; but the greatest of the atrocities seem to have been committed by these separationists, who cared neither for Stephen nor Matilda, and who rarely, or never, took the field for either party. They waged war against one another, and besieged castles, and sacked farms, and seized the unprotected traveller, on their own account, and for their own private spite or advantage.

At first the fortune of the greater war inclined in favour of Stephen; for though he failed to take Bristol, the headquarters of Matilda and Earl Robert, he gained many advantages over their adherents in the west, and he defeated a formidable insurrection in the east, headed by Nigel, the bishop of Ely. Nigel fled to Gloucester, whither Matilda had transferred her standard; and while Stephen was still on the eastern coast, the flames of war were rekindled in all the west

#### THE BATTLE OF LINCOLN (1141 A.D.)

The cause of Stephen was never injured by any want of personal courage and rapidity of movement. From the east he returned to the west, and from the west marched again to the country of fens. The castle of Lincoln was in the hands of his enemies; but the townspeople were for Stephen, and assisted him in laying siege to the fortress. On the 2d of February, 1141, as Stephen was prosecuting this siege, the earl of Gloucester, who had got together an army ten thousand strong, swam across the Trent, and appeared in front of Lincoln. Stephen, however, was prepared to receive him: he had drawn out his forces in the best position, and, dismounting from his war-horse, he put himself at the head of his infantry. But his army was unequal in number, and contained many traitors; the whole of his cavalry deserted to the enemy, or fled at the first onset; and after he had fought most gallantly, and broken both his sword and battle-axe, Stephen was taken prisoner by the earl of Gloucester. Matilda was incapable of imitating his generosity; but her partisans lauded her mercy because she only loaded him with chains; and threw him into a dungeon in Bristol castle. The empress does not appear to have encountered much difficulty in persuading the bishop of Winchester wholly to abandon his unfortunate brother, and acknowledge her title. The price paid to the bishop was the promise that he should have the chief direction of her affairs, and the disposal of all vacant bishoprics and abbacies. The bargain was concluded on the 2d of March at Winchester. The next day the brother of Stephen conducted the empress to the cathedral of Winchester, within which he blessed all who should be obedient to her, and denounced all who refused to submit to her authority. As legate of the pope, this man's decision had the force of law with most of the clergy; and several bishops, and even Theobald, the new archbishop of Canterbury, fol-

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lowed his example. At Winchester, Matilda took possession of the royal castle, the crown, with other regalia, and on the 7th of April convened an assembly of churchmen to ratify her accession. The legate prevailed with them all. William of Malmesbury,<sup>e</sup> who was present, and heard the opening speech, professes to give the very words of the legate. The brother of Stephen began by contrasting the turbulent times they had just witnessed with the tranquillity and happiness enjoyed under the wise reign of Henry I; he said that he blushed to bear testimony against his own brother, but that Stephen had violated all his engagements, particularly those made to the church; that hence God had pronounced judgment against him, and placed them again under the necessity of appointing someone to fill the throne. "And now," said the legate in conclusion, "in order that the kingdom may not be without a ruler, we, the clergy of England, to whom it chiefly belongs to elect kings and ordain them, do elect Matilda, the daughter of the pious, rich, glorious, good, and incomparable King Henry, to be sovereign lady of England and Normandy." The assembly hailed the conclusion of the speech with loud and repeated acclamations. The deliberations of the synod, and the proclamation of Matilda, were hurried over before the deputation from the city of London could reach Winchester. When the decision of the council was announced to them, these deputies said they did not come to debate, but to petition for the liberty of their king; that they had no powers to agree to the election of this new sovereign; and that the whole community of London, with all the barons lately admitted into it, earnestly desired the immediate liberation of Stephen. But Stephen's brother was not much moved; he repeated to the Londoners the arguments he had used the day before; the deputies departed with a promise, in which there was probably little sincerity, to recommend his view to their fellow citizens; and the legate broke up the council with a sentence of excommunication on several persons who still adhered to his brother, not forgetting a certain William Martel, who had recently made free on the roads with a part of his (the legate's) baggage.

## MATILDA IN LONDON; THE SIEGE OF WINCHESTER

If popular opinion can be counted for anything in those days—and if the city of London, together with Lincoln and other large towns, may be taken as indexes of the popular will—we might be led to conclude that Stephen was still the sovereign of the people's choice, or, at least, that they preferred him to his competitor. The feelings of the citizens of London were indeed so decided, that it was not until some time had passed, and the earl of Gloucester had soothed them with promises and flattering prospects, that Matilda ventured among them. She entered the city a few days before midsummer, and made preparations for her immediate coronation at Westminster. But Matilda herself, who pretended to an indefeasible, sacred, hereditary right, would perform none of the promises made by her half-brother; on the contrary, she imposed a heavy tallage or tax on the Londoners, as a punishment for their attachment to the usurper; and arrogantly rejected a petition they presented to her, praying that the laws of Edward the Confessor might be restored, and the changes and usages introduced by the Normans abolished. Indeed, whatever slight restraint she had formerly put on her haughty, vindictive temper, was now entirely removed; and in a surprisingly short space of time she contrived not only to irritate her old opponents to the very utmost, but also to convert many of her best friends into bitter enemies. When



the legate desired that Prince Eustace, his nephew, and Stephen's eldest son, should be put in possession of the earldom of Boulogne and the other patrimonial rights of his father, she gave him a direct and insulting refusal. When Stephen's wife, who was her own cousin, and a kind-hearted, amiable woman, appeared before her, seconded by many of the nobility, to petition for the enlargement of her husband, she showed the malignancy and littleness of her soul by personal and most unwomanly upbraidings.

The acts of this tragedy, in which there was no small mixture of farce, passed rapidly; and before the coronation clothes could be got ready, and the bishops assembled, Matilda was driven from London without having time to take with her so much as a change of raiment. One fine summer's day, "nigh on to the feast of St. John the Baptist," and about noon-tide, the dinner hour of the court in those times, a body of horse bearing the banner of Queen Maud (the wife of Stephen) appeared on the southern side of the river opposite the city; on a sudden all the church-bells of London sounded the alarm, and the people ran to arms. From every house there went forth one man at least with whatever weapon he could lay his hand upon. They gathered in the streets, says a contemporary, like bees rushing from their hives. Matilda saved herself from being made prisoner by rushing from table, mounting a horse and galloping off. She had scarcely cleared the western suburb when some of the populace burst into her apartment, and pillaged or destroyed whatever they found in it. Such was her leave-taking of London, which she never saw again. Some few of her friends accompanied her to Oxford.

Matilda had not been long at Oxford when she conceived suspicions touching the fidelity of the bishop of Winchester, whom she had offended beyond redress, and who had taken his measures accordingly, absenting himself from court, and manning the castles which he had built within his diocese. He had also an interview with his sister-in-law, Maud, at the town of Guildford, where he probably arranged the plans in favour of his brother Stephen, which were soon carried into execution. Matilda sent him a rude order to appear before her forthwith. The cunning churchman told her messenger that he was "getting himself ready for her"; which was true enough. She then attempted to seize him at Winchester; but, having well fortified his episcopal residence and set up his brother's standard on its roof, he rode out by one gate of the town as she entered at the other, and then proceeded to place himself at the head of his armed vassals and friends. Matilda laid siege to the episcopal palace, which was in every essential a castle. The legate's garrison made a sortie, and set fire to all the neighbouring houses of the town that might have weakened their position, and then, being confident of succour, waited the event.

The bishop did not make them wait long. Being reinforced by Queen Maud and the Londoners, he turned rapidly back upon Winchester, and actually besieged the besiegers there. By the 1st of August he had invested the royal castle of Winchester, where, besides the empress-queen, there were shut up the king of Scotland, the earls of Gloucester, Hereford, and Chester, and many other of the noblest of her partisans. When the siege had lasted six weeks, all the provisions in the castle were exhausted, and a desperate attempt at flight was resolved upon. By tacit consent the belligerents of those times were accustomed to suspend their operations on the great festivals of the church. The 14th of September was a Sunday, and the festival of the Holy Rood. At a very early hour of the morning of that day Matilda mounted a swift horse, and, accompanied by a strong and well-mounted

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escort, crept as secretly and quietly as was possible out of the castle: her half-brother, the earl of Gloucester, followed at a short distance with a number of knights, who had engaged to keep between her and her pursuers. These movements were so well timed and executed, that they broke through the beleaguers, and got upon the Devizes road, before the legate's adherents could mount and follow them. Once in the saddle, however, they made hot pursuit, and at Stourbridge, the earl of Gloucester and his gallant knights were overtaken. To give Matilda time to escape, they offered an obstinate resistance. They were nearly all made prisoners; but their self-devotion had the desired effect, for the queen reached the castle of Devizes in safety. Not finding herself in security even there, Matilda immediately resumed her journey, and, the better to avoid danger, feigned herself to be dead, and being placed on a bier, caused herself to be drawn in a hearse from Devizes to Gloucester. The king of the Scots, Matilda's uncle, got safely back to his own kingdom; but her half-brother, the earl of Gloucester, who was by far the most important prisoner that could be taken, was conveyed to Stephen's queen, who secured him in Rochester castle.

Both parties were now, as it were, without a head, for Matilda was nothing in the field in the absence of her half-brother. A negotiation was therefore set on foot, and on the 1st of November it was finally agreed that the earl of Gloucester should be exchanged for King Stephen. The interval had been filled up by unspeakable misery to the people; but, as far as the principals were concerned, the two parties now stood as they did previously to the battle of Lincoln. The legate summoned a great ecclesiastical council, which met at Westminster on the 7th of December, and he there produced a letter from the pope, ordering him to do all in his power to effect the liberation of his brother. This letter was held as a sufficient justification of all the measures he had recently adopted. Stephen addressed the assembly, briefly and moderately complaining of the wrongs and hardships he had sustained, and adding, that if it would please the nobles of the realm to aid him with men and money, he trusted so to work as to relieve them from the fear of a shameful submission to the yoke of a woman. At last the legate himself rose to speak. He pleaded that it was through force, and not out of conviction or good-will, that he had supported the cause of Matilda. He was thus, he maintained, freed from his oaths to the "countess of Anjou," for he no longer deigned to style her by a higher title. The judgment of heaven, he said, was visible in the punishment of her perfidy, and God himself now restored the rightful King Stephen to his throne. The council went with the legate, and no objection was started save by a solitary voice, which boldly asserted that the legate himself had caused all the calamities which had happened—that he had invited Matilda into England—that he had planned the expedition in which Stephen was taken—and that it was by his advice that the empress had loaded his brother with chains. The imperturbable legate heard these open accusations without any apparent emotion, and with the greatest composure proceeded to excommunicate all those who remained attached to the party he had just quitted.

No compromise between the contending parties was as yet thought of. No decisive action was fought, but a succession of skirmishes and forays, petty sieges, and the burning of defenceless towns and villages kept people on the rack in nearly every part of the land at once. Both parties had engaged foreign mercenaries; and, in the absence of regular pay and provision and of all discipline, bands of Brabançons and Flemings prowled through the land, satisfying all their appetites in the most brutal manner.

During Stephen's captivity, Matilda's husband, Geoffrey of Anjou, reduced nearly the whole of Normandy, and prevailed upon the majority of the resident nobles to acknowledge Prince Henry (his son by Matilda) as their legitimate duke. The king's party thus lost all hope of aid and assistance from beyond sea; but, as they were masters of the coasts of the island, they were able to prevent the arrival of any considerable reinforcement to their adversaries. Matilda pressed her husband to come to her assistance with all the forces he could raise; but Geoffrey declined the invitation on the ground that he had not yet made himself sure of Normandy; but he offered to send over Prince Henry. Even on this point he showed no great readiness, and several months were lost ere he would intrust his son to the care of the earl of Gloucester, whom Matilda had sent into Normandy.

#### THE SIEGE OF OXFORD (1141 A.D.)

Meanwhile Stephen marched to Oxford, where the empress had fixed her court, and invested that city, with a firm resolution of never moving thence until he had got his troublesome rival into his hands. Matilda retired into the castle, and the victor's troops set fire to the town. Stephen invested the citadel, and persevered in the operations of the siege or blockade in a winter of extraordinary severity; and so intent was he on his purpose that he would not permit his attention to be distracted even when informed that the earl of Gloucester and Prince Henry had landed in England. The castle was strong, but when the siege had lasted some three months, Matilda again found herself in danger of starvation, to escape which she had recourse to another of her furtive flights. On the 20th of December, a little after midnight, she dressed herself in white, and, accompanied by three knights in the same attire, stole out of the castle by a postern gate. The ground being covered with deep snow, the party passed unobserved, and the Thames, being frozen over, afforded them a safe and direct passage. Matilda pursued her course on foot as far as the town of Abingdon, where, finding horses, the party mounted, and she rode on to Wallingford, where she was joined by the earl of Gloucester and her young son, who were now at the head of a considerable force. The day after Matilda's flight Oxford castle surrendered to the king; but the king himself was defeated by the earl of Gloucester at Wilton, in the following month of July, and, with his brother the legate, narrowly escaped being made prisoner.

After the affair of Wilton no military operation deserving of notice occurred for three years, during which Stephen's party prevailed in all the east; Matilda's maintained their ground in the west; and the young prince was shut up for safety in the strong castle of Bristol, where, at his leisure moments, his uncle, the earl of Gloucester, who enjoyed, like his father, Henry Beaulclerc, the reputation of being a learned person, attended to his education. The presence of the boy in England was of no use whatever to his mother's or his own cause, and in 1147 he returned to his father Geoffrey in Normandy. Gloucester died of a fever in the month of October; and thus, deprived of son and brother, and depressed also by the loss of other staunch partisans, the masculine resolution of Matilda gave way, and, after a struggle of eight years, she quitted England and retired to Normandy.

After her departure, Stephen endeavoured to get possession of all the baronial castles, and to reduce the nobles to a proper degree of subordination; but the measures he adopted were as unpalatable to his own adherents



[1148-1152 A.D.]

as to the friends of Matilda. At the same time he involved himself in a fresh quarrel with the church, and that, too, at a moment when his brother, the legate, and bishop of Winchester, had lost his great authority through the death of the pope, who patronised him, and the election of another pope, who took away his legatine office, and espoused the quarrel of his now declared enemy, Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury.

For attending the council of Rheims, against the express orders of the king, the archbishop was exiled. Caring little for this sentence, Theobald (1148) put himself under the protection of Bigod, earl of Norfolk, who was of the Angevin faction, and then published a sentence of interdict against Stephen's party and all that part of the kingdom that acknowledged the rule of the "usurper." Instantly, in one half of the kingdom all the churches were closed, and the priests and monks either withdrew, or refused to perform any of the offices of religion. This was a state of things which men could not bear, and Stephen was compelled to seek a reconciliation with the archbishop. About two years after this reconciliation a general council of the high clergy was held at London; and Stephen, who, in the interval, had endeavoured to win the hearts of the bishops and abbots with donations to the church, and promises of much greater things when the kingdom should be settled, required them to recognise and anoint his eldest son, Eustace, as his successor. This the archbishop of Canterbury resolutely refused to do. He had consulted, he said, his spiritual master, and the pope had told him that Stephen was a usurper, and therefore could not, like a legitimate sovereign, transmit his crown to his posterity. It was quite natural, and perhaps excusable, that Stephen, on thus hearing his rights called in question by a man who had sworn allegiance to him, should be overcome by a momentary rage and order his guards to arrest the bishops and seize their temporalities.

## HENRY PLANTAGENET

As long as the contest lay between Stephen on the one side and a woman and a boy on the other, it was likely to be, on the whole, favourable to the former. But time had worked its changes; Prince Henry was no longer a boy, but a handsome, gallant young man, capable of performing all the duties of a knight and soldier, and gifted with precocious abilities and political acumen. He had also become, by inheritance and marriage, one of the most powerful princes on the Continent. When Henry Plantagenet left Bristol castle he was about fourteen years of age. In 1149, having attained the military age of sixteen, he recrossed the seas and landed in Scotland, in order to receive the honour of knighthood at the hands of his mother's uncle, King David. The ceremony was performed with great pomp in "merry Carlisle"; crowds of nobles from most parts of England, as well as from Scotland and Normandy, were present, and had the opportunity of remarking Henry's many eminent qualities; and as that prince had only been returned to the Continent some twelve months when Stephen assembled the council for the anointing of his son, the impressions made by the fortunate Plantagenet were still fresh, and his character was naturally contrasted with that of Prince Eustace, who was about his own age, but who does not appear to have had one of his high endowments.

Shortly after his return from Carlisle, Henry was put in full possession of the government of Normandy; by the decease of his father Geoffrey (1150), he succeeded to the countship of Anjou; and in 1152, together with the hand of Eleanor, the divorced queen of Louis VII of France, he acquired her rights

over the countship of Poitou, and the vast duchy of Guienne or Aquitaine, which had descended to her from her father. The Plantagenet party in England recovered their spirits at the prospect of this sudden aggrandisement, and thinking no more of the mother, they determined to call in the son to reign in his own right. But the king of France formed an alliance with King Stephen, Theobald, count of Blois, and Geoffrey of Anjou, Henry's younger brother, and marched to the confines of Normandy. This attempt occasioned some delay; but as soon as Henry obtained a truce on the Continent, he sailed for England with a small fleet. The army he brought over with him did not exceed 140 knights and 3,000 foot, but it was well appointed and disciplined; and as soon as he landed in England most of the old friends of his family

flocked to join his standard. It was unexpectedly found, however, that Stephen was still strong in the affections and devotion of a large party. The armies of the competitors came in sight of each other at Wallingford.

They lay facing each other during two whole days, and were hourly expecting a sanguinary engagement; but the pause had given time for salutary reflection, and the earl of Arundel had the boldness to say that it was an unreasonable thing to prolong the calamities of a whole nation on account of the ambition of two princes. Many lords of both parties laboured to persuade both princes to come to an amicable arrangement. The two chiefs consented; and in a short conversation which they carried on with one another across a narrow part of the Thames, Stephen and Henry agreed to a truce, during which each expressed his readiness to negotiate a lasting peace. On this, Prince Eustace, who was probably well aware that the first article of the treaty would seal his exclusion from the throne, burst away from his father in a paroxysm of rage, and went into the east to get up a war on his own account. The rash young



TINTERN ABBEY  
(Founded in 1131)

man took forcible possession of the abbey of Bury Saint Edmunds, and laid waste or plundered the country round about, not excepting even the lands of the abbot. His licentious career was very brief, for, as he was sitting down to a riotous banquet, he was suddenly seized with a frenzy, of which he soon died.<sup>1</sup>

The principal obstacle to concession from Stephen was thus removed, for though he had another legitimate son, Prince William, he was but a boy, and was docile and unambitious. The principal negotiators, who with great ability and address reconciled the conflicting interests of the two factions, were Theobald, the archbishop of Canterbury, and Henry, bishop of Winchester, Stephen's brother, who played so many parts in this long and chequered drama. On the 7th of November, 1153, a great council of the kingdom was held at Winchester, where a peace was finally adjusted on the following conditions: Stephen, who was to retain undisturbed possession of the crown during his life, adopted Henry as his son, appointed him his successor, and gave

<sup>1</sup> Writers of a later period introduced some confusion in this matter by accounting for his death in different ways. Some of them said Eustace was drowned.

[1153-1154 A.D.]

the kingdom, after his own death, to Henry and his heirs forever. In return Henry did present homage, and swore fealty to Stephen. Henry received the homage of the king's surviving son William, and, in return, gave that young prince all the estates and honours, whether in England or on the Continent, which his father Stephen had enjoyed before he ascended the throne. There then followed a mighty interchange and duplication of oaths among the earls, barons, bishops, and abbots of both factions, all swearing present allegiance to Stephen, and future fealty to Henry.

After signing the treaty, Stephen and Henry visited together the cities of Winchester, London, and Oxford, in which places solemn processions were made, and both princes were received with acclamations by the people. At the end of Lent they parted with expressions of mutual friendship. Henry returned to the Continent, and on the following 25th of October (1154), Stephen died at Dover, in the fiftieth year of his age. He was buried by the side of his wife, Maud, who died three years before him, at the monastery of Faversham, in the pleasant county of Kent, which she had loved so much.<sup>d</sup>

#### A CONTEMPORARY VIEW OF STEPHEN'S REIGN

The disorders of Stephen's reign form the subject of the last great outburst of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*. In all that has been written since, nothing is at once so vivid and so impressive as this record of an eye-witness of the results of a king's weakness and vacillation:<sup>a</sup>

When the traitors perceived that the king was a mild man, and a soft, and a good, and that he did not enforce justice, they did all wonder. They had done homage to him, and sworn oaths, but no faith kept they; all became forsworn, and broke their allegiance, for every rich man built his castles, and defended them against him; and they filled the land full of castles. They greatly oppressed the wretched people by making them work at these castles, and when the castles were finished they filled them with devils and evil men.

Then they took those whom they suspected to have any goods, by night and by day, seizing both men and women, and they put them in prison for their gold and silver, and tortured them with pains unspeakable, for never were any martyrs tormented as these were. They hung some up by their feet, and smoked them with foul smoke; some by their thumbs, or by the head, and they hung burning things on their feet. They put a knotted string about their heads, and writhed it till it went into the brain. They put them into dungeons wherein were adders and snakes and toads, and thus wore them out. Some they put into a crucet-house, that is, into a chest that was short and narrow, and not deep, and they put sharp stones in it, and crushed the man therein so that they broke all his limbs. There were hateful and grim things called *Sachenteges* in many of the castles, and which two or three men had enough to do to carry. The *Sachenteg* was made thus: it was fastened to a beam, having a sharp iron to go round a man's throat and neck, so that he might no ways sit, nor lie, nor sleep, but that he must bear all the iron. Many thousands they exhausted with hunger. I cannot and I may not tell of all the wounds, and all the tortures that they inflicted upon the wretched men of this land; and this state of things lasted the nineteen years that Stephen was king, and ever grew worse and worse. They were continually levying an exaction from the towns, which they called *Tensery*,<sup>1</sup> and when the miserable

<sup>1</sup> A payment to the superior lord for protection.



inhabitants had no more to give, then plundered they, and burned all the towns, so that well mightest thou walk a whole day's journey nor ever shouldest thou find a man seated in a town, or its lands tilled.

Then was corn dear, and flesh, and cheese, and butter, for there was none in the land—wretched men starved with hunger—some lived on alms who had been awhile rich: some fled the country—never was there more misery, and never acted heathens worse than these. At length they spared neither church nor churchyard, but they took all that was valuable therein, and then burned the church and all together. Neither did they spare the lands of bishops, nor of abbots, nor of priests; but they robbed the monks and the clergy, and every man plundered his neighbour inasmuch as he might. If two or three men came riding to a town, all the township fled before them, and thought that they were robbers. The bishops and clergy were ever cursing them, but this to them was nothing, for they were all accursed, and forsworn, and reprobate. The earth bare no corn; you might as well have tilled the sea, for the land was all ruined by such deeds, and it was said openly that Christ and his saints slept. These things, and more than we can say, did we suffer during nineteen years because of our sins.<sup>i</sup>

#### FUSION OF NORMANS AND ENGLISH

It was during the reigns of the two sons and the grandson of the Conqueror that the chief steps were taken towards the fusion of English and Normans into one people, or rather towards the change of Normans into Englishmen. At the accession of Rufus the distinction was in full force; at the accession of Henry I it is clearly visible. In the course of Henry's reign it so far died out that, though it was doubtless not forgotten, it was no longer marked by outward distinction. The name of Englishmen now takes in all natives of England, of whatever descent. A tale of a general conspiracy to kill all the Normans soon after the accession of Stephen proves, when it is examined, to mean, just as in the case of the massacre of St. Brice, not a design to slay every man of Norman descent in England, but merely a design to slay a particular body of Norman mercenary soldiers. Everything during these reigns tended to draw the two races more nearly together; nothing tended to keep them apart. The brutal tyranny of Rufus wronged both races alike; yet men of native English descent could rise even under him. The cold despotism of Henry at once benefited and offended both races alike. At one time of his reign we meet with a complaint that he would admit no Englishmen to high office. When the complaint is tested, it is found that the exclusion extended to natives of England of both races, that the preference was a preference for absolute foreigners as such. The horrors of the anarchy in Stephen's day fell on both races alike; the foreign mercenaries who laid waste the land were hateful to both alike. We may safely say that, at the time of the accession of Henry of Anjou, the man of Norman descent born in England had, altogether in feeling and largely in speech, become an Englishman.<sup>2</sup>



ST. ANDREW'S CASTLE

## CHAPTER VII

### THE REIGN OF HENRY II

[1154-1189 A.D.]

HENRY may well have contemplated with an anxiety little short of despair the task which lay before him. It was nothing less than the resuscitation of the body politic from a state of utter decay. The legal, constitutional and administrative machinery of the state was at a deadlock; the national resources, material and moral, were exhausted. To bring under subjection, once for all, the remnant of the disturbing forces which had caused the catastrophe, and render them powerless for future harm; to disinter from the mass of ruin the fragments of the old foundations of social and political organisation, and build up on them a secure and lasting fabric of administration and law; to bring order out of chaos, life out of decay—this was the work which a youth who had not yet completed his twenty-second year now found himself called to undertake, and to undertake almost single-handed.—NORGATE.<sup>h</sup>

#### HENRY'S ACCESSION: QUEEN ELEANOR

WHEN Henry Plantagenet received the news of Stephen's death he was engaged in the siege of a castle on the frontier of Normandy. Relying on the situation of affairs in England, and the disposition of men's minds in his favour, he prosecuted the siege to a successful close, and reduced some turbulent continental vassals to obedience, before he went to the coast to embark for his new kingdom. He was detained some time at Barfleur by storms and contrary winds; and it was not till six weeks after the death of Stephen that he landed in England, where he was received with enthusiastic joy. He brought with him a splendid retinue, and Eleanor, his wife, whose inheritance had made him so powerful on the Continent. This marriage proved that, if the young Henry had the gallantry of his age and all the knightly accomplishments then in vogue, he was not less distinguished by a cool, calculating head, and the faculty of sacrificing romantic or delicate feelings for political

advantages. The lady he espoused was many years older than himself, and the repudiated wife of another.

Eleanor was daughter and heiress of William IX,<sup>1</sup> earl of Poitou and duke of Aquitaine—the sovereign of all the western coast of France, from the mouth of the Loire to the foot of the Pyrenees. She was married in 1137 to Louis VII, king of France, who was not less enchanted with her beauty than with the fine provinces she brought him. When the union had lasted some years, and the queen had given birth to two daughters, the princesses Marie and Alix, Louis resolved to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and to take along with him his wife, whose uncle, Raymond, was duke of Antioch. The general morality of the royal and noble crusaders and pilgrims is represented in no very favourable light by contemporary writers; and it is easily understood how camps and marches, and a close and constant association with soldiers, should not be favourable to female virtue. Suspicion soon fell upon Eleanor, who, according to her least unfavourable judges, was guilty of great coquetry and freedom of manners; and her conduct in the gay and dissolute court of Antioch at last awakened the indignation of her devout husband.

She was very generally accused of an intrigue with a young and handsome Turk, named Saladin.<sup>2</sup> In 1152, about a year after their return from the Holy Land, Louis summoned a council of prelates for the purpose of divorcing him from a woman who had publicly dishonoured him. The bishop of Langres, pleading for the king, gravely announced that his royal master “no longer placed faith in his wife, and could never be sure of the legitimacy of her progeny.” But the archbishop of Bordeaux, desirous that the separation should be effected in a less scandalous manner, proposed to treat the whole question on very different grounds—namely, on the consanguinity of the parties, which might have been objected by the canonical law as an insuperable barrier to the marriage when it was contracted fifteen years before, but which now seemed to be remembered by the clergy somewhat tardily. This course, however, relieved them from a delicate dilemma. Eleanor voluntarily and readily agreed to the dissolution of the marriage, and the council dissolved it accordingly—on the pretext that the consciences of the parties reproached them for living as man and wife when they were cousins within the prohibited degree.<sup>3</sup>

But the good, simple Louis wonderfully deceived himself when he thought that no prince of the time would be so wanting in delicacy, and regardless of his own honour, as to marry a divorced wife of so defamed a reputation. According to a contemporary authority, Eleanor’s only difficulty was in making a choice and escaping the too forcible addresses of some of her suitors. Henry soon presented himself, and, “with more policy than delicacy,” wooed, and won, and married her, too, within six weeks of her divorce. King Louis had

<sup>1</sup> This Duke William was a troubadour of high renown, and the most ancient of that class of poets whose works have been preserved.

<sup>2</sup> Some old writers confound this Saladin with the Great Saladin, the heroic opponent of Eleanor’s son, Richard; but this is a great mistake, involving an anachronism.

<sup>3</sup> The divorce of Eleanor has given rise to all manner of conjectures on the part of historians because of the great divergence in the accounts of contemporary writers. The French chroniclers are naturally bitter against the queen. The English and Angevin writers are more favourable. Gervase of Canterbury,<sup>a</sup> who treats the matter very fully, declares that Henry and Eleanor married for love, and that Eleanor had herself procured the divorce in order to marry Henry—a statement which, of course, is untrue. “As to the question of consanguinity,” says Kate Norgate,<sup>b</sup> “that of Louis and Eleanor is not very clear; it was at any rate more remote than that of Henry and Eleanor, who certainly were within the forbidden degree.” To which Ramsay *c* adds that scarcely a marriage in the ruling classes of the time could have stood the test of the prohibited “tenth degree.”]



[1154 A.D.]

been more delicate than politic; and, however honourable to him individually, his delicacy was a great misfortune to France, for it dissevered states which had been united by the marriage—retarded that fusion and integration which alone could render the French kingdom respectable, and threw the finest territories of France into the hands of his most dangerous enemies. When it was too late, Louis saw the great error in policy he had committed, and made what efforts he could to prevent the marriage. He prohibited Henry, as his vassal for Normandy and Anjou, to contract any such union; but Henry, by far the more powerful of the two, cared little for the prohibition, and Louis, in the end, was obliged to content himself with receiving the empty oaths of allegiance which the fortunate Plantagenet tendered for Guienne and Poitou.

The sacrifice was indeed immense. The French kingdom almost ceased to figure as a maritime state on the Atlantic; and when Eleanor's possessions were added to those Henry already possessed on the Continent, that prince occupied the whole coast line from Dieppe to Bayonne, with the exception only of the great promontory of Brittany.

#### HENRY'S CORONATION AND REFORMS

At their first arrival in England everything wore a bright aspect. The queen rode by the king's side into the royal city of Winchester, where they both received the homage of the nobility; and when, on the 19th of December, Henry took his coronation oaths, and was crowned at Westminster by Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, Eleanor was crowned with him, amidst the acclamations of the people. Not a shadow of opposition was offered; the English, still enamoured of their old dynasty or traditions, dwelt with complacency on the Saxon blood, which, from his mother's side, flowed in the veins of the youthful, handsome, and brave Henry; and all classes seemed to overlook the past history of the queen in her grandeur and magnificence and present attachment to their king. The court pageantries were splendid, and accompanied by the spontaneous rejoicings of the citizens.

Henry proceeded to business almost as soon as the crown was on his head. He assembled a great council, appointed the crown officers, issued a decree, promising his subjects all the rights and liberties they had enjoyed under his grandfather, Henry I; and he made his barons and bishops swear fealty to his infant children, his wife Eleanor having already made him the happy father of two sons. He then turned his attention to the correcting of those abuses which had rendered the reign of Stephen a long agony to himself and a curse to the nation. His reforms were not completed for several years, but it will render the narrative clearer to condense our account of these transactions in one general statement.

Henry appointed the earl of Leicester grand justiciar of the kingdom, and, feeling that the office had hitherto been insufficiently supported by the crown, he attached to it more ample powers, and provided the means of enforcing its decisions. As happened in all seasons of trouble and distress in those ages, the coin had been alloyed and tampered with under Stephen; and now Henry issued an entirely new coinage of standard weight and purity. The foreign mercenaries and companies of adventure that came over to England during the long civil war between Stephen and Matilda had done incalculable mischief. Many of these adventurers had got possession of the castles and estates of the Anglo-Norman nobles who adhered to Matilda, and had been created earls

and barons by Stephen; Henry determined to drive every one of them from the land, and their expulsion seems to have afforded almost as much joy to the Saxon population as to the Normans, who raised a shout of triumph on the occasion. "We saw," says Ralph de Diceto, "these Brabançons and Flenings cross the sea, to return from the camp to the plough-tail, and become again serfs, after having been lords."

Up to this point the operations were easy, and the king was carried forward on the high tide of popular opinion; but in what still remained to do were great and obvious difficulties, for in the impartial execution of his measures he had to despoil those who fought his mother's battles and supported his own cause when he was a helpless infant. The generous romantic virtues natural to youth might have been fatal to him; but Henry's heart in some respects



HENRY II

seems never to have been young, and his head was cool and calculating. In a treaty made at Winchester, shortly after his pacification with Stephen, it was stipulated that the king (Stephen) should resume all such royal castles and lands as had been alienated to the lay nobles or usurped by them. Among the resumable gifts were many made by Matilda. Stephen, poor as he was, had neglected this resumption, or made no progress in it during the few months that he survived the treaty. But Henry was determined not to be a pauper king, or to tolerate that widely stretched aristocratic power which bade fair to reduce royalty to an empty shadow. In the absence of other fixed revenues, the sovereigns of that time depended almost entirely on the produce of the crown lands; and Stephen had allowed so much of these to slip from him that there remained not sufficient for a

decent maintenance of royal dignity. Besides the numerous castles which had been built by the turbulent nobles, royal fortresses and even royal cities had been granted away; and these could hardly be permitted to remain in the hands of the feudal lords without endangering the peace of the kingdom. Law was brought in to the aid of policy, and it was now established as a legal axiom that the ancient demesne of the crown was of so sacred and inalienable a nature that no length of time, tenure, or enjoyment could give a right of prescription to any other possessors, against the claim of succeeding princes, who might (it was laid down) at any time resume possession of what had formerly been alienated.

Foreseeing, however, that this step would create much discontent, Henry was cautious not to act without a high sanction; and he therefore summoned a great council of the nobles, who, after hearing the urgency of his necessities, concurred pretty generally in the justice of his immediately resuming all that had been held by his grandfather Henry I, with the exception of the alienations or grants to Stephen's son and the church. As soon as he was armed

[1155-1157 A.D.]

with this sanction the young king put himself at the head of a formidable army, knowing right well that there were many who would not consider themselves bound by the voices of the assembly of nobles, and who would only cede their castles and lands by force. In some instances the castles, on being closely beleaguered, surrendered without bloodshed; in others, they were taken by storm or reduced by famine. In nearly all cases they were levelled to the ground, and about eleven hundred of these "dens of thieves" were blotted out from the fair land they defaced. After many toils, and not a few checks, Henry completed his purpose; he drove the earl of Nottingham and some other dangerous nobles out of the kingdom; he levelled with the ground the six strong castles of Stephen's brother, the famous bishop of Winchester, who, placing no confidence in the new king whom he had helped to make, fled with his treasures to Cluny; he reduced the earl of Aumale, who had long reigned like an independent sovereign in Yorkshire, to the proper state of vassalage and allegiance; and he finally obliged Malcolm, king of Scots, to resign the three northern counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmoreland [and do homage] for the possession of the earldom of Huntingdon, which the Scottish princes claimed as descendants of Earl Waltheof. Henry was not less eager to recover everything than wisely anxious to avoid the appearance of acting from motives of party revenge; and by his equal and impartial proceeding he left the adherents of Stephen no more reason to complain than his mother's or his own partisans.<sup>c</sup>

## EARLY YEARS OF HENRY'S REIGN

Before Henry had completed his work of destroying the "adulterine" castles he was called to the Continent (1156), where his younger brother Geoffrey had raised the standard of revolt in Anjou and Maine, asserting that by his father's will these possessions were to fall to him if Henry became king of England. Louis VII, who had openly shown encouragement to Geoffrey, was detached from his support by Henry's unconditionally and voluntarily renewing his oath of allegiance to the French king for all the numerous possessions he held of him. Henry at the head of an army invaded the disputed territory, and Geoffrey was forced to submit, and to be satisfied with the liberal pension which his brother allowed him. Before his return to England Henry made a triumphal progress through Aquitaine and the other dominions which Eleanor had brought him, and at a great council held at Bordeaux received the homage of his principal vassals.

Henry had returned to England (1157) to conduct a campaign against the Welsh. With a powerful army he entered Flintshire, and penetrated far into the mountains of North Wales without opposition. At last, however, as his army was entering a narrow defile in Coleshill (Cynsyllt) Forest he was unexpectedly attacked by the Welsh under their chief, Owen Gwynedd. Taken at a disadvantage, the English loss was enormous, the king saved himself with difficulty, and many of his chief barons fell; but the army at length fought its way out of the pass. Thenceforth the campaign was conducted with greater caution, and after marching for some distance along the coast, and constructing castles at several strategic points, a peace was concluded by which the Welsh chieftains swore fealty to the English king and gave up to him several districts they had won in Stephen's time.

Henry had scarcely returned to England when Geoffrey accepted from the city of Nantes in lower Brittany a voluntary tender of the government



of their municipality. But Geoffrey died within the year, and the city renewed its former allegiance to Conan, count of Brittany. Henry, who had long looked upon Brittany with a covetous eye, as the only break in the chain of his continental possessions, put forth the astounding claim that Nantes fell to him by inheritance, on Geoffrey's death. Crossing at once to Brittany, where he was ineffectually opposed by Conan, Henry forced Nantes into submission, and then quietly occupied all the region between the Vilaine and the Loire. With Conan, whom he left in control of Brittany, he concluded an arrangement by which his young son Geoffrey was affianced to Conan's daughter, Constance, with the understanding that she should accede to her father's Breton possessions at his death. In order to pacify Louis, who was naturally alarmed at Henry's actions, the king, with his faithful friend and minister Thomas à Becket, proceeded at once to Paris with a magnificent retinue. Then, while the nobles and people were dazzled and interested by lavish display and well-placed generosity, there was concluded a treaty providing for the marriage of Henry's eldest son, Prince Henry, to Louis' daughter Margaret.

Early in 1159 Henry took a step which he must have realised was almost certain to disrupt the friendly relations he had just been at so much pains to establish with Louis. This was a determination to recover Toulouse from Raymond V, its count. With Queen Eleanor, Henry had come into possession of a disputed claim to these dominions which the counts of Poitou had long asserted. As the holder of that title he now prepared to press the claim. The expedition against Toulouse is of importance in English history, however, not so much because of its military operations as because



BYLAND ABBEY, YORKSHIRE (1150 A.D.)

the preparations for it were marked by the institution of one of the financial measures for which Henry is best remembered. This was the institution of the tax known as scutage, as a commutation for personal military service. Henry realised that in calling upon the English and Normans to help him in his wars in far-away Aquitaine he was stretching the theory of feudal service to the uttermost, and he preferred not to make the attempt. He therefore

[1159-1160 A.D.]

hit upon the idea of asking England and Normandy to furnish funds with which he could employ an army of mercenaries, who not only would be likely to be all trained fighting men, but who would also be unhindered by the forty-day limitation of feudal service. Therefore a commutation was arranged amounting to two marks on a knight's fee in England and sixty shillings in Normandy.

By this and other means Henry raised the sum of £180,000 in all his dominions, and gathered together at Poitiers a finely equipped army of mercenaries. With them came a mighty array of barons and knights from all Henry's possessions, and beside him rode Malcolm, king of Scotland, Raymond, king of Aragon, and the clerical lord chancellor, Becket, accoutred as any lay baron, and accompanied by seven hundred knights and men-at-arms raised at his own expense. The expedition undertaken in such force, although marked by several brilliant exploits, was on the whole unsuccessful. Cahors was taken, but before Toulouse was reached Louis had taken the field in behalf of Count Raymond, and thrown himself into the city; and Henry, influenced, it is said, by a realisation of his feudal obligations and the bad example he might set to his own vassals by ruthlessly breaking them, withdrew his forces without laying siege to the city. In the following year a peace negotiated by Becket was concluded with Louis. Prince Henry did homage to Louis for his father's duchy of Normandy, and Aquitanian garrisons were left in Cahors and the other towns occupied during the southern campaign. Before the year was out Prince Henry, aged seven, and Princess Margaret, aged three, were married by special dispensation of the pope.<sup>a</sup>

A short period of tranquillity, both in England and Henry's continental dominions, followed this reconciliation; and when it was disturbed, the storm proceeded from a most unexpected quarter—from Thomas à Becket, the king's bosom friend.



ST. ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL  
(Founded by Bishop Arnold about 1160)

#### THE RISE OF BECKET

Becket was born at London, in or about the year 1117.<sup>1</sup> His father was a citizen and trader. The boy, however, was gifted with an extraordinary intelligence, a handsome person, and most engaging manners; and his father

[<sup>1</sup> The older historians were fond of laying stress on the Saxon parentage of Thomas, as emphasising the unusual ability that one of the conquered race must have possessed to rise to such heights of power. Modern research, however, has spoiled this pretty conclusion by informing us that Gilbert Becket, the father of Thomas, was a native of Rouen who had settled in London, and that his mother Rohesia was likewise a Norman, having been born in Caen.]

gave him all the advantages of education that were within his reach. He studied successively at Merton abbey, London, Oxford, and Paris, in which last city he applied to civil law, and acquired as perfect a mastery and as pure a pronunciation of the French language as any of the best educated of the Norman nobles and officers. While yet a young man, he was employed as an under-clerk in the office of the sheriff of London, where he attracted the attention of Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, who sent him to complete his study of the civil law at the then famous school of Bologna. After profiting by the lessons of the learned Gratian, Becket recrossed the Alps, and stayed some time at Auxerre, in Burgundy, to attend the lectures of another celebrated law professor.

On his return to London he took deacon's orders,<sup>1</sup> and his powerful patron the archbishop gave him some valuable church preferment, which necessitated neither a residence nor the performance of any church duties; and he soon afterwards sent him, as the best qualified person he knew, to conduct some important negotiations at the court of Rome. The young diplomatist—he was then only thirty-two years old—acquitted himself with great ability and complete success, obtaining from the pope a prohibition that defeated the design of crowning Prince Eustace, the son of Stephen—an important service, which secured the favour of the empress Matilda and the house of Plantagenet. On Henry's accession, Archbishop Theobald had all the authority of prime minister, and, being old and infirm, he delegated the most of it to the active Becket, who was made chancellor of the kingdom two years after, being the first man of English birth since the Conquest that had reached any eminent office. Henry at the same time appointed him preceptor of the heir to the crown, and gave him the wardenship of the Tower of London, the castle of Berkhamstead, and the honour of Eye, with 340 knights' fees. His revenue was immense; and no man ever spent more freely or magnificently. His house was a palace, both in dimensions and appointments. It was stocked with vessels of gold and silver, and constantly frequented by numberless guests of all ranks, from barons and earls to knights and pages and simple retainers. His tables were spread with the choicest viands; the best of wines were poured out with an unsparing hand; the richest dresses allotted to his pages and serving-men.

The chancellor's out-door appearance was still more splendid, and on great public occasions was carried to an extremity of pomp and magnificence. When he went on his embassy to Paris, in 1158, he was attended by two hundred knights, besides many barons and nobles, and a host of domestics, all richly armed and attired, the chancellor himself having four-and-twenty changes of apparel. As he travelled through France, his train of wagons and sumpter-horses, his hounds and hawks, his huntsmen and falconers, seemed to announce the presence of a more than king. Whenever he entered a town, the ambassadorial procession was led by 250 boys, singing national songs; then followed his hounds, led in couples; and these were succeeded by eight wagons, each with five large horses and five drivers in new frocks. Every wagon was covered with skins, and guarded by two men and a fierce mastiff. Two of the wagons were loaded with ale, to be distributed to the people; one carried the vessels and furniture of his chapel; another of his bed-chamber; a fifth was loaded with his kitchen apparatus; a sixth carried his abundant plate and wardrobe; and the other two were devoted to the use of his household servants. After the wagons came twelve sumpter-horses, a monkey riding

<sup>1</sup> He never took the major orders till he became archbishop.



[1160-1162 A.D.]

on each, with a groom behind on his knees. Then came the esquires, carrying the shields, and leading the war-horses of their respective knights; then other esquires, falconers, officers of the household, knights, and priests; and last of all appeared the great chancellor himself, with his familiar friends. As Becket passed in this guise, the French were heard to exclaim, "What manner of man must the king of England be, when his chancellor travels in such state!"

Henry encouraged all this pomp and magnificence, and seems to have taken a lively enjoyment in the spectacle, though he sometimes twitted the chancellor on the finery of his attire. All such offices of government as were not performed by the ready and indefatigable king himself were left to Becket, who had no competitor in authority. Secret enemies he had in abundance, but never even a momentary rival in the royal favour. The minister and king lived together like brothers; and according to a contemporary [Peter of Blois] who knew more of Henry than any other that has written concerning him, it was notorious to all men that they were *cor unum et animam unam* (of one heart and one mind in all things). With his chancellor Henry gave free scope to a facetious, frolicsome humour, which was natural to him, though no prince could assume more dignity and sternness when necessary. The chancellor was an admirable horseman, and expert in hunting and hawking and all the sports of the field. These accomplishments, and a never-failing wit and vivacity, made him the constant companion of the king's leisure hours, and the sharer (it is hinted) in less innocent pleasures; for Henry was a very inconstant husband, and had much of the Norman licentiousness.

At the same time, Becket was an able minister, and his administration was not only advantageous to the interests of his master, but, on the whole, extremely beneficial to the nation. Most of the useful measures which distinguished the early part of the king's reign have been attributed to his advice, his discriminating genius, and good intentions. Such were the restoration of internal tranquillity, the curbing of the baronial power, the better appointment of judges, the reform in the currency, and the encouragement given to trade. He certainly could not be accused of entertaining a low notion of the royal prerogative, or of any lukewarmness in exacting the rights of the king. He humbled the lay aristocracy whenever he could, and more than once attacked the extravagant privileges, immunities, and exemptions claimed by the aristocracy of the church. He insisted that the bishops and abbots should pay the scutage for the war of Toulouse like the lay vassals of the crown, and this drew upon him the violent invectives of many of the hierarchy, Gilbert Foliot, the bishop of Hereford, among others, accusing him of plunging the sword into the bosom of mother church, and threatening him with excommunication.

All this tended to convince Henry that Becket was the proper person to nominate to the primacy, as one who had already given proofs of a spirit greatly averse to ecclesiastical encroachments, and that promised to be of the greatest service to him in a project which, in common with other European sovereigns, he had much at heart—namely, to check the growing power of Rome, and curtail the privileges of the priesthood. Although his conduct had not been very priest-like, he was popular; the king's favour and intentions were well known, and accordingly, in 1161, when his old patron, Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, died, the public voice designated Becket as the man who must inevitably succeed him; and after a vacancy of about thirteen months, during which Henry drew the revenues, he was appointed primate of all England.

## BECKET BECOMES ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY

From that moment Becket was an altered man: the soldier, statesman, hunter, courtier, man of the world, and man of pleasure became a rigid and ascetic monk, renouncing even the innocent enjoyments of life, together with the service of his more friend than master, and resolving to perish by a slow martyrdom rather than suffer the king to invade the smallest privilege of the church. Although he then retained, and afterwards showed a somewhat inconsistent anxiety to keep certain other worldly honours and places of trust, he resigned the chancellorship in spite of the wishes of the king; he discarded all his former companions and magnificent retinue; he threw off his splendid attire; he discharged his choice cooks and his cup-bearers, to surround himself with monks and beggars (whose feet he daily washed), to clothe himself in sackcloth, to eat the coarsest food, and drink water rendered bitter by the mixture of unsavoury herbs. The rest of his penitence, his prayers, his works of charity in hospitals and pest-houses soon caused his name to be revered as that of a saint, and his person to be followed by the prayers and acclamations of the people. With the views the king was known to entertain in church matters, the collision was inevitable; yet it certainly was the archbishop who began the contest.

In 1163, about a year after his elevation, Becket raised a loud complaint on the usurpations by the king and laity of the rights and property of the church. He claimed houses and lands which, if they ever had been included in the endowments of the see of Canterbury, had been for generations in the possession of lay families. It is curious to see castles and places of war figuring in his list. From the king himself he demanded the important castle of Rochester. From the earl of Clare—whose family had possessed them in fief ever since the Conquest—he demanded the strong castle and the barony of Tunbridge; and from other barons possessions of a like nature. But to complete the indignation of Henry, who had laid it down as an indispensable and unchangeable rule of government that no vassal who held *in capite* of the crown should be excommunicated without his previous knowledge and consent, he hurled the thunders of the church at the head of William de Eynsford, a military tenant of the crown, for forcibly ejecting a priest collated to the rectory of that manor by the archbishop; and for pretending, as lord of the manor, to a right over that living. When Henry ordered him to revoke the sentence, Becket told him that it was not for the king to inform him whom he should absolve and whom excommunicate—a right and faculty appertaining solely to the church. The king then resorted from remonstrances to threats of vengeance; and Becket, bending for a while before the storm, absolved the knight, but reluctantly and with a bad grace.

In the course of the following year the king matured his project for subjecting the clergy to the authority of the civil courts for murder, felony, and other civil crimes: and to this reform, in a council held at Westminster, he formally demanded the assent of the archbishop and the other prelates. The leniency of the ecclesiastical courts to offenders in holy orders seemed almost to give an immunity to crime; and a recent case, in which a clergyman had been but slightly punished for the most atrocious of offences, called aloud for a change of court and practice, and lent unanswerable arguments to the ministers and advocates of the king. The bishops, however, with one voice, rejected the proposed innovations; upon which Henry asked them if they would merely promise to observe the ancient customs of the realm. Becket

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and his brethren, with the exception only of Hilary, bishop of Chichester, answered that they would observe them, "saving their order." On this the king immediately deprived the archbishop of the manor of Eye and the castle of Berkhamstead.

## THE CONSTITUTIONS OF CLARENDON

Finding, however, that the bishops fell from his side, and being on one hand menaced by the king and lay nobles, and on the other, it is said, advised to submit by the pope himself, Becket shortly afterwards, at a great council held at Clarendon,<sup>1</sup> in Wiltshire (January 25th, 1164), consented to sign a series of enactments embodying the several points insisted upon by the king, and hence called the Constitutions of Clarendon, but he refused to put his seal to them, and immediately after withdrew from the court, and even from the service of the altar, to subject himself to the harshest penance for having acted contrary to his inward conviction. Subsequently the pope rejected the Constitutions of Clarendon, with the exception only of six articles of minor importance; and the archbishop was then encouraged to persist, by the only superior he acknowledged in this world.<sup>c</sup>

The Constitutions of Clarendon constitute one of the most important documents in the history of the relations between church and state in England. They purport to be, and it is now pretty generally accepted, despite the dissent of Lingard<sup>d</sup> and some other Catholic writers, that they are a report of the usages and customs of the Conqueror and his sons, particularly of Henry I, in regard to the disputed points. The most important points laid down in the Constitutions were these: disputes concerning advowsons and presentations to be tried in the king's court; criminal clerks to be tried in the king's court; no clergyman to leave the realm without the king's consent; appeals allowed from the ecclesiastical courts to the king; no tenant-in-chief or royal minister to be excommunicated without the king's consent; the clergy to hold their lands as tenants-in-chief, and to perform all duties and attend the king's court with other tenants-in-chief; elections of archbishops, bishops, and abbots to take place by the king's order in the king's chapel, the man elected to do homage for his lands before consecration; sons of vassals not to be allowed to take clerical orders without the consent of their lord. Speaking of the Constitutions, Bishop Stubbs<sup>i</sup> says: "They are no mere engine of tyranny, or secular spite against a churchman: they are really a part of a great scheme of administrative reform, by which the debatable ground between the spiritual and temporal powers can be brought within the reach of common justice, and the lawlessness arising from professional jealousies abolished. That they were really this, and not an occasional weapon of controversy, may be inferred from the fact that, notwithstanding the storm that followed, they formed the groundwork of the later customary practice in all such matters."<sup>a</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The assembly at Clarendon seems to have been the most considerable of those which met under the name of the Great or the Common Council of the Realm since the Norman invasion. They were not yet called by the name of a parliament. But whatever difficulty may exist concerning the qualifications of their constituent members, there is no reason to doubt that the fulness of legislative authority was exercised by the king only when he was present in such assemblies, and acted with their advice and consent."—MACKINTOSH.<sup>m</sup>



## THE FALL OF BECKET

The king now assembled a great council in the town of Northampton, and summoned the archbishop to appear before it. He was charged, in the first place, with a breach of allegiance and acts of contempt against the king. He offered a plea in excuse, but Henry swore, "by God's eyes," that he would have justice in its full extent, and the court condemned Becket to forfeit all his goods and chattels; but this forfeiture was immediately commuted for a fine of £500. On the third day, he was required to render an account of all his receipts from vacant abbeys and bishoprics during his chancellorship, the balance due thereon to the crown being set down at the enormous sum of 44,000 marks.

Becket now perceived that the king was bent on his utter ruin. For a moment he was overpowered; but, recovering his firmness and self-possession, which never forsook him for long intervals, he said he was not bound to plead on that count, seeing that, at his consecration as archbishop, he had been publicly released by the king from all such claims. He demanded a conference with the bishops; but these dignitaries had already declared for the court, and the majority of them now advised him to resign the primacy, as the only step which could restore peace to the church and the nation. His indomitable mind, however, yielded none of its firmness and, we must add, its pride. He considered the bishops cowards and time-servers; and resolved to retain that post from which, having once been placed in it, it was held, by all law and custom, he could never be deposed by the temporal power. On the morning of the decisive day (October 18th, 1164), he celebrated the mass of St. Stephen, the first martyr, the office of which begins with these words: "*Sederunt principes et adversum me loquebantur*" (Princes also did sit and speak against me); Ps. cxix., 23.

After the mass, he set out for the court, arrayed in his pontifical robes. He went on horseback, bearing the archiepiscopal cross in his right hand and holding the reins in his left. When he dismounted at the palace, one of his suffragans would have borne the cross before him in the usual manner, but he would not let it go out of his hands. "But," said the archbishop of York, an old rival and enemy of Becket, "it is defying the king, our lord, to come in this fashion to his court; but the king has a sword, the point of which is sharper than that of thy pastoral staff." As the primate entered, the king rose from his seat, and withdrew to an inner apartment, whither the barons and bishops soon followed him, leaving Becket alone in the vast hall, or attended only by a few of his clerks or the inferior clergy, the whole body of which, unlike the dignitaries of the church, inclined to his person and cause. Becket seated himself on a bench, and still holding his cross erect calmly awaited the event. He was not made to wait long: the bishop of Exeter, terrified at the excessive exasperation of the sovereign, came forth from the inner apartment, and throwing himself on his knees implored the primate to have pity on himself and his brethren the bishops, for the king had vowed to slay the first of them that should attempt to excuse his conduct. "Thou fearest?" replied Becket; "flee then—thou canst not understand the things that are of God!" Soon afterwards, the rest of the bishops appeared in a body, and Hilary of Chichester, speaking in the name of all, said: "Thou wast our primate, but now we disavow thee, because, after having promised faith to the king, our common lord, and sworn to maintain his royal customs, thou hast endeavoured to destroy them, and hast broken thine oath. We

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proclaim thee, then, a traitor, and tell thee we will no longer obey a perjured archbishop, but place ourselves and our cause under the protection of our lord the pope, and summon thee to answer us before him." "I hear," said Becket; and he deigned no further reply.

According to Roger of Hoveden,<sup>c</sup> the archbishop was accused in the council chamber of the impossible crime of magic; and the barons pronounced a sentence of imprisonment against him. The door of that chamber soon opened, and Robert, earl of Leicester, followed by the barons, stepped forth into the hall to read the sentence. The archbishop rose, and, interrupting him, said, "Son and earl, hear me first. Thou knowest with how much faith I served the king—with how much reluctance, and only to please him, I accepted my present charge, and in what manner I was declared free from all secular claims whatsoever. Touching the things which happened before my consecration I ought not to answer, nor will I answer. You, moreover, are all my children in God; and neither law nor reason permits you to sit in judgment upon your father. I forbid you therefore to judge me: I decline your tribunal, and refer my quarrel to the decision of the pope. To him I appeal: and now, under the holy protection of the Catholic church and the apostolic see, I depart in peace."

After this counter-appeal to the power which his adversaries had been the first to invoke, Becket slowly strode through the crowd towards the door of the hall. When near the threshold, the spirit of the soldier, which was not yet extinguished by the aspirations of the saint, blazed forth in a withering look and a few hasty but impassioned words. Some of the courtiers and attendants of the king threw at him straw or rushes, which they gathered from the floor, and called him traitor and false perjurer. Turning round and drawing himself up to his full height, he cried, "If my holy calling did not forbid it, I would make my answer with my sword to those cowards who call me traitor!" He then mounted his horse amidst the acclamations of the lower clergy and common people, and rode in a sort of triumph to his lodgings, the populace shouting, "Blessed be God, who hath delivered his servant from the hands of his enemies!" The strength of Becket's party was in the popular body. In the course of the evening he sent to the king to ask leave to retire beyond sea, and he was told that he should receive an answer on the following morning. Becket, however, stole out of the town of Northampton at the dead of night, disguised as a simple monk, and calling himself Brother Dearman; and being followed only by two clerks and a domestic servant, he hastened towards the coast, hiding by day and pursuing his journey by night. The season was far advanced, and the stormy winds of November swept the waters of the Channel when he reached the coast; but Becket embarked in a small boat, and after many perils and fatigues landed at Gravelines, in Flanders.

From the seaport of Gravelines he and his companions walked on foot to the monastery of St. Bertin, at St. Omer, where he waited a short time the success of his applications to the king of France and the pope, Alexander III, who had fixed his residence for a time in the city of Sens. Their answers were most favourable; for, fortunately for Becket, the jealousy and disunion between the kings of France and England disposed Louis to protect the obnoxious exile, in order to vex and weaken Henry; and the pope, turning a deaf ear to a magnificent embassy despatched to him by the English sovereign, determined to support the cause of the primate as that of truth, of justice, and the church. The splendid abbey of Pontigny, in Burgundy, was assigned to him as an honourable and secure asylum; and the pope re-

invested him with his archiepiscopal dignity, which he had surrendered into his hands.

As soon as Henry was informed of these particulars, he issued writs to the sheriffs of England, commanding them to seize all rents and possessions of the primate within their jurisdictions, and to detain all bearers of appeals to the pope till the king's pleasure should be made known to them. He also commanded the justices of the kingdom to detain, in like manner, all bearers of papers, whether from the pope or Becket, that purported to pronounce excommunication or interdict on the realm. The primate's name was struck out of the liturgy, and the revenues of every clergyman who had either followed him into France or had sent him aid and money were seized by the crown. If Henry's vengeance had stopped here it might have been excused, if not justified; but, irritated to madness by the tone of defiance his enemy assumed in a foreign country, he proceeded to further vindictive and most disgraceful measures, issuing one common sentence of banishment against all who were connected with Becket, either by the ties of relationship or of friendship. The list of proscription contained four hundred names, for the wives and children of Becket's friends were included. Pontigny was beset by these exiles, but Becket finally succeeded in relieving their immediate wants by interesting the king of France, the queen of Sicily, and the pope, in their favour.

#### THE WELSH AND BRETON REVOLTS

In 1165, the year after Becket's flight, Henry sustained no small disgrace from the result of a campaign, in which he personally commanded, against the Welsh. That hardy people had risen once more in arms in 1163, but had been defeated by an Anglo-Norman army, which subsequently plundered and wasted with fire the county of Carmarthen. Somewhat more than a year later a nephew of Rees-ap-Gryffiths, king of South Wales, was found dead in his bed; and the uncle, asserting he had been assassinated by the secret emissaries of a neighbouring Norman baron, collected the mountaineers of the south, and began a fierce and successful warfare, in which he was presently joined by his old allies, Gwynedd of North Wales and Owen Cyvelioch, the leader of the clans of Powysland. One Norman castle after another fell, and, when hostilities had continued for some time, the Welsh pushed their incursions forward into the level country.

The king, turning at length his attention from the church quarrel, which had absorbed it, drew together an army and hastened to the Welsh marches. At his approach the mountaineers withdrew "to their starting-holes"—their woods and strait passages. Henry, without regard to difficulties and dangers, followed them, and a general action was fought on the banks of the Cieroc. The Welsh were defeated, and fled to their uplands. Henry, still following them, penetrated as far as the lofty Berwin, at the foot of which he encamped. A sudden storm of rain set in, and continued until all the streams were fearfully swollen, and the valley was deluged. Meanwhile the natives gathered on the ridges of the mountain of Berwin; but it appears to have been more from the war of the elements than of man that the king's army retreated in great disorder and with some loss. Henry had hitherto showed himself remarkably free from the cruelty of his age, but his mind was now embittered, and in a hasty moment he resolved to take a barbarous vengeance on the persons of the noble hostages whom the Welsh princes had placed in his hands, seven years before,



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as pledges of their tranquillity and allegiance. The eyes of the males were picked out of their heads, and the noses and ears of the females were cut off.

This reverse in England was soon followed by successes on the Continent. A formidable insurrection broke out in Brittany against Henry's subservient ally Conan, who applied to him for succour, according to the terms of the treaty of alliance. The troops of the king entered by the frontier of Normandy, under pretext of defending the legitimate duke of the Bretons against his revolted subjects. Henry soon made himself master of Dol, and several other towns, which he kept and garrisoned with his own soldiers. Conan had shown himself utterly incapable of managing the fierce Breton nobles, by whose excesses and cruelties the poor people were ground to the dust. Henry's power and abilities were well known to the suffering Bretons, and a considerable party, including the priests of the country, rallied round him, and hailed him as a deliverer. Conan resigned the remnant of his authority into the hands of his protector, who governed the state in the name of his son Geoffrey and Conan's heiress Constance, the espousals of these two children being prematurely solemnised.

## THE QUARREL WITH BECKET RENEWED

In the month of May the banished archbishop went from Pontigny to Vézelay, near Auxerre, and encouraged by the pope he repaired to the church on the great festival of the Ascension, and mounting the pulpit there, "with book, bell, and candle," solemnly cursed and pronounced the sentence of excommunication against the defenders of the Constitutions of Clarendon, the detainers of the sequestered property of the church of Canterbury,<sup>1</sup> and those who imprisoned or persecuted either laymen or clergy on his account. This done, he more particularly excommunicated by name Richard de Lucy, Jocelin Baliol, and four other of Henry's courtiers and prime favourites.

The king was at Chinon, in Anjou, when he was startled by this new sign of life given by his adversary. Though in general a great master of his feelings, Henry was subject to excesses of ungovernable fury, and on this occasion he seems fairly to have taken leave of his senses. He cried out that they wanted to kill him, body and soul—that he was wretched in being surrounded by cowards and traitors, not one of whom thought of delivering him from the insupportable vexations caused him by a single man. He took off his cap and dashed it to the ground, undid his girdle, threw his clothes about the room, tore off the silk coverlet from his bed and rolled upon it, and gnawed the straw and rushes—for it appears that this mighty and splendid monarch had no better bed. His resentment did not pass away with this paroxysm; and after writing to the pope and the king of France, he threatened that, if Becket should return and continue to be sheltered at the abbey of Pontigny, which belonged to the Cistercians, he would seize all the estates appertaining to that order within his numerous dominions.

The threat was an alarming one to the monks, and we find Becket removing out of Burgundy to the town of Sens, where a new asylum was appointed him by Louis. A paltry war was begun and ended by a truce, all within a few months; it was followed the next year by another war, equally

[<sup>1</sup> "It must always be remembered," says Freeman,<sup>l</sup> "that the second quarrel, the quarrel in which Thomas died, was wholly distinct from the first, and had to do not with the exemption of clerks from secular jurisdiction but with the rights of the churches of Canterbury and York."]

short and still more inglorious for the French king. Nothing but an empty pride could have been gratified by a series of feudal oaths; but the designations given to his sons on this occasion by the English king contributed to fatal consequences which happened four years later. Prince Henry of England, his eldest son, did homage to his father-in-law, the king of France, for Anjou and Maine, as he had formerly done for Normandy; Prince Richard, his second son, did homage for Aquitaine; and Geoffrey, his third son, for Brittany: and it was afterwards assumed that these ceremonies constituted the boys sovereigns and absolute masters of the several dominions named. At the same time the two kings agreed upon a marriage between Prince Richard of England and Alice, another daughter of the king of France. Sixteen months before these events Henry lost his mother, the empress Matilda, who died at Rouen and was buried in the celebrated abbey of Bec, which she had enriched with the donations of her piety and penitence.

#### THE RETURN OF BECKET

About this time Henry was prevailed upon to assent to the return of Becket. The kings of France and England met at Montmirail, and Becket was admitted to a conference. Henry insisted on qualifying his agreement to the proposed terms of accommodation by the addition of the words, "saving the honour of his kingdom," a salvo which Becket met by another on his part, saying that he was willing to be reconciled to the king, and obey him in all things, "saving the honour of God and the church." Upon this, Henry, turning to the king of France, said, "Do you know what would happen if I were to admit this reservation? That man would interpret everything displeasing to himself as being contrary to the honour of God, and would so invade all my rights: but to show that I do not withstand God's honour, I will here offer him a concession—what the greatest and holiest of his predecessors did unto the least of mine, that let him do unto me, and I am contented therewith." All present exclaimed that this was enough. But Becket still insisted on his salvo; upon which the king of France said he seemed to wish to be "greater than the saints, and better than St. Peter"; and the nobles present murmured at his unbending pride, and said he no longer merited an asylum in France. The two kings mounted their horses and rode away without saluting Becket, who retired much cast down. No one any longer offered him food and lodging in the name of Louis, and on his journey back to Sens he was reduced to live on the charity of the common people.

In another conference the obnoxious clauses on either side were omitted. The business now seemed in fair train; but when Becket asked from the king the kiss of peace, Henry's irritated feelings prevented him from granting it, and he excused himself by saying it was only a solemn oath taken formerly in a moment of passion never to kiss Becket that hindered him from giving this sign of perfect reconciliation. The primate was resolute to waive no privilege and no ceremony, and this conference was also broken off in anger. Another quarrel between the two kings, which threatened at first to retard the reconciliation between Henry and his primate, was in fact the cause of hastening that event; for hostilities dwindled into a truce, the truce led to another conference between the sovereigns, and the conference to another peace, at which Henry, who was apprehensive that the pope would finally consent to Becket's ardent wishes, and permit him to excommunicate his king by name and pronounce an interdict against the whole kingdom, slowly and

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reluctantly pledged his word to be reconciled forthwith to the dangerous exile. On the 22d of July, 1170, a solemn congress was held in a spacious and pleasant meadow, between Frêteval and La Ferté-Bernard, on the borders of Touraine. The king was there before the archbishop; and as soon as Becket appeared, riding leisurely towards the tent, he spurred his horse to meet him, and saluted him, cap in hand. They then rode apart into the field, and discoursed together for some time in the same familiar manner as in by-gone times. Then, returning to his attendants, Henry said that he found the archbishop in the best possible disposition, and that it would be sinful in him to nourish rancour any longer.

The primate came up, and the forms of reconciliation were completed; always, however, excepting the kiss of peace, which, according to some, Henry promised he would give in England, where they would soon meet. The king, however, condescended to hold Becket's stirrup when he mounted. By their agreement, Becket was to love, honour, and serve the king in as far as an archbishop could "render in the Lord service to his sovereign"; and Henry was to restore immediately all the lands, and livings, and privileges of the church of Canterbury, and to furnish Becket with funds to discharge his debts, and make the journey into England. These terms were certainly not all kept: the lands were not released for four months; and, after many vexatious delays, Becket was obliged to borrow money for his journey. While tarrying on the French coast, he was several times warned that danger awaited him on the opposite shore. This was not improbable, as many resolute men had been suddenly driven from the church lands on which they had fattened for years, and as he was known to carry about his person letters of excommunication from the pope against the archbishop of York and the bishops of London and Salisbury, whom he held to be his chief enemies, and who were men likely to adopt strong measures to prevent his promulgating the terrible sentence. He was even assured that Ranulf de Broc, who had boasted that he would not let the archbishop live to eat a single loaf of bread in England, was lying with a body of soldiers between Canterbury and Dover, in order to intercept him.

But nothing could move Becket, who said seven years of absence were long enough both for the shepherd and his flock, and that he would not stop though he were sure to be cut to pieces as soon as he landed on the opposite coast. The only use he made of the warnings he received was to confide the letters of excommunication to a skilful and devoted messenger, who, preceding him some short time, stole into England without being suspected, and actually delivered them publicly to the three bishops, who were as much startled as if a thunderbolt had fallen at their feet. This last measure seems to have had as much to do with Becket's death as any anger of the king's. As he was on the point of embarking, a vessel arrived from England. The sailors were asked what were the feelings of the good English people towards their archbishop. They replied, that the people would hail his return with transports of joy. This was a good omen, and he no doubt relied much on the popular favour.

He sailed from France in the same gloomy month of the year in which he had begun his exile, and, avoiding Dover, landed at Sandwich on the 1st of December. At the news of his arrival, the mariners, the peasants, and the English burghers flocked to meet him; but none of the rich and powerful welcomed him, and the first persons of rank he saw presented themselves in a menacing attitude. These latter were a sheriff of Kent, Reginald de Warenne, Ranulf de Broc (who had ridden across the country from Dover), and some relatives and allies of the three excommunicated bishops, who carried



swords under their tunics, and drew them when they approached the primate. John of Oxford conjured them to be quiet, lest they should make their king pass for a traitor; but it is probable that the determined countenance of the English multitude made more impression on them than his peaceful words. They retired to their castles, and spread a report among their feudal compeers that Becket was liberating the serfs of the country, who were marching in his train, drunk with joy and hopes of vengeance. At Canterbury the primate was received with acclamations; but still it was only the poor and lowly that welcomed him. A few days after he set out for Woodstock, to visit the king's eldest son, Prince Henry, who had formerly been his pupil. Becket counted much on his influence over the young prince, but the party opposed to him succeeded in preventing his having an opportunity to exert that influence. A royal messenger met him on his journey, and ordered him, in the name of the prince, not to enter any of the royal towns or castles, but to return and remain within his own diocese. The primate obeyed, and returning spent some days at Harrow-on-the-Hill, which belonged to the church of Canterbury. During his stay at Harrow, two of his own clergy, Nigellus de Sackville, who was called "the usurping rector of Harrow," and Robert de Broc, the vicar, a relation of his determined foe Ranulf de Broc, treated him with great disrespect, and when he was departing maimed the horse which carried his provisions.

Becket returned to Canterbury, escorted by a host of poor people, armed with rustic targets and rusty lances. On Christmas Day he ascended the pulpit in the great cathedral church, and delivered an eloquent sermon on the words, "*Venio ad vos mori inter vos*" (I come to die among you). He told his congregation that one of their archbishops had been a martyr, and that they would probably soon see another; "but," he added, "before I depart hence I will avenge some of the wrongs my church has suffered during the last seven years": and he forthwith excommunicated Ranulf and Robert de Broc, and Nigellus the rector of Harrow. This was Becket's last public act. As soon as his messenger from the French coast had delivered his letters, the three bishops excommunicated by them hastened over to the Continent, to demand redress from the king. "We implore it," said the bishops, "both for the sake of royalty and the clergy—for your own repose as well as ours. There is a man who sets England on fire; he marches with troops of horse and armed foot, prowling round the fortresses, and trying to get himself received within them."

The exaggeration was not needed; Henry was seized with one of his most violent fits of fury. "How!" cried he, "a fellow that hath eaten my bread—a beggar that first came to my court on a lame horse—dares insult his king and the royal family, and tread upon the whole kingdom; and not one of the cowards I nourish at my table—not one will deliver me from this turbulent priest!" There were four knights present, who had probably injuries of their own to avenge, and who took this outburst of temper as a sufficient death-warrant; and, without communicating their sudden determination to the king (or, at least, there is no evidence that they did), hurried over to England. Their names were Reginald Fitzurse, William Tracy, Hugh de Morville, and Richard le Breton; and they are described by a contemporary as being barons and servants of the king's bed-chamber. Their intention was not suspected, nor was their absence noticed; and while they were riding with loose rein towards the coast, the king was closeted with his council of barons, who, after some discussion, which seems to have occupied more than one day, appointed three commissioners to go and seize, according to the forms of law, the person of Thomas à Becket, on the charge of high treason.

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## THE MURDER OF BECKET (1170 A.D.)

But the conspirators, who had bound themselves together by an oath, left the commissioners nothing to do. Three days after Christmas Day they arrived secretly at Saltwood, in the neighbourhood of Canterbury, where the De Broc family had a house; and here, under the cover of night, they arranged their plans. On the 29th of December, having collected a number of adherents to quell the resistance of Becket's attendants and the citizens, in case any should be offered, they proceeded to the monastery of St. Augustine's, at Canterbury, the abbot of which, like nearly all the superior churchmen, was of the king's party. From St. Augustine's they went to the archbishop's palace, and entering his apartment abruptly, about two hours after noon, seated themselves on the floor without saluting him or offering any sign of respect. There was a dead pause—the knights not knowing how to begin, and neither of them liking to speak first. At length Becket asked what they wanted; but still they sat gazing at him with haggard eyes. There were twelve men of the party, besides the four knights. Reginald Fitzurse, feigning a commission from the king, at last spoke. "We come," said he, "that you may absolve the bishops whom you have excommunicated, re-establish the bishops whom you have suspended, and answer for your offences against the king."

Becket replied with boldness and with great warmth, not sparing taunts and invectives. He said that he had published the papal letters of excommunication with the king's consent; that he could not absolve the archbishop of York, whose heinous case was reserved for the pope alone; but that he would remove the censures from the two other bishops, if they would swear to submit to the decisions of Rome. "But of whom then," demanded Reginald, "do you hold your archbishopric—of the king, or of the pope?" "I owe the spiritual rights to God and the pope, and the temporal rights to the king." "How! is it not the king that hath given you all?" Becket's decided negative was received with murmurs, and the knights furiously twisted their long gloves. Three out of the four cavaliers had followed Becket in the days of his prosperity and vainglory, and vowed themselves his liege men. He reminded them of this, and observed it was not for such as they to threaten him in his own house; adding, also, that if he were threatened by all the swords in England, he would not yield. "We will do more than threaten," replied the knights, and then departed.

When they were gone, his attendants loudly expressed their alarm, and blamed him for the rough and provoking tone by which he had inflamed instead of pacifying his enemies; but the prelate silenced the latter part of their discourse by telling them he had no need of their advice, and knew what he ought to do. The barons, with their accomplices, who seemed to have wished, if they could, to avoid bloodshed, finding that threats were ineffectual, put on their coats of mail, and taking each a sword in his hand returned to the palace; but finding that the gate had been shut and barred by the terrified servants, Fitzurse tried to break it open, and the sounds of his ponderous axe rang through the building. The gate might have offered some considerable resistance, but Robert de Broc showed them the way in at a window. The people about Becket had in vain urged him to take refuge in the church; but at this moment the voices of the monks, singing vespers in the choir, striking his ear, he said he would go, as his duty called him thither; and, making his cross-bearer precede him with the crucifix elevated, he traversed

the cloister with slow and measured steps, and entered the church. His servants would have closed and fastened the doors, but he forbade them, saying that the house of God was not to be barricaded like a castle. He had passed through the north transept, and was ascending the steps which led to the choir, when Reginald Fitzurse appeared at the other end of the church, waving his sword, and shouting, "Follow me, loyal servants of the king!" The other conspirators followed him closely, armed like himself from head to foot, and brandishing their swords.

The shades of evening had fallen, and in the obscurity of the vast church, which was broken here and there only by a lamp glimmering before a shrine, Becket might easily have hid himself in the dark and intricate crypts underground, or beneath the roof of the old church. Each of these courses was suggested by his attendants, but he rejected them both, and turned boldly to meet the intruders, followed or preceded by his cross-bearer, the faithful Edward Gryme, the only one who did not flee. A voice shouted, "Where is the traitor?" Becket answered not; but when Reginald Fitzurse said, "Where is the archbishop?" he replied, "Here am I, an archbishop, but no traitor, ready to suffer in my Saviour's name." Tracy pulled him by the sleeve, saying, "Come hither, thou art a prisoner." He pulled back his arm in so violent a manner that he made Tracy stagger forward. They advised him to flee or to go with them; and, on a candid consideration, it seems to us that the conspirators, after all, are entitled to a doubt as to whether they really intended a murder, or were not rather hurried into it by his obstinacy and provoking language. Addressing Fitzurse, he said, "I have done thee many pleasures; why comest thou with armed men into my church?" They told him that he must instantly absolve the bishops. "Never, until they have offered satisfaction," was his answer; and he applied a foul vituperative term to Fitzurse.

"Then die!" exclaimed Fitzurse, striking at his head. The faithful Gryme interposed his arm to save his master; the arm was broken or nearly cut off, and the stroke descended on the primate's head and slightly wounded him. Then another voice cried, "Flee, or thou diest!" but still Becket moved not; but with the blood running down his face, he clasped his hands, and bowing his head, exclaimed, "To God, to St. Mary, to the holy patrons of this church and to St. Denis, I commend my soul and the Church's cause." A second stroke brought him to the ground, close to the foot of St. Bennet's altar; a third, given with such force that the sword was broken against the stone pavement, cleft his skull, and his brains were scattered all about. One of the conspirators put his foot on his neck, and cried, "Thus perishes a traitor!" The conspirators then withdrew, without encountering any hindrance or molestation; but when the fearful news spread through Canterbury and the neighbouring country, the excitement was prodigious, and the inevitable inference was drawn that Becket was a martyr and miracles would be wrought at his tomb.

His old foe, the archbishop of York, ascended the pulpit to announce his death as an infliction of divine vengeance, saying that he had perished in his guilt and pride like Pharaoh. Other ecclesiastics preached that the body of the traitor ought not to be allowed to rest in consecrated ground, but ought to be thrown into a ditch or hung on a gibbet. An attempt was even made to seize the body, but the monks, who received timely warning, concealed it, and hastily buried it in the subterranean vaults of the cathedral. But it was soon found that the public voice, echoed, for its own purposes, by the court of France, was too loud to be drowned in this manner. Louis, whom Henry



[1171-1185 A.D.]

had so often humbled, wrote to the pope, imploring him to draw the sword of St. Peter against that horrible persecutor of God, who surpassed Nero in cruelty, Julian in apostasy, and Judas in treachery. He chose to believe, and the French bishops believed with him, that Henry had ordered the murder.

On receiving the intelligence of Becket's assassination, Henry expressed the greatest grief and horror, shut himself up in his room, and refused to receive either food or consolation for three days; and if he took care to have a touching detail of his distressed feelings transmitted to the pope, in which he declared his innocence in the strongest terms, and entreated that censure might be suspended till the facts of the case were examined, such a measure is not to be taken, in itself, as indicating the insincerity of his grief and horror. He must have felt that his own hasty exclamations had led to the deed, and that all the penalties of a deliberate crime would be exacted at his hand.

When Henry's envoys first appeared at Rome—for the pope Alexander was no longer a dependent exile—they were coldly received, and everything seemed to threaten that an interdict would be laid upon the kingdom, and the king excommunicated by name. In the end, however, Alexander rested satisfied with an excommunication, in general terms, of the murderers and the abettors of the crime. It is said that Henry's gold was not idle on this occasion; but the employment of it is rather a proof of the notorious rapacity of the cardinals than of his having a bad cause to plead. In the month of May, 1172, in a council held at Avranches, at which two legates of the pope attended, Henry swore that he had neither ordered nor desired the murder of the archbishop. This oath was not demanded from him, but taken of his own free will. As, however, he could not deny that the assassins might have been moved to the deed by his wrathful words, he consented to maintain two hundred knights during a year for the defence of the Holy Land; and himself to serve, if the pope should require it, for three years against the infidels. At the same time, he engaged to restore all the lands and possessions belonging to the friends of the late archbishop; to permit appeals to be made to the pope in good faith, and without fraud, reserving to himself, however, the right of obliging such appellants as he suspected of evil intentions to give security that they would attempt nothing abroad to the detriment of him or his kingdom. The legates then fully absolved the king; and thus terminated this quarrel, less to Henry's disadvantage than might have been expected. In the short interval of this negotiation he had added a kingdom to his dominions. The year that followed the death of Becket was made memorable by the conquest of Ireland.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE STATE OF IRELAND

The state of Ireland at this period has been delineated by Giraldus Cambrensis,<sup>k</sup> who twice visited the island—once in the company of his brother, a military adventurer, and afterwards as the chaplain or secretary of John, the youngest of Henry's sons (1182-1185). In three books on the topography and two on the subjugation of Ireland, he has left us the detail of all that he heard, read, and saw. That the credulity of the Welshman was often deceived by fables is evident; nor is it improbable that his partiality might occasionally betray him into unfriendly and exaggerated statements; yet the accuracy of his narrative in the more important points is confirmed by the whole tenor of Irish and English history.

The ancient division of the island into five provinces or kingdoms was still (1185) retained;<sup>1</sup> but the nominal sovereignty over the whole, which for several generations had been possessed by the O'Neils, had of late been assumed by different chieftains, and was now claimed by the O'Connors, kings of Connaught. The seaports, inhabited chiefly by the descendants of the Ostmen [Northmen] were places of some trade. Dublin is styled the rival of London; and the wines of Languedoc were imported in exchange for hides. But the majority of the natives shunned the towns, and lived in huts in the country. They preferred pasturage to agriculture. Restraint and labour were deemed by them the worst of evils; liberty and indolence the most desirable of blessings. The children owed little to the care of their parents, but acquired, as they grew up, elegant forms, which, aided by their lofty stature and florid complexion, excited the admiration of the invaders. Their



HEXHAM ABBEY CHURCH, NORTHUMBERLAND  
(Twelfth century)

clothing was scanty, fashioned after the manner which to the eye of Giraldus appeared barbarous, and spun from the wool of their sheep, sometimes dyed, but generally in its natural state. In battle they measured the valour of the combatants by their contempt of artificial assistance; and, when they beheld the English knights covered with iron, hesitated not to pronounce them devoid of real courage. Their own arms were a short lance, or two javelins, a sword called a skene, about fifteen inches long, and a hatchet of steel called a "sparthe." The sparthe was wielded with one hand, but with such address and impetuosity as generally to penetrate through the best-tempered armour. To bear it was the distinction of freemen. They constructed their houses of timber and wicker-work. Their churches were generally built of the same materials; and when Archbishop Malachy began to erect a church of stone the very attempt excited an insurrection of the people, who reproached him with abandoning the customs of his country and introducing those of Gaul. In temper the natives are described as irascible and inconstant, warmly attached to their friends, faithless and vindictive towards their enemies. Music was the acquirement in which they principally sought to excel; and the Welshman, Giraldus, with all his partiality for his own country, has the honesty to assign to the Irish the superiority on the harp.

<sup>1</sup> These provinces were Leinster, Desmond or South Munster, Tuamond or North Munster, Connaught, and Ulster. Meath was considered as annexed to the dignity of monarch of Ireland.

[1152-1166 A.D.]

That the clergy of Ireland in the sixth century differed in some points of discipline from the clergy of the neighbouring churches is plain from the disputes respecting the time of Easter and the form of the tonsure: that they agreed in all points of doctrine is equally evident from the history of these very disputes, from the cordial reception of the Irish ecclesiastics in Gaul and Italy, and from the easy amalgamation of their rules with those of the continental monks. During the invasions of the Northmen they were the principal sufferers; at the return of tranquillity their churches and possessions fell, in many instances at least, into the hands of laymen, and were retained, according to the custom of taniistry, in the possession of the same family for several generations.

The proximity of Ireland to England, and the inferiority of the natives in the art of war, had suggested the idea of conquest to both William the Conqueror and the first Henry. The task which they had abandoned was seriously taken up by the son of Matilda. To justify the invasion of a free and unoffending people, his ambition had discovered that the civilisation of their manners and the reform of their clergy were benefits which the Irish ought cheerfully to purchase with the loss of their independence. Within a few months after his coronation, John of Salisbury, a learned monk, and afterwards bishop of Chartres, was despatched to solicit the approbation of Pope Adrian.

The envoy was charged to assure his holiness that Henry's principal object was to provide instruction for an ignorant people, to extirpate vice from the Lord's vineyard, and to extend to Ireland the annual payment of Peter's pence; but that as every Christian island was the property of the holy see, he did not presume to make the attempt without the advice and consent of the successor of St. Peter. The pontiff, Adrian IV,<sup>1</sup> who must have smiled at the hypocrisy of this address, praised in his reply the piety of his dutiful son; accepted and asserted the right of sovereignty which had been so liberally admitted; expressed the satisfaction with which he assented to the king's request; and exhorted him to bear always in mind the conditions on which that assent had been grounded. At the following Michaelmas a great council was held to deliberate on the enterprise: but a strong opposition was made by the empress mother and the barons; other projects offered themselves to Henry's ambition, and the papal letter was consigned to oblivion in the archives of the castle of Winchester.

## DERMOT AND PEMBROKE

Fourteen years after this singular negotiation a few Welsh adventurers landed in Ireland at the solicitation of one of the native princes. Dermot, king of Leinster, had several years before carried away by force Dervorgil (Derbforgaill), the wife of O'Rourke, prince of Brefni or Leitrim. The lady appears to have been a willing captive; but the husband, to avenge his disgrace, claimed the assistance of Turlough (Tordelbach) O'Connor, monarch of Ireland, and the adulterer was compelled to restore the fugitive. From this period Dermot and O'Rourke adhered to opposite interests in all the

[<sup>1</sup>Adrian IV was the only Englishman who ever wore the papal crown. His name was originally Nicholas Breakspear. He was born in Hertfordshire some time before 1100, but was educated for the priesthood on the Continent, and finally became abbot of St. Rufus in Provence. In 1146 he was created cardinal-bishop of Albano by Pope Eugenius III, and in December, 1154, was elected to the papacy, retaining the throne until his death in 1159.]



disputes which agitated the island. During the life of Maurice (Muircertach) O'Loughlin, who succeeded O'Connor in the sovereign authority, Dermot braved the power of his adversary; but on the death of that prince, the house of O'Connor resumed the ascendancy: O'Rourke destroyed Ferns, the capital of Leinster (1166); and Dermot was driven out of the island.

The exile, abandoned by his countrymen, solicited the assistance of strangers. Passing through England to Aquitaine, he did homage for his dominions to Henry, and obtained permission to enlist adventurers in his service. His offers were accepted by Richard de Clare, surnamed Strongbow, earl of Pembroke, a nobleman of ruined fortunes and in disgrace with his sovereign, and by two brothers, Robert Fitzstephen and Maurice Fitzgerald, Welsh gentlemen, distressed in their circumstances and ready to engage in any desperate enterprise.<sup>1</sup> Relying on their promises, Dermot returned to Ireland, and found, during the winter months, a secure asylum in the monastery of Ferns. In the beginning of the summer of 1169 Fitzstephen landed in Bannow Bay, accompanied by one hundred and forty knights and three hundred archers. Dermot joined them with a body of natives, and by the reduction of Wexford struck dismay into the hearts of his enemies. He then led his forces against Donald, the prince of Ossory, a ferocious chieftain, whose jealousy a few years before had deprived the eldest of Dermot's sons of sight, and afterwards of life. The men of Ossory, five thousand in number, amid their forests and marshes, defended themselves with success; but by a pretended flight they were drawn into the plain, where a charge of the English cavalry bore them to the ground, and the fallen were immediately despatched by the natives under the banner of Dermot. A trophy of two hundred heads was erected at the feet of that savage, who testified his joy by clapping his hands, leaping in the air, and pouring out thanksgivings to the Almighty. As he turned over the heap, he discovered the head of a former enemy. His hatred was rekindled at the sight, and seizing it by the ears, in a paroxysm of fury he tore off the nose with his teeth.

The ambition of Dermot now aspired to the sovereignty of the island. With this view he solicited reinforcements from England, and reminded the earl of Pembroke of his engagements. "We have seen," says Dermot, in a singular letter preserved by Giraldus,<sup>k</sup> "the storks and the swallows. The birds of the spring have paid us their annual visit, and at the warning of the blast have departed to other climes. But our best friend has hitherto disappointed our hopes. Neither the breezes of the summer nor the storms of the winter have conducted him to these shores." His expectations were soon realised by the arrival of Fitzgerald and Raymond, with twenty knights and one hundred and seventy archers (1170). The strangers landed four miles to the south of Waterford, and were immediately opposed by O'Phelan at the head of three thousand men. They retired before the multitude to the rock of Dundolf, where, aided by the advantage of the ground, they repelled every attack. Fame exaggerated the loss of the natives to five hundred men; but the glory of the victory was sullied by the cruelty of the invaders, who wantonly precipitated seventy of their captives from the promontory into the sea.

When Strongbow (Pembroke) despatched the last reinforcement, he had obtained an ambiguous permission from Henry: he now followed with twelve hundred archers and knights, though he had recently received an absolute

<sup>1</sup> These brothers were, by different husbands, the sons of Nesta, a Welsh princess, who while she was the mistress of Henry I had borne to that monarch Robert, the celebrated earl of Gloucester.

[1170-1171 A.D.]

prohibition. At the third assault Waterford was taken. Dermot eagerly marched against Dublin. It was carried by storm, and the victor testified by numerous donations his gratitude for the services of his auxiliaries. But while he was meditating new conquests, he was arrested by death; and Strongbow, who had previously married his daughter Eva, and had been appointed his successor, immediately assumed the royal authority. The most powerful efforts were now made to expel the strangers from Dublin. The former inhabitants, who had escaped under Asculf the Ostman, attempted, with the aid of sixty Norwegian vessels, to regain the city. They were scarcely repulsed when Roderick, king of Connaught, sat down before it. In the ninth week of the siege he was surprised by a sally from the garrison, and his followers were completely dispersed. Lastly, O'Rourke with the natives of Meath undertook to avenge the cause of his country. He lost his son and the bravest of his associates.

## HENRY II IN IRELAND (1171 A.D.)

When the Welsh adventurers first sailed to the aid of Dermot, Henry had viewed the enterprise with contempt; their subsequent success awakened his jealousy. As soon as he heard of the capture of Waterford, he forbade by proclamation any of his subjects to cross over to Ireland, and commanded all who had already joined in the invasion to return under the penalty of forfeiture. Strongbow was alarmed, and despatched Raymond to lay his conquests at the feet of his sovereign. The messenger was unable to procure an answer. Henry of Mountmaurice followed, and was equally unsuccessful. The earl, convinced of his danger, now adopted the advice of his friends, and repairing to England waited on Henry at Newnham, in Gloucestershire. At first he was ignominiously refused an audience; and to recover the royal favour renewed his homage and fealty, surrendered to Henry the city of Dublin, the surrounding cantreds, and the castles and harbours in his possession, and consented to hold the remainder of his lands in Ireland as tenant-in-chief of the English crown.

With this the king was satisfied; the acquisitions of the adventurers had been transferred to himself; and he permitted Strongbow to accompany him to Milford Haven, where he embarked with five hundred knights, their esquires, and a numerous body of archers, on board a fleet of four hundred transports. He landed at Waterford, received during a hasty progress the homage of the neighbouring princes, and directed his march towards Dublin, where a temporary palace of timber had been erected for his reception (November, 1171). It was his wish rather to allure than to compel submission; and the chieftains, whom hope, or fear, or example daily led to his court, were induced to swear obedience to his authority, were invited to his table, and were taught to admire the magnificence and affability of their new sovereign. But while so many others crowded to Dublin, O'Connor refused to meet a superior; and the severity of the season, with the inundation of the country, placed him beyond the reach of resentment. He condescended, however, to see the royal messengers on the banks of the Shannon, and to make in their presence a nominal submission. The princes of Ulster alone obstinately preserved their independence: they would neither visit the king nor own his authority.

When in the preceding year Dermot let loose his foreign auxiliaries against his countrymen, the Irish bishops, surprised at their unexampled success,

had assembled at Armagh, and looking on the strangers as the ministers of the divine wrath had enacted that every slave who had been imported from England should be immediately restored to his freedom. After the arrival of Henry they held another synod at Cashel, under the presidency of the papal legate, the bishop of Lismore; signed a formal recognition of the king's sovereignty; and framed several canons for the reform of their church. By these, polygamy and incestuous marriages were prohibited; the clergy were declared exempt from the exactions of their chieftains; the payment of tithes was enjoined; the form was prescribed by which the dying ought to dispose of their property; and provision was made for the decent sepulture of the dead.

It had been the wish of Henry to spend the following summer in Ireland, to penetrate to the western and northern coasts, and by the erection of castles in favourable situations to insure the submission of the country. But he was recalled to England in the spring by affairs of greater urgency, and left the island without having added an inch of territory to the acquisitions of the original adventurers. His nominal sovereignty was, indeed, extended over four out of five provinces, but his real authority was confined to the cantreds in the vicinity of his garrisons. There the feudal customs and services were introduced and enforced; in the rest of the island the national laws prevailed; and the Irish princes felt no other change in their situation than that they had promised to a distant prince the obedience which they had previously paid to the king of Connaught.

At Henry's departure the supreme command had been given by him to Hugh de Lacy, with the county of Meath for his fee. But during the war which afterwards ensued between the king and his sons, De Lacy was summoned to the assistance of the father, and the government of the English conquests reverted to the earl of Pembroke, who possessed neither the authority to check the rapacity of his followers nor the power to overawe the hostility of the natives. The castles which had been fortified in Meath were burnt to the ground; Dublin was repeatedly insulted; four English knights, and four hundred Ostmen, their followers, fell in a battle in Ossory (1174); and the governor himself was compelled to seek refuge within the castle of Waterford. A seasonable supply of forces raised the siege, and restored the preponderance of the English adventurers.

It was during this period, when his authority in Ireland was nearly annihilated, that Henry bethought him of the letter which he had formerly procured from Pope Adrian. It had been forgotten during almost twenty years; now it was drawn from obscurity, was intrusted to William Fitzadelm and Nicholas, prior of Wallingford, and was read by them with much solemnity to a synod of Irish bishops. How far it served to convince these prelates that the king was the rightful sovereign of the island, we are left to conjecture; but the next year O'Connor sent the archbishop of Tuam to Windsor, and a treaty of "final concord" was concluded by the ministers of the two princes.

In this instrument Henry grants to his liege man, Roderick O'Connor, king of Connaught, that he should be king under the English crown as long as he faithfully performed the services to which he was bound; that, on the annual payment of tribute, he should possess his own lands in peace, as he did before the invasion; that he should have under him all the other chieftains of Ireland, who should hold their lands in peace, as long as they were faithful to the king of England and paid him tribute; that Roderick should collect that tribute and transmit it to Henry; should punish the defaulters;



[1175-1185 A.D.]

and, if it were necessary, call in for that purpose the aid of the king's constable; that the tribute should be every tenth merchantable hide on the lands of the natives; that the authority of Roderick should extend over the whole island with the exception of the demesne lands belonging to Henry and those belonging to his barons—that is, Dublin, Meath, Wexford, and Waterford, as far as Duncannon. Roderick afterwards surrendered one of his sons to Henry as a hostage for his fidelity.

But treaties could not bind the passions of either the natives or the foreigners. The former, urged by national resentment, seized every opportunity of wreaking their vengeance on their despoilers; the latter, for the most part men of lawless habits and desperate fortunes, could support themselves only by plunder, and therefore sought every pretext to create or to prolong hostilities. Strongbow died in 1177, leaving two children by Eva, a son, who followed his father to the grave, and a daughter, named Isabella, heiress to the kingdom of Leinster. With the guardianship of this lady, Henry conferred the government on Fitzadelm, a minister fond of money and addicted to pleasure, who shunned the dangers of war and enriched himself at the expense of his inferiors. De Courey, a rough soldier, and second in command, took advantage of the discontent of the army, and with three hundred and fifty men, in defiance of the governor's prohibition, made an incursion into the province of Ulster (1178). They hoped to surprise Mac Dunlevy, the king, in his residence at Downpatrick: to their astonishment, with the Irish chief they found the Cardinal Vivian, a legate from Rome, on his road towards Dublin.

This ecclesiastic, unable to dissuade the invaders, gave his benediction to Mac Dunlevy, and exhorted him to fight bravely in the defence of his country. But though the men of Ulster were famed for their courage, they were no match for the superior discipline and armour of their opponents; in the three battles victory declared for De Courey, and the conqueror was able to retain the possession of Downpatrick, despite of the constant and occasionally successful hostilities of the natives.

#### PRINCE JOHN MADE LORD OF IRELAND (1185 A.D.)

Henry had obtained from the pontiff a bull empowering him to enfeoff any one of his sons with the lordship of Ireland. In a great council assembled at Oxford he conferred that dignity on John, a boy in his twelfth year; and, cancelling the grants which he had formerly made, retained for himself in demesne all the seaports with the adjoining cantreds, and distributed the rest of the English possessions among the chief adventurers, to be holden by the tenure of military service of him and of his son John. At the same time Hugh de Lacy was appointed lord deputy, an officer whose talents and administration have been deservedly praised. He rebuilt the castles in Meath, invited the fugitives to resettle in their former homes, and by his equity and prudence reconciled them to the dominion of strangers. But his merit, joined to his marriage with a daughter of Roderick O'Connor, alarmed the jealous temper of Henry, and he received an order to resign his authority to Philip de Worcester, who in a few months was superseded by the arrival of Prince John, attended by a numerous force (March, 1185).

Unfortunately the counsellors and favourites of the prince were Normans, who viewed with equal contempt the chieftains of the Irish and the adventurers from Wales. The former they irritated by insults, ridiculing their garb, and

plucking their beards; the latter they offended by removing them from the garrison towns to serve in the marches. Their thirst for wealth made no distinction between friend or foe. Even the lands of the septs, which had hitherto proved faithful, were now divided; and the exiles, from the desire of revenge, their local knowledge, and their gradual improvement in the art of war, soon became formidable adversaries. The strangers lost several of their most fortunate leaders, with the greater part of their retainers; the English ascendancy rapidly declined; the council was divided by opposite opinions and angry recriminations; and John, after an inglorious rule of nine months, was recalled by his father. De Courcy, who succeeded him (1186), by repeated and laborious expeditions preserved, if he did not extend, the English conquests, which comprised the maritime districts of Down, Dublin, Wexford, Waterford, and Cork, connected with each other by a long chain of forts.

This was the period when the natives, had they united in the cause of their country, might in all probability have expelled the invaders. But they wasted their strength in domestic feuds. Even the family of their national sovereign was divided by a most sanguinary contest. Murrough, the son of Roderick, with the aid of an English partisan, had invaded the territory of his father. He was taken, imprisoned, and deprived of sight. His partisans rescued him, and Roderick retired to a convent. By the English of Munster the old king was restored to his throne; his son Connor Mainmoy compelled him once more to return to his asylum. Mainmoy was murdered by one of his brothers—that brother fell by the revenge of a nephew; and Connaught presented a dreadful scene of anarchy and carnage, till another brother, Cathal the bloody-handed, subdued every competitor, and obtained the pre-eminence which had been enjoyed by his father.

That the reader might form an accurate notion of the manner in which the authority of the English princes was originally established in Ireland, we have conducted the narrative of these events to the death of Henry. It is now time to revert to the personal history of that monarch.<sup>d</sup>

#### THE REVOLT OF THE KING'S SONS (1172 A.D.)

During his expedition to Ireland Henry appears to have devoted himself entirely to the concerns of that new accession to his authority. He spent the Christmas of 1171 in Dublin. At the end of March, 1172, vessels arrived from England and Aquitaine, and he immediately resolved to leave the island. It is remarkable that for five months there had been no maritime communication from England or the Continent. It is held that this suspension of intercourse was not accidental, and that the king prevented any vessel coming to disturb him with the announcement that the spiritual arm was uplifted against him on account of the murder of Becket.

When at length an encouraging issue of five months' debate was announced to him, his characteristic vigour was displayed by his immediate presence in Normandy. "The king of England neither rides nor sails; he flies with the rapidity of a bird," said the king of France. Henry [as we have already related] met the legates: solemnly swore in the cathedral of Avranches that he was innocent in word or deed of the murder of the archbishop; and was as solemnly absolved of all censure, upon agreeing to certain concessions in favour of the church, which had the effect of suspending the operations of the Constitutions of Clarendon. Henry was now in his fortieth year, perhaps with that touch of gray in his hair which Peter of Blois has described, but in

[1172 A.D.]

the most perfect vigour of his powerful understanding and energetic will. He had four sons living—Henry, in his eighteenth year; Richard, in his fifteenth; Geoffrey, in his fourteenth; and John, in his sixth. These were the children of Queen Eleanor. In 1172 some influence had been at work to produce a powerful confederacy against the great king of England; and in this confederacy Queen Eleanor and her sons, Henry, Richard, and Geoffrey, were involved. The young Henry had been a second time crowned at Westminster, with his wife, the daughter of the king of France; and he was termed king from this circumstance. It was not unusual, according to a custom of the French monarchy, to crown the heir-apparent. But Prince Henry, at the instigation, it is believed, of his father-in-law, set up a pretension to divide the royal power with his father, and demanded that the king should resign to him either England or Normandy. In the same spirit Richard, the boy of fifteen, claimed Aquitaine because he had performed homage to Louis for that duchy; and the other boy of fourteen, Geoffrey, claimed the immediate possession of Brittany.

The rebellious sons fled from the court of their father to the French king, and their mother soon followed. The bishops of Normandy exhorted her, under pain of ecclesiastical censure, to return with her sons. King Henry took a more effectual mode—he secured her person, and kept her in close durance for many years. This was something more than a domestic quarrel. Louis of France dreaded the great extent of Henry's possessions and stood in awe of his talents. The people of Normandy, and Aquitaine, and Brittany—and especially those of Aquitaine, of whom Eleanor was the duchess—were desirous of independence. By the people, we of course only mean those who had wealth and power. To the villeins and the slaves it was of little consequence who governed them. To the young rebellious princes it appeared, as it has appeared to historians, that the struggle for inheritance was a mere personal question. Richard used to say that it was the birthright of their race to be at variance. But there was something more than this curse fated to rest upon the line of Plantagenet, as the old chroniclers believed. The power which the second Henry had acquired was too enormous to be long upheld. It would have fallen to pieces at once in the hands of a weak king. It was broken up, in less than a quarter of a century after his death, when a king came who was neither a warrior nor a statesman. To avert the severance of his vast dominions, Henry had need of all his great qualities. Louis of France bound himself, with the usual oaths, to aid the young Henry in his attempt to possess England; and the young Henry vowed never to make peace with his father unless France should give consent. There were two other princes who became parties to this league—William, king of Scotland, and Philip, count of Flanders. In England there were discontented barons, whose oppressions were checked by a sovereign who had strenuously asserted the very disagreeable principle of legal justice.

Henry collected an army of twenty thousand adventurers, soldiers of fortune, who were ready to support any cause that afforded pay and plunder. The allied enemies of the king entered Normandy, but they were repulsed.

The Scots made incursions upon the north of England, but they were driven back by Richard de Lacy, the justiciar, and Humphrey de Bohun, the lord constable, who ravaged Lothian and burned Berwick. Meanwhile, the earl of Leicester, who had taken part against the king, had brought over a large body of Flemings; and the force was joined by the earl of Norfolk, at Framlingham castle. Near Bury St. Edmunds they were met by the army which had returned triumphantly from Scotland. The banner of St. Edmund was



carried in front of the royal army; and, at a marshy place called Fornham, on the bank of the river, the rebel forces were entirely defeated, and the earl of Leicester and his countess were taken prisoners. The rebellious barons being thus defeated, many captives were sent to Henry in Normandy. In 1174 the rebellion became even more formidable. The Scots again entered England in great force. The insurrectionary standard was raised in the northern, the midland, and the eastern counties.

A fleet was ready at Gravelines to bring over the young Henry. But there was one who, whilst all around him seemed to be crumbling into ruin, stood as unshaken as in the days of his most joyous security. On the 8th of July the king took ship and crossed the Channel in a heavy storm. He was more than usually solemn during the long and difficult passage. His ordinary gaiety of heart was overclouded by deep thought. The man who had fallen dead at the shrine of St. Bennet at Canterbury was now a canonised saint, at whose tomb miracles were wrought which noble and churl equally believed. On the 10th of July Henry rode from Southampton during the night, and as he saw the cathedral towers of Canterbury looming in the gray dawn, he alighted, and walked in penitential garb barefoot to the city. He knelt at the tomb of Becket in deep humiliation. The bishop of London preached, and maintained that Henry had thus appealed to heaven in avowal of his innocence of the guilt of blood. Then the great king, before the assembled monks and chapter, poured forth his contrition for the passionate exclamation which had been so rashly interpreted; and he was scourged with a knotted cord. He spent the night in the dark crypt, and the next day rode fasting to London. There he fell ill. But on the fifth night of his fever a messenger came from Ranulf de Glanville. "Is Glanville well?" said the king. "He is well, and has now in his custody your enemy, the king of the Scots."

On the morning when Henry was humiliating himself before the tomb of Becket, the Norman barons in the interest of the English king had ridden from Newcastle to Alnwick, and there surprised the king of Scotland, tilting in a meadow with sixty companions. He bravely set lance in rest to meet assailants who were in earnest; but at the first encounter his horse was killed, and he became a captive. The Scottish lords threw down their arms, and a long train of English knights and their prisoners marched the same evening into Newcastle. The insurrection was at an end in England. The army which Henry had sent to oppose the rebel lords was now turned against his rebel sons and Louis of France. In another month Henry had scattered or terrified all his enemies, and at the end of September there was peace.

The king of Scotland was confined for several months in the castle of Falaise. A deputation of Scottish nobles and prelates assembled in Normandy to advise their king; and he was finally liberated, after doing homage to Henry as liege lord, it being stipulated that the Scottish clergy and barons should also take an oath of fealty to the English king, and that certain castles in Scotland should be garrisoned by English. This treaty was ratified at York in the succeeding year. Sir Walter Scott<sup>t</sup> terms this acknowledgment of the king of England as lord paramount of the whole kingdom of Scotland—homage never before having been claimed except for Lothian—"a miserable example of that impatience which too often characterised the Scottish counsels." It was some time before Henry would receive the reconciling homage of his eldest son; but in 1175 they sailed to England in company, and lived in apparent cordiality together.

Relieved of these pressing anxieties, the king again directed his mind to the better administration of his English dominions. In 1176, at a council at

[1176-1185 A.D.]

Northampton, he divided the kingdom into six districts, each having three itinerant justices. The circuits of modern times do not greatly vary from these ancient divisions. It has been imputed to Henry, by Lingard,<sup>d</sup> that he established these courts of assize chiefly to bring money into his own exchequer. That the revenues of the crown would be increased by the power which these justices possessed of inquiring into wardships, lapsed lands, fines received from defaulters, and other matters connected with sovereign rights, cannot be doubted. The pleas of the crown and of the forest afforded royal profit. The common pleas between subject and subject were also a source of pecuniary advantage to the treasury. But that the king and his chief justiciary were desirous to judge righteously, and to compel others so to judge, we have some evidence. Peter of Blois,<sup>f</sup> who always writes to the king with honest freedom, in one of his letters says: "If causes are tried in your highness's presence, or before your chief justice, there is no place for bribery or favour; all goes on equitably, and your sentences do not exceed, in the least degree, the bounds of moderation. But if a poor man's cause goes to the petty judges, the wicked is justified for his gifts, snares are laid for the poor, quibbles on syllables are practised, and word-catching." In the same letter he says: "Your justices in eyre, who are sent to check other men's faults, have a great many of their own. They hide men's crimes, from favour, or fear, or relationship, or for money." Henry did not allow these practices to remain unchecked. In three years after their appointment he removed all the justices in eyre, except Ranulf de Glanville, who, with five others, held assizes north of the Trent. He was subsequently appointed chief justiciar.

During the peace which Henry enjoyed for eight years after the suppression of the revolts of 1174, he devoted himself to the unremitting discharge of his civil duties. That tranquillity was not disturbed till 1183. In that year the unquiet Plantagenet blood was again asserting "the birthright of their race to be at variance." Henry, the eldest son, had been the foremost in every tournament; and Richard and Geoffrey were equally emulous of the fame of accomplished knights. In 1183 the king commanded Richard to do homage to his elder brother for Aquitaine. He refused, and Henry entered Richard's territory with an army. The father interposed, and apparently reconciled the sons. But new causes of quarrel arose; and then Henry and Geoffrey rebelled against the king. Into these quarrels, as obscure in their details as they are hateful in their principle, we have no desire to enter. Being about to give battle to his father, the young Henry fell ill, and then he became penitent. The king, always forgiving, sent him a ring as a token of his love, and the unhappy man died pressing that token to his lips. Geoffrey was pardoned; but he then made new demands, and repaired to the court of Philip, now king of France, to excite new troubles. In 1186 he was thrown from his horse at a tournament, and died in a few days. Richard and John only remained, to show "how sharper than a serpent's tooth" is filial ingratitude.

## THE LAST YEARS OF HENRY II

Louis of France died in 1180, and Henry of England was then released from their mutual obligation to visit the Holy Land. In England there were two powerful bodies especially sworn as defenders of the cross—the knights Hospitallers and the Knights Templars. In 1185, during a suspension of hostilities with Saladin, the patriarch of Jerusalem, Heraclius, arrived in England; and the church of the new house of the Templars in London was

consecrated by him. In those quiet courts, now so changed, but looking out upon the same broad river, dwelt the prior, the knights, and the serving brethren of the great order of the Templars. In that round church, which in late years has been restored to its primitive beauty, the chaplains of the community prayed for the fall of the infidel; and the knights who had fought against him were buried with monumental honour—as they were in other churches—distinguished by that singular attitude of the crossed legs, which denoted that the Holy Land had witnessed the performance of their sacred vows.

Heraclius had a special mission in England. It was to urge King Henry, as the representative of Fulk of Anjou, whose descendants had been kings of Jerusalem for half a century, to rescue the sacred city from the dangers by



MALMESBURY ABBEY

(Twelfth century)

which she was threatened. Henry referred the question to his great council—whether he should go to the East, for the defence of Palestine, or remain to govern the nations of which heaven had given him the charge. The council decided wisely. The king remained: but he promised a large sum to assist those who were engaged in the sacred warfare. In 1187 Jerusalem was surrendered to Saladin. Then went forth deep lamentation throughout Europe. A pope died of grief. A king wore sackcloth. Other sovereigns trembled for the safety of their own possessions, under a possible invasion of the triumphant Mussulmans. In 1188 Henry proceeded to France, and he and Philip Augustus resolved to take the cross. He returned to England, and obtained an enormous tribute, of which nearly one-half was extorted from the Jews.

Henry was bent upon a new field of enterprise. He was yet vigorous, though past the prime of life. But a suspicious friendship had arisen between Philip and Henry's son, Richard. The real causes of the troubles that ensued are not very manifest; but the disputes ended in Richard joining the French king in a war against his father. The projected crusade was necessarily suspended. Philip and Richard took his castles, whilst Henry remained



[1188-1189 A.D.]

in a condition of unusual supineness. He was now broken in spirit. He met the king of France in a plain near Tours, during a violent thunder-storm. His agitation was great. In his weakened health he yielded, almost without a struggle, to the demands which were made upon him. They were exorbitant, and put that proud heart wholly under subjection to the will of Philip and that of his rebellious son Richard. Throughout these unnatural conflicts he had rested his hopes upon his beloved John, to whom he had required his seneschal to deliver his castles in the event of his death, and who he had hoped might possess Normandy. On a sick-bed he signed the treaty. He had asked for the names of those barons who had joined the French king. The first name he saw was John. He read no more. The world and all its troubles and hopes faded from his view. He turned his face to the wall, and exclaimed, "Let everything go as it will." He was then carried in a litter to his pleasant palace of Chinon, and there laid himself down to die. One only watched over him with real affection—his illegitimate son, Geoffrey. His great heart was broken. On the 6th of July, 1189, Henry II was no more.<sup>2</sup>

Besides his five legitimate sons, of whom three preceded him to the grave, Henry had three daughters by his wife Eleanor. Matilda, the eldest, was married to Henry, duke of Saxony, Bavaria, Westphalia, etc.; and from her is descended the present royal family of Great Britain. Eleanor, the second daughter, was married to Alfonso the Good, king of Castile; and Joan, the youngest, was united to William II, king of Sicily, a prince of the Norman line of Guiscard. Two of his natural children have obtained the general notice of history on account of the celebrity of their mother, Rosamond, and of their own eminent qualities. The first, who was born while Stephen was yet on the throne of England, was William, surnamed Longsword, who married the heiress of the earl of Salisbury, and succeeded to the high titles and immense estates of that baron; the second was the still better known Geoffrey,<sup>1</sup> who was born about the time when Henry became king, and who was made bishop of Lincoln at a very early age. He had much of Henry's spirit and ability, and, if an indifferent prelate, he was a bold and successful warrior in his *nonage*, when (during the first insurrection promoted by his father's legitimate sons) he gained in the north some signal advantages for the king, to whom he and his brother, William Longsword, were ever faithful and affectionate. Geoffrey was subsequently made chancellor, when, like Becket in the same capacity, he constantly accompanied the king. In his dying moments Henry expressed a hope or a wish that he might be made archbishop of York, a promotion which he afterwards obtained.

## THE STORY OF FAIR ROSAMOND

The history of their mother, the "Fair Rosamond," has been enveloped in romantic traditions which have scarcely any foundation in truth, but which have taken so firm a hold on the popular mind, and have been identified with so much poetry, that it is neither an easy nor a pleasant task to dissipate the fanciful illusion, and unpeople the "bower" in the sylvan shades of Woodstock. Rosamond de Clifford was the daughter of a baron of Herefordshire,

[<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey was certainly not, as here stated, a son of "Fair Rosamond" Clifford. His mother was probably an English woman, but otherwise nothing is known of her. His age makes it certain that Rosamond could not have been his mother. Norgate<sup>b</sup> says he must have been born before Henry's accession—probably between 1151-1153. Henry, it must be remembered, had a legitimate son of the same name who died in 1186.]

the beautiful site of whose antique castle, in the valley of the Wye, is pointed out to the traveller between the town of the Welsh Hay and the city of Hereford, at a point where the most romantic of rivers, after foaming through its rocky, narrow bed in Wales, sweeps freely and tranquilly through an open English valley of surpassing loveliness. Henry became enamoured of her in his youth, before he was king, and the connection continued for many years but long before his death, and even long before his quarrel with his wife and legitimate sons (with which, it appears, she had nothing to do), Rosamond retired, to lead a religious and penitent life, into the "little nunnery" of Godestow, in the "rich meadows of Evenlod near unto Oxford."

As Henry still preserved gentle and generous feelings towards the object of his youthful passion, he made many donations to the "little nunnery" on her account; and when she died (some time, at least, before the first rebellion) the nuns, in gratitude to one who had been both directly and indirectly their benefactress, buried her in their choir, hung a silken pall over her tomb, and kept tapers constantly burning around it. These few lines, we believe, comprise all that is really known of the Fair Rosamond. The legend, so familiar to the childhood of all of us, was of later and gradual growth, not being the product of one imagination. The chronicler Brompton,<sup>s</sup> who wrote in the time of Edward III, or more than a century and a half after the event, gave the first description we possess of the secret bower of Rosamond. He says that, in order that she might not be "easily taken unawares by the queen," Henry constructed, near "Wodestoke," a bower for this "most slightly maiden," of wonderful contrivance, and not unlike the Dædalean labyrinth; but he speaks only of a device against surprise, and intimates, in clear terms, that Rosamond died a natural death. The clue of silk, and the poison-bowl forced on her fair and gentle rival by the jealous and revengeful Eleanor, were additions of a still more modern date.

The adventures of the amiable frail one's unoffending bones are better authenticated. A rigid bishop caused them to be cast out of the church and interred in the common cemetery, observing to the nuns that the tomb of a harlot was no fit object for a choir of virgins to contemplate, and that religion made no distinction between the mistress of a king and the mistress of any other man. But gratitude rebelled against this salutary doctrine, and the virgin sisterhood of Godestow gathered up the remains, perfumed the dry bones, laid them again in their church, under a fair, large gravestone, and set up a cross hard by, with an inscription imploring requiem or rest for Rosamond.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE CHARACTER OF HENRY II

If we seek the character of the founder of the Common Law in the pages of the justiciar (Glanville<sup>o</sup>), we shall view him as greater and more powerful than any king who had hitherto borne sway in England—just, discreet, and merciful; a lover of peace, but whose humanity did not degenerate into indolence or supineness; mighty, but who never allowed his strength to tempt him into tyranny. By the force of his right hand he crushed the violence of the proud and intractable, while he extended his sceptre to the indigent and lowly. None of the judges of his court could dare to deviate, however slightly, from the path of righteousness, nor to utter a sentence contrary to the dictates of truth. In his supreme tribunal, the power of the adversary oppressed not the poor man; neither could favor or credit drive the lowly from the

[1189 A.D.]

of judgment. Such are the sentences which preface the earliest treatise on the Law.

But in the portrait which we receive from the ecclesiastic Ralph Niger,<sup>p</sup> who on account of his support of Becket was exiled by Henry, every virtue disappears: unchaste, greedy, avaricious, capricious, and cruel, he abolished all the old and rightful laws of the country, by the new ordinances termed "assizes," which he promulgated every year. Severe beyond example, his jurisprudence was subversive both of natural justice and of the laudable customs of the realm. Attacking, with an even hand, the honour, the privileges, and the property of the aristocracy, and the franchises of the clergy, no individual was so exalted as to be above the reach of his arbitrary power; no one so insignificant as to be sheltered by obscurity from his searching tyranny. This strange discrepancy between the minister and the monk may be attributed in part to the difference of their respective stations. The persecutor of Becket could find little favour from the churchman; and the charge preferred against him that "he kept the guilty priest in fetters, making no distinction between the clerk and the churl," may not be considered as a proof of the impartiality of the complainant; but the fiscal extortions of Henry, together with the abuses resulting from the sale of right and justice, have been faithfully recorded. In opposition to the praises of his equity, so loudly bestowed by Glanville, we can quote the declaration of the suitor, who counts the bribes which he paid to the monarch; and the testimony afforded by the justiciar is rendered suspicious by his known perversion of the law to answer his own sinister designs.<sup>n</sup>

### *Peter of Blois' Description of Henry II*

You are aware that his complexion and hair were a little red, but the approach of old age has altered this somewhat and the hair is turning gray. He is of middle size, such that among short men he seems tall, and even among tall ones not the least in stature. His head is spherical, as if it were the seat of great wisdom and the special sanctuary of deep schemes. In size it is such as to correspond well with the neck and whole body. His eyes are round and, while he is calm, dove-like and quiet; but when he is angry, they flash fire and are like lightning. His hair is not grown scant, but he keeps it well cut. His face is lion-like, and almost square. His nose projects in a degree proportionate to the symmetry of his whole body. His feet are arched; his shins like a horse's; his broad chest and brawny arms proclaim him to be strong, active, and bold. In one of his toes, however, part of the nail grows into the flesh, and increases enormously, to the injury of the whole foot. His hands by their coarseness show the man's carelessness; he wholly neglects all attention to them, and never puts a glove on, except he is hawking.

He every day attends mass, councils, and other public business, and stands on his feet from morning till night. Though his shins are terribly wounded and discoloured by constant kicks from horses, he never sits down except on horseback or when he is eating. In one day, if need requires, he will perform four or five regular days' journeys, and by these rapid and unexpected movements often defeats his enemies' plans. He uses straight boots, a plain hat, and a tight dress. He is very fond of field sports, and if he is not fighting, amuses himself with hawking and hunting. He would have grown enormously fat if he did not tame this tendency to belly by fasting and exercise. In mounting a horse and riding he preserves all the light-



ness of youth, and tires out the strongest men by his excursions almost every day. For he does not, like other kings, lie idle in his palace, but goes through his provinces examining into everyone's conduct, and particularly that of the persons whom he has appointed judges of others. No one is shrewder in council, readier in speaking, more self-possessed in danger, more careful in prosperity, more firm in adversity. If he once forms an attachment to a man he seldom gives him up; if he has once taken a real aversion to a person, he seldom admits him afterwards to any familiarity. He has forever in his hands bows, swords, hunting-nets, and arrows, except he is at council or at his books; for as often as he can get breathing time from his cares and anxieties he occupies himself with private reading, or, surrounded by a knot of clergymen, he endeavours to solve some hard question. The constant con-



WARKWORTH CASTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND

(From the twelfth to the fourteenth century)

versation of learned men and the discussion of questions make his court a daily school.

No one can be more dignified in speaking, more cautious at table, more moderate in drinking, more splendid in gifts, more generous in arms. He is pacific in heart, victorious in war, but glorious in peace, which he desires for his people as the most precious of earthly gifts. It is with a view to this that he receives, collects, and dispenses such an immensity of money. He is equally skilful and liberal in erecting walls, towers, fortifications, moats, and places of enclosure for fish and birds. No one is more gentle to the distressed, more affable to the poor, more overbearing to the proud. It has always, indeed, been his study, by a certain carriage of himself like a deity, to put down the insolent, to encourage the oppressed, and to repress the swellings of pride by continual and deadly persecution. Although, by the customs of the kingdom, he has the chief and most influential part in elections (of bishops?), his hands have always been pure from anything like venality. But these and other excellent gifts of mind and body with which nature has enriched him I can but briefly touch. I profess my own incompetence to describe them, and believe that Cicero or Virgil would labour in vain.

I often wonder how one who has been used to the service of scholarship and the camps of learning can endure the annoyances of a court life. Among

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courtiers there is no order, no plan, no moderation, either in food, in horse exercises, or in watchings. A priest or a soldier attached to the court has bread put before him which is not kneaded, nor leavened, made of the dregs of beer—bread like lead, full of bran, and unbaked; wine, spoiled either by being sour or mouldy—thick, greasy, rancid, tasting of pitch, and vapid. I have sometimes seen wine so full of dregs put before noblemen that they were compelled rather to filter than drink it, with their eyes shut and their teeth closed, with loathing and retching. The beer at court is horrid to taste and filthy to look at. On account of the great demand, meat, whether sweet or not, is sold alike; the fish is four days old, yet its stinking does not lessen its price. The servants care nothing whatever whether the unlucky guests are sick or dead, provided there are fuller dishes sent up to their master's tables. Indeed, the tables are filled (sometimes) with carrion, and the guests' stomachs thus become the tombs for those who die in the course of nature. Indeed, many more deaths would ensue from this putrid food were it not that the famishing greediness of the stomach (which, like a whirlpool, will suck in anything), by the help of powerful exercise, gets rid of everything. But if the courtiers cannot have exercise (which is the case if the court stays for a time in a town), some of them always stay behind at the point of death.

This too must be added to the miseries of court: If the king announces his intention of moving three days hence, and particularly if the royal pleasure has been announced by the heralds, you may be quite sure that the king will start by daybreak, and put everybody's plans to the rout by his unexpected despatch. Thus it frequently happens that persons who have been let blood, or have taken physic, follow the king without regard to themselves, place their existence at the hazard of a die, and, for fear of losing what they neither do nor ever will possess, are not afraid of losing their own lives. You may see men running about like madmen, sumpter-horses pressing on sumpter-horses, and carriages jostling against carriages, all, in short, in utter confusion. So that, from the thorough disturbance and misery, one might get a good description of the look of hell. But if his majesty has given notice beforehand that he will move to such a place very early the next day, his plan will certainly be changed, and you may therefore be sure that he will sleep till mid-day. You will see the sumpter-horses waiting with their burdens on, the carriages all quiet, the pioneers asleep, the court purveyors in a worry, and all muttering to one another; then they run to the prostitutes and the court shopkeepers to inquire of them whether the prince will go, for this class of court followers very often know the secrets of the palace.

The king's court, indeed, is regularly followed by stage-players, washer-women, dice-players, confectioners, tavern-keepers, buffoons, barbers, pick-pockets—in short, the whole race of this kind. I have often known that, when the king was asleep and everything in deep silence, a message came from the royal quarters (not omnipotent, perhaps, but still awaking all), and told us the city or town to which we were to go. After we had been worn out with expectation, it was some comfort at all events that we were to be fixed where we might hope to find plenty of lodgings and provisions. There was then such a hurried and confused rush of horse and foot immediately that you would think all hell had broken loose. However, when the pioneers had quite or nearly finished their day's journey, the king would change his mind, and go to some other place, where, perhaps, he had the only house and a plenty of provisions, none of which were given to anyone else. And, if I dare say so, I really think that his pleasure was increased by our

annoyance. We had to travel three or four miles through unknown woods, and often in the dark, and thought ourselves too happy if at length we could find a dirty and miserable hut. There was often a violent quarrel among the courtiers about the cottages, and they would fight with swords about a place for which pigs would have been ashamed to quarrel.

By exceeding complaisance you may sometimes keep in favour with the outer porters for two days, but this will not last to a third, unless you buy it with continued gifts and flattery. They will tell the most unblushing falsehoods, and say that the king is ill, or asleep, or at council. And if you are an honest and religious man, but have given them nothing the day before, they will keep you an unreasonable time standing in the rain and mire; and to annoy you the more, and move your bile, they will allow a set of hair-dressers and thieves to go in at the first word. As to the door-keepers of the presence, may the Most High confound them! For they are not afraid to put every good man to the blush, and cover him with confusion. Have you got by the terrible porters without? It is of no avail, unless you have bribed the door-keeper! After the first Cerberus, there is another worse than Cerberus, more terrible than Briareus, more wicked than Pygmalion, and more cruel than the Minotaur. If you were in the greatest danger of losing your life, or your fortune, to the king you cannot go; nay, it often happens, to make things ten thousand times worse, that while you are kept out these wretches let your enemy in. O Lord Jesus Christ, if this is the way of living, if this is the life of the court, may I never go back to it again! I cannot attempt to reckon the grievous loss of time which I have already sustained in years of trifling about the court.<sup>f</sup>

#### LEGISLATION OF HENRY II

No time is richer than this in legal history. The whole reign of Henry II was a reign of legislation, and the work was not interrupted even during the time of the great struggle with the archbishop. In the year before the promotion of Thomas to the primacy, king and chancellor had dealt one direct blow at all feudal ideas. In the war of Toulouse the scutage was first devised; a money payment was accepted instead of personal military service. The money was of course spent in hiring mercenaries; and it was largely by the help of mercenaries that Henry subdued his rebels in England. But later in his reign, by the Assize of Arms (1181), he regulated the old constitutional force of the country, and enjoined that every free Englishman should be ready to serve with the weapons belonging to his rank.

Other incidental notices show us that much legislation was done while Henry still had Thomas for his minister. The reign of Henry is rich in charters to boroughs, several of which are early enough in his reign to bear the signature of Chancellor Thomas. And a reference in the Constitutions of Clarendon shows that, thus early in his reign, Henry had begun that great step towards the development of jury trial which is one of the special marks of his reign. By the work of Henry and his chancellor the system of recognition was organised, by which sworn men gave a verdict, but as yet a verdict given from their own knowledge. The great legal writer of Henry's reign, the justiciar Glanville,<sup>o</sup> speaks of the recognition as a special gift of Henry to his people, and enlarges on its superiority to the wager of battle. All this comes within the chancellorship of Thomas; and we shall do the chancellor great injustice if we think wholly of his later ecclesiastical character and



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forget his services in the days when he was the chief minister of one of our greatest kings. Of the extant ordinances of Henry's reign, the oldest after the charter issued at his coronation are the Constitutions of Clarendon themselves (1164). The Assize of Clarendon—a wholly distinct document (1166)—and the Inquest of Sheriffs (1170) came during the time of the quarrel with Thomas.

On these, after the death of Thomas, follow in 1176 the Assize of Northampton, in 1181 the Assize of Arms, and in 1184 the Assize of the Forest. All these bear witness to Henry's care, even when he was most occupied with other matters, to preserve the peace of the land, and to enable all his subjects to have justice done to them in the king's name. And in all, the mode of inquisition by the oath of twelve lawful men grows at each step. The Assizes of Clarendon and Northampton have a special reference to one of Henry's great measures, that by which the visitation of the country by itinerant judges going regular circuits was finally established. It was not an invention of his own; the visits of the king's judges had begun to take a regular shape under Henry I. But it was Henry II who organised the whole system afresh after the anarchy. It was he who finally established the specially English principle that justice should be administered in different parts of the kingdom by judges not belonging to the particular district, but immediately commissioned by the king. When the king's judges came and received the inquisitions of the local jurors, though the complete modern ideal of a judge and jury had not been reached, yet something had been reached which could grow into that ideal without any one moment of change so great as the changes wrought by Henry himself. By him the jury was applied to all manner of purposes.

The Assize of Arms was distinctly a return to the old military system. It gave a new life to the *fyrð*, the ancient militia, which had never gone out of use, but which had been overshadowed by feudal levies on the one hand and by the use of mercenaries on the other. Each man was to have the arms which befitted the amount of his property. It was by a jury that the liability of each man to be ranked in such or such a class was to be fixed. Even in the Assize of the Forest, an ordinance framed to protect the most exceptional and most oppressive of all the royal rights, the popular element comes in. Sworn knights are appointed in each shire to protect those rights. Lastly, when in 1188 the tithe<sup>1</sup> was levied for the defence of eastern Christendom against Saladin, the liability of each man to the impost was assessed by a local jury. In all these ways the appeal to the oath of lawful men, as opposed to any other form of finding out truth, was strengthened by every step in the legislation of Henry.

Meanwhile the administrative system which had been growing up ever since the Conquest took firm root under Henry. We have a contemporary picture of it, drawn by one of Henry's own officials, in the *Dialogus de Scaccario*.<sup>r</sup> This was the work of Richard, treasurer of the exchequer and bishop of London, one of the family of officials founded by Roger of Salisbury. Alongside of this, we have our first strictly legal treatise, as distinguished from private compilations and codes, in the work of the great justiciar Glanville.<sup>o</sup>

[<sup>1</sup>The real importance of the ordinance by which the "Saladin tithe" was instituted consists in its being the earliest attempt to impose a tax on personal property, and in the employment of local jurors to determine the responsibility of the individual. In this latter aspect it shows a striking difference from the corresponding act of Philip Augustus, which may well be said to point the difference in the existing political systems of England and France. The ordinance of Henry II showed a development of the representative theory; that of Philip Augustus rested on the feudal basis.]

In short, we may say that under Henry the legal system of England took a shape which it has practically kept ever since. The endless changes of the last seven hundred years are rather special amendments of Henry's work than anything which can be said to start altogether afresh from a new point. Strictly constitutional advance rather belongs to the reigns of Henry's sons than to that of Henry himself. Nor is this wonderful. Constitutional advance commonly means the lessening of the royal power, and acts which lessen the royal power do not often issue from the free will of kings. In Henry's time, above all, a time when law and order had to be restored after the reign of anarchy, the momentary need was rather to strengthen the royal power than to lessen it. Legal reforms are often, as in this case, the free gift of wise kings; constitutional reforms have commonly to be wrested from weak or wicked kings. But the legal reforms of Henry supplied an element which largely entered into the constitutional reforms of the next stage. Out of Henry's favourite institution of recognitions on oath grew not only trial by jury but also the House of Commons.

By the time of Henry II the force of circumstances, especially the working of the practice of summons, had gradually changed the ancient assembly of the whole nation into a mere gathering of the great men of the realm. The work which had now to be done, and which, in the space of about a hundred years, was gradually done by a number of instruments, conscious and unconscious, was to call into being a second and more popular assembly alongside of the assembly which had lost its popular character. To use language which belongs to a somewhat later time than that with which we are now dealing, the House of Lords already existed; the House of Commons had to be called into being alongside of it. The details of this great process of constitutional growth must be drawn out by the strictly constitutional historian. All that can be done here is to call attention to the main lines of the process and to its more remarkable landmarks. And it may be well from the very beginning to give the warning that the two houses of the English parliament did not arise out of any theoretical preference for two houses over one or three. The number was fixed, like everything else in English history, by what we are apt to call circumstances or accidents. The whole English parliamentary system was eminently one which was not made, but grew. Thus, for instance, it was only gradually established that the barons should be personally summoned to the same house as the bishops and earls, while the knights should appear only by their representatives along with the smaller freeholders and the burgesses of the towns.<sup>1</sup>

#### SOCIAL LIFE UNDER THE NORMAN AND ANGEVIN KINGS

The conquest of England by the Normans was an event scarcely to be deplored. The Saxon occupation of the country had now lasted six hundred years; but the rate of national progress had been so slow, and at the time of the Conquest itself appeared to be so decisively arrested, that any impulse, however rude and severe, would have been preferable to such a stagnation. For this want of improvement, also, such causes were in operation as to make any other kind of remedy hopeless.

As might be expected, the first progress of the Normans after their conquest of England was slow, and from the same causes which had retarded that of the Saxons. Although superior to the conquered in refinement, they were still rude and illiterate; and as they were the smaller party, the utmost of their

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efforts for a long time were tasked first to win, and afterwards to retain their ascendancy. The arts of war, therefore, rather than those of peace, occupied their immediate attention, and the march of civilisation, instead of being accelerated, was in the first instance rather retarded by the change. But the shock was soon surmounted, and a foundation laid for future improvement during the course of the present period. William the Conqueror himself was a lover and patron of learning; Henry Beaulere, his son, was distinguished for his scholarship; and Henry II was not only accomplished in the learning of the period, but his sons also were distinguished for their literary acquirements.

It is likewise to be noted that, although one of the earliest oppressions of the Conquest was the deposition of the English ecclesiastical dignitaries, yet their loss was little to be regretted on the score of learning, while their places were filled by foreign prelates of a much superior description. Of these, Lanfranc and Anselm were subtle metaphysicians and theologians; while Geoffrey, who established a school at Dunstable, and Godfrey, prior of St. Swithin's, were excellent Latin poets. Abbeys were also founded and libraries established for the promotion of literature and the extension of education; while schools in connection with cathedrals and monasteries were multiplied over the kingdom. It was chiefly, however, the clergy who availed themselves of these opportunities, for as yet, even of the Norman nobility, there were few who could either read or write. But, indeed, the education delivered at these seminaries was scarcely attractive enough for the stirring spirits of the young men of the day, being chiefly of a theological and scholastic character, mixed up, as might be supposed, with a full amount of the mere pedantry and show of scholarship. Such we learn from the description of Fitzstephen."

"On holidays," he thus writes, "it is usual for these schools to hold public meetings in the churches, in which the scholars engage in demonstrative or logical disputations; some using enthymemes, and others perfect syllogisms; some aiming at nothing but to gain the victory and make an ostentatious display of their acuteness, while others have the investigation of truth in view. Artful sophists on these occasions acquire great applause, some by a prodigious inundation and flow of words, others by their specious but fallacious arguments. After the disputations, other scholars deliver rhetorical declamations, in which they observe all the rules of art, and neglect no topic of persuasion. Even the younger boys in the different schools contend against each other in verse about the principles of grammar and the preterites and supines of verbs." Thus early had that course of education been in full vigour in England, which continued for centuries and as long as the Aristotelian system prevailed. But the seminary which was finally to surpass and eclipse all these institutions is thus described by Peter of Blois, a lively writer who flourished in the reign of Henry II:

"In the year 1109, Joffrid, abbot of Croyland, sent to his manor of Cottenham, near Cambridge, Master Gislebert [Gilbert], his fellow-monk, and professor of theology, with three other monks who had followed him into England, who, being very well instructed in philosophical theorems and other primitive sciences, went every day to Cambridge, and, having hired a certain public barn, taught the sciences openly, and in a little time collected a great course of scholars; for, in the very second year after their arrival, the number of their scholars from the town and country increased so much, that there was no house, barn, nor church capable of containing them. For this reason they separated into different parts of the town, and imitating the plan of the Studium of Orleans, brother Odo, who was eminent as a grammarian and



satirical poet, read grammar according to the doctrine of Priscian, and of his commentator Remegius, to the boys and younger students that were assigned to him, early in the morning. At one o'clock, brother Terrius, a most acute sophist, read the logic of Aristotle according to the introductions and commentaries of Porphyry and Averrhoës, to those who were further advanced. At three, brother William read lectures on Tully's rhetoric and Quintilian's *Institutions*. But Master Gislebert, being ignorant of the English, but very expert in the Latin and French languages, preached in the several churches to the people on Sundays and holidays. From this little fountain which hath swelled into a great river, we now behold the city of God made glad, and all England rendered fruitful by many teachers and doctors issuing from Cambridge, after the likeness of the holy paradise."

It will be noticed here that in such a concourse of learned men from different countries, Latin was the conventional language, which was spoken with the ease and fluency of a living tongue. But to preach in it before illiterate rustic audiences, as Master Gilbert appears to have done! The people, however, were probably charmed with the sound, and only the more convinced by how little they could comprehend. Such phenomena are not rare in preaching. In this way, Giraldus Cambrensis roused the people of Wales to arms, while preaching a crusade in 1186 for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. He harangued them in Latin, of which they did not understand a word; but they wept, and hurried forward in crowds to enrol themselves for the war in Palestine.

### *The Growth of Towns*

We now turn our eyes to the general condition of society both in town and country. Already, not only "the sweet security of streets" was felt doubly needful in the new state of things, but also that spirit of centralisation had vigorously commenced which gives birth to national industry, wealth, and civilisation. Thus, Bristol, Exeter, Winchester, Gloucester, and Chester were already populous towns, to which may be added Dunwich, Lynn, Lincoln, and Norwich; and all of them were distinguished either for home or foreign trade, especially the latter, which was carried on with Ireland and the Continent. In like manner, the towns along the coast of England in general, which afterwards rose into opulence, were coming into note through their shipping and commercial enterprise. But already the court and the Thames had imparted to London that pre-eminence which it still so immeasurably holds over every other English city; and the Latin style of Fitzstephen<sup>a</sup> scarcely furnishes him with words of sufficient bulk and weight to describe its magnificence. It contained forty thousand inhabitants! In the city and suburbs were 126 parochial churches and thirteen large conventual ones, while Ludgate was the extreme west end of the city. The inhabitants, too, were reckoned something better than mere ordinary citizens, just as the citizens of Rome in ancient times became the patricians of the overgrown republic.

Its traffic was carried on with every country, but chiefly with Germany; and the provisions that were garnered within its granaries were the chief resource of the surrounding districts during the occasional visits of famine. A trade so brisk and so extensive, he adds, was also properly systematised, so that not only the merchants of every commodity, but the workmen of every craft had their respective places assigned to them. London also was curiously bounded, according to the ideas of the nineteenth century. The city was girdled with a great and high wall, having seven gates which were made double; and on the north and south it had towers and turrets at intervals; but on the

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south side the wall was worn out and washed away by the ebb and flow of the Thames. Such was the fate of the riverside fortifications in the time of Fitzstephen, and about the same period the stone bridge of London arose in their place, thus connecting both sides of the Thames, which had formerly been wedged asunder. Ludgate, as we have already mentioned, was the west end of London: the space between it and Westminster was a tract of fields and gardens. Smithfield, as yet a suburban locality, was then, as till lately, a cattle market, in which horses, cows, hogs, and other animals were sold. Moorfields was a large lake, formed by the confluence of several streams that turned mills. That great artery of London now called the City road, with its countless ramifications of streets, consisted at that time of pasturage and corn-fields; while beyond that rural territory now known as Islington and Pentonville, a large tract of forest extended, stored with wild boars and other game, where the citizens enjoyed the recreation of hunting. Thus much for London, which even at that period was the marvel of foreigners on account of its greatness and its wealth. Well might the German barons who accompanied Richard I exclaim, when they saw the magnificence of his reception within its walls: "O king! if our emperor had suspected this, you would not have been let off so lightly!"

### *The Jews and Flemings*

While adverting to the mercantile character of the English towns, it is necessary to allude to those persons by whom the infant commerce and manufactures of the nation were at this period chiefly promoted. And first among the men of business we may mention the Jews, who even at this early period had perceived the facilities which England possessed for gainful traffic, and who flocked thither in great numbers. True to their national character, and the doom imposed upon them of having no abiding home or resting-place, they neither dealt in land nor bulky articles of merchandise, neither built, created, nor manufactured; on the contrary, they dealt in money, the light symbol and representative of these substantialities; and that they might be enabled to gird up their loins and flee at a moment's warning, without the risk and labour of carrying gold and silver along with them, they symbolised the symbol itself, by the use of bills of exchange and letters of credit, so that they could carry their whole fortune away in the shape of a few scraps of paper or parchment. The towns were the natural abodes of such men, and especially the capital, where they pursued the vocation of money-lenders, and drove a thriving trade, on account of the prodigality of the Norman nobles.

The law, too, was greatly in their favour, for while every Christian was prohibited from exacting any interest whatever upon a loan, the Jews were untouched by the statute, and might lay on their percentages to whatever amount they pleased. But although they were thus the brokers of the court, and money-lenders of royalty itself, their very profits made their situation more precarious than that of a farmer of taxes in the French revolution, or a Turkish pasha under the old régime; for like leeches they were compelled to disgorge as often as their tyrants were pleased to turn upon them; and in this way the English kings were able to draw into the royal treasury the money of the people, without the odium of collecting it. The histories of Richard I and John show how well these sovereigns understood such a simple and direct mode of finance. But this was not the worst which these outcasts of the world were compelled to endure; and the record of their sufferings during the crusading frenzy forms one of the most melancholy as well as atrocious episodes in the ancient chronicles of England.

It was fortunate that another class of people were already settled in the country, from whom its mercantile interests were to derive more substantial benefits than could ever be obtained from Jewish usurers. These were Flemish emigrants, who, in consequence of the bursting of their dikes, had been deprived of the territory which they had won from the sea, and were therefore obliged to seek a more permanent home. They first came to England in the time of the Conqueror, and as they were brave as well as industrious men they were located on the frontier of Wales, where they formed a sort of steady break-water against the stormy invasions of the Welsh. This colony was soon increased by fresh arrivals; and Henry II, perceiving the benefits to be derived from such a people, not only enlarged their territory, but endowed them with many political privileges. England had hitherto not been a manufacturing country, but the arrival of these Flemings introduced the preparation and weaving of wool, so that, in process of time, not only the home market was abundantly supplied with woollen cloth, but a large surplus made for foreign exportation.

Unlike the Jews, too, these Flemings, while they formed a gallant border defence against the Welsh, and diffused industrial arts and habits among the English, were not only Christians, but kinsmen of the Anglo-Saxon race, and distinguished for that probity in their commercial dealings which afterwards became the characteristic of the English merchants at large. From England, these Flemings gradually introduced themselves into Scotland, where David I protected them, and allowed them to be governed by their own laws and usages. In this way not only the Scottish manufactures originated, but the trade of Scotland with Flanders, which continued for centuries, and was of great utility to both countries.

### *Architecture*

The taste of the Normans for magnificent buildings was well attested by the churches, palaces, and castles which they erected in every land where they obtained the predominance; and after the conquest of so rich a country as England, these architectural predilections had scope for full exercise. Accordingly, while the greater part of the principal cathedrals and abbeys of the kingdom owed their origin to this period, a style of architecture was introduced superior to any that had yet been attempted in England. This, indeed, was to be expected where Norman prelates bore rule, and where the resources of the nation were at their command for the realisation of their utmost wishes. But while monasteries and cathedrals were thus so largely multiplied, castles sprang up in still greater profusion. The style in which these edifices were erected, whether ecclesiastical, castellated, or domestic, was that prevalent at the time in Normandy; but it cannot in strictness be said to have been introduced into England at the Conquest, for Edward the Confessor, who had been brought up in the Norman court, had surrounded himself with Normans, and employed Norman architects on his buildings. It is expressly stated that he built the abbey church of Westminster in a "new style of architecture," and that many other churches were imitated from it.

The Norman style continued in use for about one hundred and thirty years—that is, until the time of Richard I, about the end of whose reign it passed into the early English style. It may be conveniently divided into three periods—the Early, from the Conquest to 1100; the Middle, from 1100 to about 1180; and the Transition, from about this time to the end of the century.



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These dates cannot be absolutely fixed, but are an approximation sufficiently near for general purposes. The Norman style is thus distinguished from the Saxon: in the Saxon the towers were lofty in proportion to their width, and were without buttresses or staircases; their masonry was peculiar, and their windows, when of more than one light, were divided by a rude baluster, supporting a long impost through the thickness of the wall. In the Norman the towers were lower in proportion—were strengthened with buttresses, and had in general staircases, either in projecting turrets or within the thickness of the wall; their masonry had not the peculiar framework or quoins, and their windows were divided by small shafts instead of balusters. The mouldings, too, in the Saxon are few and simple, while in the Norman they are so numerous and ornamental as to form an important characteristic of the style.

Of the domestic buildings of this period, as contradistinguished from the castellated, we have a few existing remains, which, though imperfect, can still enable us to trace their original arrangement. The usual ground plan of the house seems to have been a parallelogram, comprising merely a large room or hall, which occupied the entire height of the building, and two rooms at the end of the hall, the lower being the cellar, and the upper the *solar* or sleeping-room, which served also for a sitting-room, and was in fact the only private room in the house. To these a kitchen and other outhouses were attached; and in large houses there was a chapel. The king's houses at the time seem to have had no other accommodation. The hall served for the common living-room of the master and his dependants. At one end the floor was raised a little higher than the rest, and on this raised part, which was called the *dais*, was placed crossways the principal table of the hall, and in the body were the tables for the servants and inferior guests. The floor of the hall served also for their sleeping-place, the solar being reserved for the master and his family. The hall was frequently divided into three parts by rows of pillars and arches, like the nave and aisles of a church; between these pillars curtains were hung, and by this means the aisles were separated from the body of the hall, and the sleeping apartments rendered more private.

The hall was usually on the ground floor, but sometimes it was on the first floor; and in this case the lower story was vaulted, and the communication with the upper story was by an external staircase. It is probable that the hall was warmed by a fire in the middle of the floor, with an opening, or *louvre*, in the roof over it, to allow the escape of smoke; but we have many fire-places and chimneys of this period still remaining.

We have but few materials for judging how the houses were furnished, our chief authorities being the illuminated manuscripts of the time. It seems certain that in large houses tapestry was used to cover the walls, but this must refer to the solar only. The hall had probably only tables, benches, and seats. The bed must have been in the solar, or private. These, in the illuminations, have more the appearance of modern couches than beds; they are without hangings or testers, but they have pillows and bed-clothes. We also find stools, seats, and arm-chairs, of various designs, in common use, both in this century and the one preceding it. All these appear to have been well executed, and some of them are enriched with ornamental carvings and mouldings. Many are evidently executed in the turning-lathe. The doors, shutters for the windows, chests, etc., exhibit in their hinges, bolts, and locks, specimens of ornamental ironwork; and their curtains are held up by rods and rings, as in modern houses. The lesser houses, the dwellings of the common people, both in town and country, seem to have been built of wood and plaster, and thatched with reeds and straw.

*The Castles*

As might be expected, the strongholds of the Normans were of a more stately and imposing character than the straggling low-roofed granges in which the Saxon thanes had hitherto dwelt in safety; but still, they were built with a reference more to the means of resistance than those of elegance or comfort. The first defence of a castle was the moat or ditch, that sometimes comprised several acres; and behind it was the outer wall, generally of great height and thickness, strengthened with towers at regular distances, and pierced with loop-holes through which missiles could be discharged at the assailants. Within these defences were three divisions, consisting of the outer ballium or lower court, the inner ballium or upper court, and the keep; while the main entrance through the outer wall was protected by the barbican, with its narrow archway, and strong gates and portcullis. It was no wonder that with such a network of walls, division of courts, and multiplied means for the defenders both of safety and annoyance, the dislodgment of an obnoxious magnate should have been so hard a task even when the royal banner marched against him. While so much was done for security and resistance, nothing was left for domestic comfort but the keep, which formed the residence of the baron and his family. This was the innermost of all the buildings, to which the defenders retreated only in the last extremity, and was so strongly constructed that in the ruins of castles it generally survives as a recording monument of departed greatness. A domicile erected on such a principle must, according to our modern ideas, have been sufficiently comfortless, where every window was a shot-hole and every apartment a battery, and where light could not be admitted without also inviting an enemy. But such as it was, it was the constant home of lordly knights and high-born dames; and, therefore, their taste and ingenuity as well as their resources were employed to make the most of it.

*Dress*

It was in dress that the Norman aristocracy of England chiefly showed their rank, wealth, and taste; and in this they resembled their ancestors the Danes, whose love of gay clothing and rich ornaments was almost equal to their craving for bloodshed and plunder. A liking of this nature could not well exist without capricious mutations, and therefore the changes in fashion from the time of William the Conqueror to that of Henry III were so many that it becomes difficult as well as tiresome to follow them. At one time the hair of the men was shorn closely behind, and the upper lip shaved; at another, as we have related, the hair was worn of such effeminate length that the church took the alarm: and while the practice was denounced by edicts, the long flowing locks of the male part of a congregation were often menaced by shears and razor, which the preachers plucked from their sleeves when they arrived at the practical application of their sermons. Nay, on one occasion of this kind, when long beards were the order of the day, the bishop of Sees, after declaiming against them before Henry I and his courtiers, descended at the end of the discourse, and with his scissors cropped off the beards both of king and congregation. After such clerical rebukes, it is no wonder if, at the close of this period, we sometimes find the pictures of men without beard or mustachio—more especially as monks were the limners. Even when the hair was not sufficiently long for the exquisite taste of the

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wearer, he sometimes enriched it with false locks, and thus flaunted a streamer that equalled the gayest.

As for the general articles of dress at this period, they consisted of a hood, or a cap, shaped like a Scottish bonnet, a cloak, a tunic, a pair of long tight hose, leg bandages, and shoes or short boots. All this, however, was but the ground-work, which fashion overlaid or transmuted at pleasure. In this way the cloaks became long or short; the sleeves of the tunic were sometimes so lengthened that the hand was overlapped and concealed; while the boots and shoes, instead of being adapted to the shape of the foot and the convenience of walking or riding, were curled up at the points like rams' horns, and sometimes were fastened to the knee with a gold chain.

The costliness of the stuff of which these different articles of dress were made, and the richness with which they were befurred and embroidered, was a matter of great import; and William Rufus on one occasion threw away a new pair of hose, because they cost only three shillings, declaring that a king should wear nothing so cheap. He seems to have been of a different opinion from King Stephen, who thought his hose too dear at half-a-crown. Towards the close of this period the bonnet was sometimes discarded, that the hair might be more fully seen and admired; and in this case the exquisites of the time of King John wreathed their long locks into ringlets with curling-tongs and bound them with gay ribbons. At other times, a streamer was attached to the hood, of such preposterous length that it nearly reached the middle of the leg. And yet these were the men who could endure the heat of a Syrian campaign under a heavy load of armour, and fight gallantly from morning to night upon a fair field!

In all these fopperies, the male sex appear to have so completely anticipated the ladies that little change can be found to have taken place in female costume and ornament. The gown and kerchief were still the principal articles of outer clothing, while the hair, which was worn long, was at one time plaited, and at another inclosed in a silken case, or bound with a ribbon. The under garment or tunic, where the front was given to view, was laced up, while its sleeves were so long that they were sometimes knotted up to prevent them from trailing on the ground—and the same was the case with the kerchiefs or veils, which would otherwise have dragged behind like a train. But these exaggerations were abandoned during the reign of Henry II, when a better taste discarded the long knotted sleeves and skirts for a more succinct and graceful costume. In this case, the gown was gathered closely to the waist with a girdle, and the veil demurely fastened beneath the chin, so that the whole head was covered. Sometimes the younger ladies wore their hair short and curled, while the elder ones appear with a hood, furnished with a long streamer behind, like that of the gentlemen. The female ornaments of gold and articles of jewelry may be presumed to have been nearly or altogether the same as in the earlier period, as rings, chains, and brooches are adapted to every taste, and not liable to the mutations of more flexible or transitory articles.

### *Domestic Life*

In turning to the domestic style of life which now prevailed in England, we find that, with all the additional splendour which was introduced by the Normans, little improvement was as yet made in the substantial comforts of a home. The floor was still carpeted, or rather littered, with rushes, however lordly might be the hall; and as these rushes appear to have been seldom renewed, they must have been plentiful receptacles both of damp and



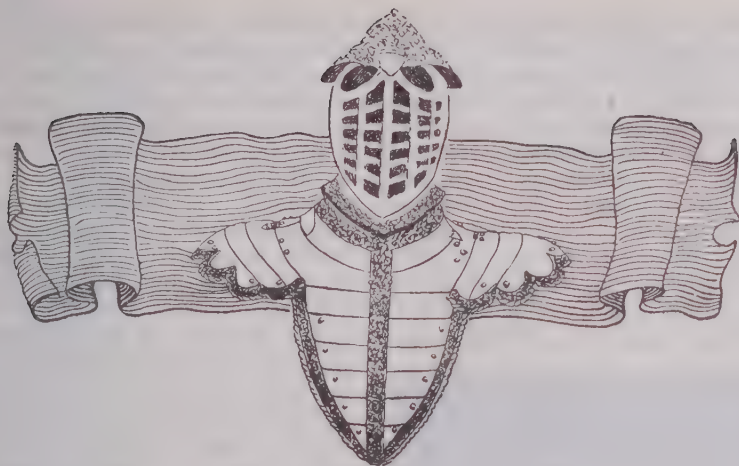
dust. On this account Fitzstephen<sup>u</sup> quotes it as an instance of the princely magnificence of Thomas à Becket, when chancellor, that he caused the floor of his dining-room to be covered every morning with clean straw or hay in winter and green branches of trees in summer. The historian, however, adds a startling fact which we could not otherwise have surmised, and it is that all this was for the comfort of those guests who were obliged at dinner to sit upon the floor, from no room being found for them at table! The general regulations in the daily routine of a household may be learned from the following rhyme of the period, which had probably all the authority of a well-established proverb:

*Lever a cinque, dîner a neuf,  
Souper a cinque, coucher a neuf,  
Fait vivre d'ans nonante et neuf.*

(To rise at five, to dine at nine,  
To sup at five, to bed at nine,  
Makes a man live to ninety and nine.)

Here we have a four hours' morning fast before the first meal, followed by eight hours of endurance before the second and last succeeded. This, and only two meals a day, was perhaps the most marked change effected by the Conquest, when the four and sometimes five heavy Saxon meals *per diem* of the preceding period are taken into account.

Another striking change was in the new nomenclature imposed upon the articles of diet. While feeding and rearing, the animals suited to the table retained their Saxon names, but as soon as they were killed they became, to all intents, Norman. Thus, a cow became beef, a calf veal, a sheep mutton, a sow pork, a deer venison, and a fowl a pullet. Of the style of cookery during the Norman period we only know that rich spices were in plentiful use, and that the Normans themselves were not only moderate but also dainty eaters—*epicures* in the best sense of the term, in contrast to the Saxons, who, we must confess, were sheer gluttons in comparison. At solemn feasts the boar's head—that long after continued to be the chief ornament of the baronial hall and Christmas festival—was already a dainty dish, and as such was brought in at the coronation of Prince Henry, eldest son and junior king to Henry II, amidst a loud blare of trumpets. The peacock, in like manner, was such a cherished ornament of the table that either already, or soon after, kings, knights, and nobles were wont to swear solemnly over it before they ate it, when they pledged themselves to some great chivalrous enterprise. The crane was a bird for the common meals of nobles and princes. The finest wheat was made into *simnel* and *wastel* cakes, and spice-bread (*panis piperatus*), and used at the tables of the rich, in addition to common loaves; and the chief drinks, as before, were spiced wines, *morat*, pigment, and *hippocras* for the wealthy, and ale and cider for the middle classes.<sup>c</sup>



## CHAPTER VIII

### RICHARD THE LION-HEARTED.

[1189-1199 A.D.]

THERE is no instance in English history where poetry and romance have so entirely succeeded in concealing the real character, as in the case of Richard. Personal courage amounting to insanity; a desire for fame, which allowed no obstacle to stand in its way; bodily strength, which overthrew every enemy in the shock of battle—these are the real distinctions of this prince and warrior; and all have equally developed themselves in very inferior men. But his kingly rank, his perilous achievements in the Holy Land, and heroic adventures on his return, have raised him from the list of mere strong-handed, firm-purposed wielders of the sword, and invested him with an interest to which his qualities, either of heart or head, did not entitle him.

A bad son, a bad brother, we are not to be surprised if the sober pen of history describes him as a bad king. Cruel and revengeful like all his race, the sufferings of his subjects or of the rank and file of his army were matters of no consideration compared to the gratification of his lightest wish; and yet by this time the refining influence of the two previous crusades, and the growth of mercantile wealth and civil privileges resulting from them, had imparted a poetical colouring to the imagination of the noble classes throughout the west; and Richard, reckless, in sober reality, of man's life and woman's honour, took his place among the gay troubadours who sang the praises of their ladies' charms, and has left some sonnets to the present time which breathe the most luxurious accents of the south. The ten years' reign of this fighting and singing potentate were passed almost entirely in absence from his kingdom and in total ignorance of the English tongue.

He was in Anjou when his father died, and gave a startling proof by his first proceeding of what was to be expected; this was to seize the treasurer of the

late king and imprison him till he had yielded the royal wealth, and also all that he himself possessed.<sup>b</sup> His subsequent conduct contributed more to turn the tide of public opinion in his favour. He dismissed his own counsellors, and called to his service those who remained faithful to his father.

To take formal possession of his transmarine dominions, and to settle the existing differences between the crowns of France and England, detained Richard a few weeks on the Continent. But he immediately ordered his mother Eleanor to be liberated from confinement, and invested her with the high dignity of regent. The queen dowager exercised her authority with prudence and moderation. As she proceeded in royal state from district to district, she distributed alms for the soul of her late husband, released the prisoners who had been confined without due process of law, forgave offences committed against the crown, restrained the severity of the foresters, and

reversed the outlawries issued upon common fame. By proclamation she ordered all freemen to take the oath of allegiance to Richard, and to swear that they would be obedient to his laws. At her invitation the barons and prelates assembled at Winchester to receive their new sovereign, and the third day of September was fixed for the ceremony of his coronation.

At the appointed hour the procession moved from his chambers in the palace of Westminster. The whole way to the high altar in the church had been previously covered with crimson cloth. First came the clergy, abbots, and bishops, followed by two barons with the cap of state and golden spurs, and two earls carrying the rod and sceptre. The three swords were borne by John, the king's brother, David, brother to the king of Scotland, and William, earl of Salisbury; and to these succeeded six earls, and six barons carrying on their



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shoulders the different articles of royal apparel. The crown had been intrusted to the hands of the earl of Aumale, who was followed by Richard himself, supported by the bishops of Durham and Bath. Over his head was borne a canopy of silk, stretched on four spears and carried by four barons. Baldwin, archbishop of Canterbury, received the king at the altar, and administered to him the usual oath. Richard then threw off his upper garment, put on sandals of gold, was anointed on the head, breast, and shoulders, and received successively from the proper officers the cap, tunic, dalmatic, swords, spurs, and mantle. Thus arrayed he was led to the altar, and solemnly adjured by the archbishop not to assume the royal dignity unless he were resolved to observe the regal oath. He renewed his promise, took the crown from the altar and gave it to the prelate, who immediately placed it on his head. The ceremony of the coronation was now completed. Richard repaired to the throne; and, after the celebration of the mass, was reconducted in state to his apartments.



[1189 A.D.]

The young king had taken the cross during the reign of his father. By a prince of his adventurous spirit an expedition to the Holy Land would at any time have been hailed with joy; at the present it offered to his mind irresistible attractions. After the fatal battle of Tiberias, Acre, Sidon, Ascalon, and Jerusalem had fallen into the hands of Saladin; Tyre alone remained in possession of the Christians. The considerations which would have deterred a more prudent monarch served but to inflame the ambition of Richard; and to make preparations for the recovery of Jerusalem and the discomfiture of the Moslem conqueror was the great object of his policy during the four months which he allotted to his residence in England. With this view he hastily filled, in a council at Pipewell, the vacant abbeys and bishopries, and divided the powers of the regency in his absence between his chancellor William Longchamp, bishop of Ely, and his justiciary Hugh, bishop of Durham. To satisfy his mother, he added to her dower all the lands which had been settled on Matilda [Good Queen Maud], the queen of the first Henry, and on Alice the relict of Stephen; and, that his brother John might through gratitude be attached to his interest, he gave him, besides the countship of Mortain in Normandy, the earldoms of Cornwall, Dorset, Somerset, Gloucester, Nottingham, Derby, and Lancaster in England, about one-third of the whole kingdom.

In the treasury at Salisbury above a hundred thousand marks were deposited, the fruit of his father's rapacity; but he deemed this enormous sum inadequate to the gigantic projects which he had conceived, and sought to augment it by expedients most disgraceful to himself and injurious to his successors. The demesne lands, the honours and the offices of the crown, were exposed to public sale. Exorbitant sums, under the name of presents, were extorted from every new bishop and abbot. For a bribe of three thousand pounds he remitted his displeasure against his natural brother Geoffrey, who had been lately chosen archbishop of York; he sold the earldom of Northumberland to the bishop of Durham during the term of his natural life for £10,000; and in consideration of an equal sum he restored to the king of Scots the castles of Berwick and Roxburgh, with all the right of superiority over the crown of Scotland which had been acquired by Henry.<sup>1</sup> Then came the punishment of real or presumed offenders. Glanville, the favourite of the last sovereign, was cast into prison, and compelled to pay £15,000 for his liberty; and Stephen, the last seneschal of Anjou, was kept in irons till he paid 30,000 Angevin pounds, and bound himself to pay 15,000 more for his release.<sup>d</sup>

This partial evil, however, turned out to be a universal good; for many of the citizens availed themselves of the opportunity to exchange their tenure of house and land, at the will of the king, for a perpetual rent. Towns also acquired fresh privileges on payment of an immediate sum; and the great masses of property which had accumulated in the hands of the kings from the time of the Conquest were broken up into smaller and more manageable

<sup>1</sup> The king's charter to the king of Scots may be seen in Rymer's *Fœdera*.<sup>k</sup> It is not, as has sometimes been supposed, a formal recognition of the independence of Scotland, but a resignation on the part of Richard of all those rights which Henry had extorted from William for his ransom. In lieu of them he received £10,000, probably the sum which William would have given to Henry. The respective rights of the two crowns were now replaced on the same footing as formerly: William was to do to Richard whatever Malcolm ought to have done to Richard's predecessors, and Richard was to do to William whatever they ought to have done to Malcolm, according to an award to be given by eight barons, to be equally chosen by the two kings. Moreover, William was to possess in England the lands which Malcolm had possessed, and to become the liege man of Richard for all lands for which his predecessors had been the liege men of the English kings.

portions and sold to new proprietors. Richard saw the success of his scheme in the avidity with which the citizens secured their corporate freedom and local government, and only regretted he had not more franchises to sell. "I would sell London," he said, "if I could find a man rich enough to buy it."<sup>b</sup>

When the means of raising money were exhausted in England, he sailed to Normandy to fill his coffers by similar expedients.

#### THE PERSECUTION OF THE JEWS

Before we accompany him on his way to Palestine it will be proper to advert to the fate of the English Jews. The Jews of this period were, in every Christian country, the sole or the principal bankers. As no law existed to regulate the interest of money, their profits were enormous; and at the time of a military expedition, and especially of a crusade, their demands always rose in proportion to the number and wants of the borrowers. Hence, sensible that they had earned the hatred of the people, they were careful to deserve by the value of their offerings the friendship of the prince. In England they had grown rich under the protection of the late king; but as Philip of France had, at his accession, banished them from his dominions, confiscated their property, and annulled the obligations of their debtors, an idea was confidently entertained that similar measures would be adopted by the new sovereign. To obviate the expected calamity, the Jews had hastened with valuable presents from every county to London; but Richard—whether he foresaw the probability of a popular tumult, or thought that their presence would pollute the holiness of the ceremony—forbade them to appear before him on the day of his coronation.

In defiance of this prohibition, some had the temerity to mix with the crowd and enter the gates of the palace. They were expelled with insults, followed with clubs and stones, and murdered by the fury of their pursuers. A report immediately gained credit that the king had given a general permission to kill them and plunder their property. The populace assembled in great numbers; every Jew found in the streets was murdered without mercy, and every house belonging to a Jew was set on fire. It was in vain that Richard despatched the justiciar with several knights to disperse the rioters. These officers were compelled to flee for their own safety, and the work of conflagration and murder continued till the next morning. The king hanged three of the ringleaders, on the pretext that they had burned the houses of Christians; but he refused to irritate his subjects at the beginning of his reign by acts of severity in favour of a hated people, and contented himself with issuing a proclamation in which he took the Jews under his protection, and forbade any molestation to be offered to them either in their persons or property.

This impunity, however, encouraged the enemies of the Israelites, and the crusaders in their way to the coast were careful to imitate their brethren in the capital. The excesses at Lynn, Norwich, Stamford, and Lincoln seem to have been caused by the impulse of the moment; those at York were the result of an organised conspiracy. Before sunset on March 16th, 1190, a body of men entered the city, and in the darkness of the night they attacked the house of Bennet, a wealthy Jew who had perished in the riot in London. His wife and children were massacred, his property was pillaged, and the building was burned. The house marked for destruction on the following night belonged to Jocen, another Jew equally wealthy, but who had escaped

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from the murder of his brethren in the metropolis. He had, however, the wisdom to retire into the castle with his treasures and family, and was imitated by most of the Jews in York and the neighbourhood.

Unfortunately, one morning the governor left the castle; at his return the fugitives, who amounted to five hundred men, independently of the women and children, mistrusting his intentions, refused him admission. In conjunction with the sheriff he called the people to his assistance; the fortress was besieged night and day; a considerable ransom was offered and rejected; and the Jews in their despair formed the horrid resolution of disappointing with their own hands the malice of their enemies. They buried their gold and silver, threw into the flames everything that was combustible, cut the throats of their wives and children, and consummated the tragedy by stabbing each other. The few who had not the courage to join in this bloody deed told the tale from the walls to the assailants, and to save their lives implored permission to receive baptism. The condition was accepted, and the moment the gates were thrown open they were massacred. The conquerors then marched to the cathedral, extorted from the officers the bonds which the Jews had deposited with them for greater security, and making a bonfire burned them in the middle of the nave. These outrages brought the chancellor to York; but the principal offenders fled into Scotland, and he contented himself with deposing the sheriff and governor, and taking the recognisances of the citizens to appear and answer in the king's court. In narrating so many horrors, it is a consolation to find them uniformly reprobated by the historians of the time. If the ringleaders endeavoured to inflame the passions of the populace by religious considerations, it was merely as a cloak to their real design of sharing among themselves the spoils of their victims and of extinguishing their debts by destroying the securities together with the persons of their creditors.<sup>d</sup>

## RICHARD IN SICILY

It was mid-summer in 1190 before Richard and Philip set out on their great expedition. Richard proceeded from Tours, Philip from Paris. They met at Vézelay, and thence marched to Lyons. The arrowy Rhone was with difficulty crossed. The pavilions of the associated armies were at length pitched in the meadows on its bank. The leaders and their followers here separated. Richard took the road to Marseilles. His fleet had not appeared. His impatience drove him onward; and he left his army, coasting along the Italian shores, till he reached Messina. His fleet was there before him. At Messina he engaged in a quarrel with the prince and the people. The king of France, who had arrived before Richard, wisely kept aloof from these differences. It was Richard's personal quarrel about the dower of his sister; and it was at last ended by the payment of forty thousand ounces of gold by Tancred, the king of Sicily, and by the betrothal of Arthur of Brittany, the nephew of Richard, to the daughter of the Sicilian king. From this period Philip Augustus saw in Richard the haughty assertor of his private interests, and he devoted himself to the advancement of his own rival interests, which finally expelled the kings of England from Normandy.<sup>e</sup>

Richard and Philip, though jealous of each other, contrived to mask their real feelings, and spent the winter in apparent amity. But soon another subject of dissension arose. Richard had offered his hand to Berengaria, the daughter of Sancho, king of Navarre; and his mother Eleanor had arrived



with the princess at Naples. Philip immediately brought forward the claim of his sister Adalais, who had for so many years been espoused to the king of England; but Richard declared that he would never marry a woman who had been, as he could prove, the mistress of his father. During the dispute Tancred put into the hands of the king a letter which he pretended to have received from Philip, containing proposals for a confederacy against Richard; and Philip, when it was shown to him, pronounced it a forgery, an unworthy artifice to countenance the English monarch in his rejection of Adalais. At length it was agreed that Richard should be released from his contract with the French princess, that he should pay to Philip 10,000 marks by instalments in the course of five years, and that at his return from Palestine he should restore Adalais, with the strong places which he held as her marriage portion. Some days later the king of France sailed for Acre. Richard accompanied him a few miles; then turning to Reggio, took on board Eleanor and Berengaria, and conducted them to Messina.

At length the king bade adieu to Sicily with a fleet of fifty-three galleys and one hundred and fifty other ships. Eleanor had returned to England; the queen of Sicily and the princess of Navarre accompanied the expedition. Nine months had already elapsed since Richard commenced his journey, and yet, though he was but a few days' sail from the Holy Land, the impetuosity of his character led him to squander away two more months in a very different enterprise. His fleet had been dispersed by a tempest, and when he reached Crete, twenty-five ships were missing. He proceeded as far as Rhodes; but being detained there by sickness, despatched some swift sailing vessels to collect the stragglers. From these he learned that two ships had been stranded on the coast of Cyprus, that the wrecks had been plundered and the crews thrown into prison. As soon as his health would allow, he sailed to Limasol, and found before the port the vessel which carried his sister and Berengaria. They had been invited to land by Isaac, a prince of the Comnenian family, who styled himself emperor of Cyprus; but, distrusting the faith of the tyrant, had remained in the open sea awaiting the arrival of Richard. He immediately demanded satisfaction for the treatment of the crusaders, and received an absolute refusal.

Isaac had manned six galleys for the protection of the harbour, and had drawn up his forces along the beach. After a sharp contest the galleys were taken; Richard landed with his usual impetuosity, and Limasol was taken. The next day Isaac suffered himself to be surprised in his camp by the activity of the invaders, and escaped with difficulty to Nicosia. Humbled by these disasters, and disheartened by the defection of the Cypriots, he condescended to sue for a conference, which was held in a plain before Limasol. After much conversation, it was agreed that Isaac should pay 3,500 marks of gold; that he should do homage to the king of England; should resign to him all his castles; should serve with five hundred knights in the holy war; and at his return, if he had given satisfaction to his new lord, should be reinstated in the possession of his dominions. But the Cypriot soon repented of his facility, and escaped in the night from his guards. Resistance, however, was fruitless. Another battle was lost; Nicosia surrendered; and his daughter, on whom he doted most tenderly, fell into the hands of the conqueror. With a broken heart he left the strong fortress of St. Andrea, and threw himself at the feet of Richard, who ordered him to be bound in chains of silver, and to be confined in a castle on the coast of Palestine.

It was at Limasol that the king married Berengaria, who was anointed and crowned by the bishop of Evreux. Here also he received a visit from

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Guy de Lusignan, the unfortunate king of Jerusalem. Guy had worn that crown in right of his wife Sybilla; but at the siege of Acre he found a dangerous competitor in Conrad, the marquis of Montferrat and prince of Tyre. Sybilla was dead; and Conrad, who had married her sister Isabel, contended that the crown could no longer belong to Lusignan, but had descended to himself as the husband of the real heiress. Philip, who had reached Acre, espoused the cause of Conrad; and this alone would have been a sufficient reason with Richard to support the interest of his rival. He received Lusignan with honour, acknowledged him for king of Jerusalem, and gave him 2,000 marks to relieve his present necessities.<sup>d</sup>

## RICHARD REACHES PALESTINE

Richard at length set sail from Cyprus, on the 5th of June, 1191. Nearly a year had passed since he and Philip had met on the plains of Vézelay. During that period, and for a year previous, Acre had been in vain besieged by the Christian host. As the English fleet approached the city, Richard gazed upon the high tower, and then the smaller fortresses showed him their formidable fronts. There he saw the Christian hosts encamped in the plain; but on the distant hills, beyond the besiegers, was the mighty army of Saladin, whose standard waved amongst innumerable tents, the bright colours of his pavilions glittering in that summer sun. As Richard landed, a shout of joy went up from the crusaders' camp, with the clang of trumpets and the loud chorus of national songs; and the night was passed in dance and revelry, amidst an illumination of waxen torches which lighted up the whole valley. The English king, having heard that the king of France had made liberal donations to his soldiers, proclaimed a higher rate of pay for everyone in his service, of whatever nation. But an intermitting fever checked his activity, and he waited for the arrival of some more men from England.

Philip led his troops to an assault of the city, and was repulsed. As Richard regained his strength the attacks were more vigorous. The battering-ram was brought up to shake the massive walls; and amidst its heavy strokes the Turks shouted and filled the air with the noise of their gongs, so that Saladin, on the distant hills, should hear the signal and come to their relief. The crusaders had to assail the city and to defend themselves. Day by day there were desperate battles in the trenches. But still the siege went on. The Greek fire was rained from the walls of Acre on the besiegers; and the besiegers cast large stones amongst the besieged from their cumbrous machines. All the various machines were plied night and day. But more formidable was the approach of famine. Saladin could not penetrate the lines of the crusaders to supply the brave defenders of Acre with new stores. After long negotiation it was agreed that the city should be surrendered, a certain portion of the garrison being left as hostages for the performance of the conditions of capitulation, the most important in the eyes of the crusaders being that Saladin should restore the holy cross. The Turks were also to pay a large sum of money, and set at liberty fifteen hundred Christian captives.

Philip of France, after the capture of Acre, resolved to return home. A furious bigot, who had, in the beginning of his reign, banished everyone from his dominions who dared to gainsay the laws of the church, he was yet the craftiest of politicians. He had measured himself with Richard, and had found that the subtlety of the fox might be as effectual as the rage of the lion. He had borne indignities from him. He was jealous that amongst all

the host of the crusaders "there was not of him a word, but all of Richard the king." He had his own schemes to pursue in the absence of Richard from his continental dominions. The duke of Normandy bound his feudal superior, by the customary oaths, not to make war upon his territories while he was not there to defend them; and the king of France left ten thousand soldiers under the command of Richard. But they parted in anger and mutual hatred. The crusaders regarded Philip as a deserter. If he had remained, perhaps his policy, if not his religion, might have saved the Christian character from the eternal disgrace of one of the atrocities of the "lion-hearted." We shall not trust ourselves to narrate this crowning horror of the siege of Acre in any other words<sup>1</sup> than in those of the chronicler, Geoffrey de Vinsauf,<sup>2</sup> who was himself a crusader.

Saladin had delayed to restore the cross within the time agreed, and he had asked further time. "When it became clearly evident to King Richard that a longer period had elapsed than had been fixed, and that Saladin was obdurate and would not give himself trouble to ransom the hostages, he called together a council of the chiefs of the people, by whom it was resolved that the hostages should all be hanged, except a few nobles of the higher class, who might ransom themselves or be exchanged for some Christian captives. King Richard, aspiring to destroy the Turks root and branch, and to punish their wanton arrogance, as well as to abolish the law of Mohammed and to vindicate the Christian religion, on the Friday after the Assumption of the blessed Virgin Mary, ordered two thousand seven hundred of the Turkish hostages to be led forth from the city and hanged; his soldiers marched forward with delight to fulfil his commands, and to retaliate, with the assent of the divine grace, by taking revenge upon those who had destroyed so many of the Christians with missiles from bows and arbalests."

In the guilt of Richard the duke of Burgundy participated, by massacring the prisoners who had been taken under the banner of France. Saladin retaliated by the decapitation of his Christian prisoners. After this mutual slaughter, Richard led his army, now reduced to thirty thousand men, by the line of the coast to Jaffa. They marched, as in the time of King Stephen, with a high standard on a wagon. Pack-horses and loaded wains went slowly on by this difficult path on the side of the sea; and the Saracens, who hovered round their march, often attacked the troops and plundered the baggage. The crusaders were moving on amidst sacred localities, and Capernaum and Cæsarea were familiar names, at least to the priests who marched with them. During the night they were stung by venomous reptiles; and when again on their march, the troops of the indefatigable Saladin hovered around them—Turks and Bedouins—darkening the air with their showers of arrows. "The strength of all paganism," says Vinsauf,<sup>3</sup> "had gathered together from Damascus to Persia, from the Mediterranean to the East."<sup>c</sup>

#### THE RETURN AND CAPTURE OF RICHARD

Thus terminated the crusade. If Jerusalem could have been won by personal strength and bravery, it might have been won by Richard. His exploits, so superior to those of his fellows, threw a splendour around him which endeared him to the Christians and extorted the admiration of the infidels.

<sup>1</sup> This work, *Itinerarium perigrinorum et gesta regis Ricardi*, etc., was formerly attributed to Geoffrey, but recent research has shown that it is in large part a translation of the French poem by Ambrose—*L'estoire de la guerre sainte*.



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But the little influence which they had on the issue of the expedition will justify a doubt whether he possessed the talents of a general. He seems to have been content with the glory, without the advantages of victory; his fickleness prevented him from pursuing for any time the same object; and his passionate temper made him fitter to promote dissension than to procure unanimity among his associates. As soon as his health would permit he paid his debts, satisfied the claims of his followers, and sailed from Acre. The next morning he turned to take a last view of the shore, and with outstretched arms exclaimed: "Most holy land, I commend thee to the care of the Almighty. May he grant me life to return and rescue thee from the yoke of the infidels!" His fleet, with his wife, sister, and the princess of Cyprus on board, had sailed some days before, and reached Sicily without any accident. The king followed in a single ship, and took a different course; but his progress was often retarded by contrary winds, and a month had elapsed before he reached the isle of Corfu.

Here he hired three coasting vessels to carry him and his suite, consisting of twenty persons, to Ragusa and Zara. What route he meant afterwards to pursue is uncertain; but he was aware that the king of France had confederated with his brother John to dispossess him of his dominions; that Henry, the emperor of Germany, the rightful heir to Sicily, was irritated by his league with Tancred;<sup>1</sup> and that many princes, the relations of Conrad, had professed themselves hostile to him, as the supposed murderer of that nobleman. Hence, as he had assumed the garb of a pilgrim, and sought to disguise himself by the length of his beard and hair, it is probable that he hoped to cross the Continent unknown, and to elude by artifice the snares of his enemies. However that may be, he was driven by a storm on the coast of Istria, between Aquileia and Venice, and proceeded towards Görtz, the residence of Meinhard, a nephew of Conrad. One of his pages appeared before that chieftain with a present of a valuable ruby, and solicited a passport for Baldwin of Bethune, and Hugh, the merchant, pilgrims returning from Jerusalem. "The present," he exclaimed, "is the present of a prince. He must be King Richard. Tell him he may come to me in peace." The pretended pilgrim, however, was suspicious of danger, and, having bought horses, fled in the night. Baldwin and seven others remained, and were seized by Meinhard, who immediately sent a messenger with the information to his brother Frederick of Betesow.

The king had reached Freisach, when he was discovered by a Norman knight in the service of Frederick; but mindful of his duty to his native sovereign, the knight warned him of his danger and endeavoured to conceal his arrival. Though six of his companions were taken, Richard escaped with one knight and a boy acquainted with the language. They travelled three days and nights without entering a house or purchasing provisions, and found themselves on the fourth day at Erdburg, in the neighbourhood of Vienna. The boy was sent to market. By the display of his money he excited curiosity, but he eluded every inquiry by answering that his master was a rich merchant who would arrive in three days. Richard, though aware of his danger, was too weak to prosecute his journey. The boy was again sent to market, was seized and put to the torture, and at last revealed the name and retreat of

<sup>1</sup> He had married Constanza, the true heir at the death of King William, her brother, and had prepared to assert her right, at the time that Richard made the league offensive and defensive with Tancred, and agreed to marry his nephew to Tancred's daughter. Within a fortnight after the king's departure from Messina, Henry entered Campania, and proceeded as far as Naples, where the heat and sickness almost destroyed his army. Hence arose the enmity of the emperor to Richard.

the king. When Richard saw his house surrounded by armed men, he drew his sword and refused to yield to anyone but their chieftain. That chieftain immediately appeared—Leopold, duke of Austria; the same Leopold whom he had treated with the most cruel insult in the town of Acre, and who, as brother-in-law to Isaac, conceived himself entitled to revenge the wrongs of that unfortunate monarch. He received the king's sword, and committed him to the care of a baron named Hadmar, to be closely confined in the castle of Durnstein.<sup>d</sup>

#### ENGLAND DURING THE CRUSADE

When Richard left England, early in December, 1189, he left the kingdom in the charge of two prelates, William of Longchamp, bishop of Ely, and Hugh of Puiset, bishop of Durham, as joint justiciars. He could not have chosen two representatives less fitted to work satisfactorily together. Hugh was a member of a rich old family of Champagne, a cousin of the king, and with very exalted ideas of his own lineage and position. William was a Norman, probably of gentle birth, but a self-made man, and accordingly laughed at by his Norman associates as a *parvenu*. Then, too, he was proud, arrogant, and ambitious, with a contempt for the English and all things English. Thus he was likely to find opposition both among the Norman nobles and the English gentry and middle classes.

But to Richard he was loyalty itself. Before the king left Normandy the two bishops had quarrelled, and Richard settled matters by making Longchamp, already chancellor, sole justiciar. At the same time the office of papal legate was conferred upon him. At Richard's departure he was practically supreme in both church and state. At once his conceit and arrogance began to alienate from him even those loyal supporters of the king who would ordinarily have stood by him. He assumed royal airs, travelled about and held his court in regal pomp, and by his personal display called forth derision from the Normans. His hatred of the English was reciprocated. It was at this point that John, who had been released from an oath to remain out of England during his brother's absence, crossed the Channel, and gathered together in an opposition court at Lancaster all those whom Longchamp had alienated.

John had looked with great favour on Richard's project of going to the Holy Land. Kings had gone on crusades before and had never come back. It was more than likely, thought John, that Richard's valour and impetuosity would lead to his death, and in that event John was determined to succeed him. To be sure, Arthur of Brittany, the son of his elder brother Geoffrey, had a better right, but Arthur was a mere child, and it had often happened in England before that a child, although the nearest heir to the throne, had been set aside for a man. Whether Richard really intended Arthur for his successor, or whether he directed Longchamp to forward that prince's cause as an offset to John's known ambition, is not clear, but the justiciar's actions made it evident that the king preferred his nephew to his brother. For a time the influence of Queen Eleanor prevented John's openly opposing the bishop, but in 1191 she joined Richard with Berengaria at Messina; and John, thus released from restraint, soon found an opportunity of standing forth as protector of the nation against the unpopular justiciar.<sup>a</sup>

For some offence, real or pretended, Longchamp had condemned Gerard de Camville to lose the shrievalty, with the custody of the castle of Lincoln; but while he besieged that fortress, John, at the head of a numerous army,

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surprised the royal castles of Nottingham and Tickhill. The chancellor was taken unawares; finding himself unequal to the contest, he offered to negotiate; and after the rejection of several proposals, it was mutually agreed that a certain number of the king's castles should be placed in the custody of different barons, who should be sworn to preserve them for the king during his life, and to deliver them to John in the event of the king's death. By this arrangement the prince gained one important step towards the object of his ambition, while the chancellor was still allowed to retain the exercise of the royal authority.

This quarrel was succeeded by another, still more disastrous to Longchamp. Geoffrey,<sup>1</sup> the king's natural brother, had been appointed to the archiepiscopal see of York; but Richard, though he had remitted his displeasure against the new prelate in consideration of a large sum of money, compelled him to swear that he would continue to reside on the Continent [for a period of three years]. He was, however, consecrated, in virtue of a papal mandate, by the archbishop of Tours, and hastened to England to obtain the possession of his church. The chancellor had given orders that on his arrival he should be required to take an oath of allegiance, or to quit the kingdom immediately. Geoffrey eluded the officers; took refuge in the church of St. Martin; and, when the requisition was made, haughtily replied that he should never submit to the orders of that traitor, the bishop of Ely. For three days his asylum was respected; on the fourth he was conveyed by force to the castle of Dover. At the solicitation of the bishop of London Longchamp allowed him to be released and to repair to the capital.

The news of this event was received with pleasure by John and his party. That prince, who had hitherto regarded his illegitimate brother as an enemy, now pretended to feel for him the most tender affection. He wrote to all the bishops and barons to assemble at Reading; while Longchamp, by other letters, forbade them to accept the invitation of a prince whose object it was to disinherit his sovereign. The assembly, however, was held; John and Geoffrey met, wept, and embraced. Two very suspicious papers were produced and read, both purporting to be letters from Richard; the one forming a council of regency, with the archbishop of Rouen as president,<sup>2</sup> the other absolving Geoffrey from his oath and allowing him to visit his diocese. The chancellor had engaged to appear before them. He had even collected a formidable army; but distrust and terror induced him to flee from Windsor to London, where he exhorted the citizens to shut their gates against the king's enemies; and, finding them disinclined to obey, retired into the Tower. He was followed to the capital by his pursuers, who obtained admission, on taking an oath to be faithful to Richard and to maintain the franchises of the city.

Longchamp, in a council held at St. Paul's, was condemned to resign the office of justiciar, to surrender all the royal castles but three, and to give security that he would not leave the kingdom till he had fulfilled these con-

[<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey seems to have been his father's favourite son till he was supplanted by John. Possessed of all the vigour and ambition of the Plantagenets, he shrank from the clerical life into which he was forced. In nominating him to the see of York Richard was faithfully carrying out his father's last wishes, but he was probably at heart glad thus to shut him forever from any chance of attaining the throne upon which Richard unjustly suspected him of having designs. "Geoffrey," says Kate Norgate,<sup>2</sup> "never did anything to justify the suspicion, but showed on the contrary every disposition to act loyally towards both his brothers, if they would but have acted with equal loyalty towards him."]

[<sup>2</sup> The archbishop of Rouen, Walter of Coutances, had been sent by Richard from Messina as a mediator, in the previous year. Exactly what his instructions were it is impossible to say, but it is quite likely that one alternative provided for the dismissal of Longchamp as justiciar. It was this letter of instructions apparently that the archbishop produced in this contingency.]



ditions. He had not been present; but the next morning he met his accusers in a field to the east of the city. The citizens mustered in a circle round the lords, and ten thousand spectators are said to have assembled behind them. A long time was spent in altercation. The chancellor defended himself with vigour. He had been a faithful servant to his sovereign; he was ready to account for every penny of the king's revenue. Still he would submit to their judgment of the preceding day;<sup>1</sup> not that he meant to resign any office intrusted to him by his royal master, but because it was useless to resist the power which was arrayed against him. He retired to Dover castle, one of the three castles reserved for him. Thence he attempted to escape to the Continent in the disguise of a monk, but was discovered and brought back. He next put on female attire, and proceeded to the beach with a web of cloth under one arm and a measure under the other. But his unusual gait provoked suspicion: on nearer inspection his beard betrayed him; and the women of the place loaded him with insults, till the officers rescued him from their fury and conveyed him to prison. John allowed him to cross the sea, and appointed the archbishop of Rouen grand justiciar and vice-chancellor in his place.

#### THE CAPTIVITY OF RICHARD

Such was the state of England when the news arrived of Richard's departure from Acre. The people, by whom with all his vices he was beloved on account of his valour, were eager to behold the champion of the cross; but week after week the public expectation was alternately roused and disappointed. Rumours the most sinister and improbable had begun to prevail, when the secret of his detention was revealed by the copy of a letter to the king of France from the emperor Henry VI. This imperial speculator, for the sum of £60,000, had purchased the royal captive from Leopold; and "the enemy of the empire and disturber of France," to use his words, was now lodged in chains in one of the castles of the Tyrol, surrounded by trusty guards, who with their naked swords attended him by day and watched at his bedside by night.

This intelligence seems to have electrified all Europe. If the king's enemies rejoiced at his disgrace, the clergy and people, all who had admired his valour or sighed for the deliverance of Palestine, lamented his misfortune and loudly invoked in his favour the interference of the Vatican. In England his subjects renewed their oaths of allegiance; the bishops and prelates assembled at Oxford, and sent deputies to give him advice and consolation; and Eleanor by repeated complaints induced Pope Celestine to pronounce the sentences of excommunication and interdict against Leopold, and to threaten similar measures against Henry, unless he immediately liberated his captive. There was, however, one man who openly rejoiced at the intelligence—John, the king's brother, who repaired in haste to Paris, surrendered to Philip some portions of Normandy, did him homage for the rest of Richard's continental possessions, and returning to England assembled an army to contend for the crown. But, as the king observed, "John was not a man to succeed by force when force was opposed to him." Though the fidelity of the grand justiciar was doubtful, the prelates and barons unfurled the royal standard; an armament of foreign mercenaries was repulsed from the coast;

[<sup>1</sup> Of this action Hallam says: "It was a remarkable assumption of power by that assembly, and the earliest authority for a leading principle of our constitution, the responsibility of ministers to parliament."]

[1193 A.D.]

and the pusillanimous usurper consented to an armistice, that he might form new plans and watch the course of events.

At the same time his confederate, the king of France, having sent a messenger to Richard to give him back his homage, entered Normandy with a powerful army. Several fortresses yielded through fear or treachery; but Rouen, the capital, was saved by the exertions of the earl of Essex, who had lately returned from the Holy Land. He harangued the citizens; pointed their indignation against the perfidy of the man who had turned his back to the infidels; and animated their patriotism by the prospect of the desolation around them. They courageously repelled the enemy. Even the women mounted the walls and poured boiling pitch on the heads of the assailants. Philip's military engines were burned, and the garrison boldly threw open the gates and invited him to advance if he dared. He preferred to retire, and his departure gave a short pause to the war.

Longchamp, the chancellor, who still remained in exile, was the first to discover the prison of his sovereign. By repeated solicitations he obtained permission of Henry to conduct Richard to the diet at Hagenau. Before this august but incompetent tribunal the king listened to the accusations against him: that he had confederated with Tancred to oppose the right of the emperor to the crown of Sicily; that he had unjustly seized the kingdom of Cyprus; that he had hired assassins to murder the marquis of Montferrat,<sup>1</sup> and that he had treated with insult the German nation at the siege of Acre. His manly and persuasive defence was received by the princes of the diet with applause and commiseration. Even the cold-hearted Henry appeared to relent. He ordered the king's chains to be struck off, showed him the respect due to a crowned head, and consented to treat about the amount of his ransom.<sup>d</sup>

#### THE CAPTIVE KING'S DEFENCE

The reply of Richard to the charges brought against him by the emperor Henry VI has been preserved. Its simple eloquence must have had, as the contemporary writers assert, a very considerable influence in securing his release. The reply follows:

"I have been born in such a station as to give an account of my actions to none but God; but these are of such a nature that I fear not even the judgment of men, and especially, sire, of a prince so just as yourself.

"My connection with the king of Sicily ought not to have grieved you; I have been able to keep on good terms with a man of whose aid I stood in need, without justly offending a prince whose friend and ally I was. As for the king of France, I know of nothing that ought to have brought on me his ill-humour, except my having been more successful than he. Either by opportunity or fortune I have done those feats which he would have been glad to achieve: this is the sum of my crimes towards him. With regard to the king of Cyprus, everyone knows I have done no more than avenge the injuries that I had first received; and, in avenging myself on him, I have freed his subjects from the yoke by which he oppressed them. I have disposed of my conquest. Was it not my right? And if there was anyone who ought to have found fault with it, it was the emperor of Constantinople, by whom neither you nor I have been very kindly treated. The duke of Austria has

<sup>1</sup> To repel this charge a letter was produced from the sheik or Old Man of the Mountain, the chief of the Assassins, who declared that he had procured the murder of Conrad in revenge for the injustice offered by that nobleman to some of his subjects.

too well revenged the injury of which he complains to reckon it still among the number of my crimes. He was the first to fail in causing his standard to be hoisted in a place where we commanded, the king of France and myself in person. I punished him for it too severely: he has had his revenge twofold; he ought not to have anything upon his mind on this score, but the consciousness of a vengeance that Christianity permits not.

"The assassination of the marquis de Montferrat is as foreign to my character as my presumed correspondence with Saladin is improbable. I have not evinced, hitherto, such a dread of my enemies that men should believe me capable of attacking their lives otherwise than sword in hand; and I have done mischief enough to Saladin to compel men to think that I at least have not been his friend.

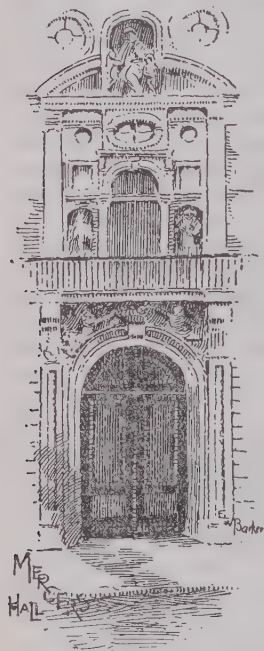
"My actions speak for me, and justify my cause more than words: Acre taken, two battles won, parties defeated, convoys carried off, with such abundance of rich spoils (with which the world is witness I have not enriched myself), indicate sufficiently, without my saying so, that I have never spared Saladin. I have received from him small presents, as fruits and similar things, which this Saracen, no less commendable for his politeness and generosity than for his valour and conduct, hath sent to me from time to time. The king of France received some as well as myself; and these are the civilities which brave men during war perform one towards another without ill consequence.

"It is said that I have not taken Jerusalem. I should have taken it if time for it had been given me: this is the fault of my enemies, not mine; and I believe no just man could blame me for having deferred an enterprise (which can always be undertaken) in order to afford to my people a succour which they could not longer wait for.

"There, sire, these are my crimes! Just and generous as you are, you, without doubt, acknowledge my innocence; and if I am not mistaken, I perceive that you are affected at my misfortune."

#### THE RELEASE OF THE KING

The prospect of liberty revived the spirits of Richard, who despatched the chancellor to England with a letter to the council of regency. By their orders a tax of twenty shillings was imposed on every knight's fee; the plate of the churches was sold or redeemed; one-fourth of every man's income was extorted from the clergy and laity; and all were required to make the king such presents as might deserve his gratitude. But, whether it were owing to the poverty of the nation, or to the peculation of the officers, the amount fell short of the sum at which it had been computed; and to supply the deficiency a second and even a third collection was made in despite of the murmurs and discontent of the people. In the mean time Henry was slow to conclude the bargain, as long as it remained in his power to make it more





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profitable. The negotiation was suspended, and renewed, and protracted; and five months elapsed before the terms could be finally adjusted.

These were that Richard should pay 100,000 marks for his ransom; should restore Isaac, the late emperor of Cyprus, to his liberty, but not to his dominions; and should deliver the captive daughter of Isaac to the care of her uncle, the duke of Austria. Henry in return engaged to set the king at liberty on the receipt of the money; to aid him against all his enemies; and to invest him with the feudal sovereignty of the kingdom of Provence, an obsolete right, which the emperors had long claimed but had not the power to enforce. A distant day was assigned for the performance of these conditions. Eleanor and the archbishop of Rouen, who had resigned the administration to Hubert Walter, archbishop of Canterbury, joined the royal captive; and Richard, to bind the emperor more firmly to his interests, adopted the strange expedient advised by his mother. In an assembly of the German princes and English envoys, by the delivery of the cap from his head he resigned his crown into the hands of Henry; who restored it to him again to be held as a fief of the empire with the obligation of a yearly payment of £5,000.<sup>1</sup> Still, no reliance could be placed on the faith of the German, to whose rapacity a more tempting bait was offered by John and the French monarch. On condition that he would detain Richard in captivity, they promised to secure to him a larger sum than had been fixed for the king's ransom, or to pay him at the rate of £20,000 for every month of imprisonment. Henry could not resist so tempting an offer. He had even the effrontery to communicate it to Richard; but the German princes, who had become sureties for the release of the English monarch, upbraided their emperor with his venality, and compelled him to relinquish his prey. More than 70,000 marks were received on the spot, and hostages given for the payment of the remainder.

The king hastily descended the Rhine as far as Cologne, the archbishop of which city conducted him to the port of Antwerp. Here he embarked on board his own fleet. Four days were consumed in the intricate navigation of the river; during five more he was detained by contrary winds in the harbour of Swine, opposite to the isle of Cadsand; at length he landed at Sandwich amidst the acclamations of his subjects, after an absence of more than four years.

Though Richard now breathed the air of liberty, his heart could not be at ease till he had chastised the perfidy of the French monarch. Two short months were all that he could spare to his English subjects; and these were employed, not in repairing the evils caused by his absence but in devising means to extort more money from those who had been already impoverished by the amount of his ransom. In England he had no longer an enemy: John's castles of Marlborough, Lancaster, and St. Michael's had previously yielded to the king's officers; and those of Tickhill and Nottingham surrendered as soon as his return had been ascertained. In Nottingham was held a great council of the realm, consisting of fifteen spiritual and temporal peers, with Eleanor, the queen mother. On the first day Richard took from several individuals the offices which they held under the crown, and sold them to the best bidder. The terms which he proposed were the payment of a considerable fine in the first instance, and an annual rent for the future.

<sup>1</sup>This extraordinary transaction is related on the best authority, that of Hoveden, whose testimony seems to be confirmed by the fact that, on Henry's death, Richard was summoned, like any other of the princes of the empire, to vote for a king of the Romans. He sent deputies, but wisely resolved not to trust his person in Germany a second time. It is, however, possible that he may have been summoned as king of Provence.

The next day he accused of treason his brother John, and the confidential adviser of that prince, Hugh, bishop of Coventry. They were ordered to appear and plead to the charge within forty days, under the following penalties. The prelate, inasmuch as he was a sheriff, was to be at the king's mercy; inasmuch as he was a bishop, to be judged by the church. John was to be outlawed, and to forfeit all his lands, goods, and chattels. Neither of them obeyed the summons, though it was thrice repeated at the distance of forty days; and then, as John held lands in Normandy, and was actually in France, three peers hastened to the court of his sovereign lord, the French king, to repeat the accusation, and to demand judgment against him for contumacy. On the third day of the council a tax of two shillings was imposed on every carucate of land; and the military tenants of the crown were required to accompany the king into Normandy after the rate of one-third of the service to which they were bound by their tenures. The last day was employed in discussing the extraordinary question whether it was necessary that the king should be crowned again. In opposition to his opinion it was decided in the affirmative; and the ceremony was performed at Winchester by Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury.

#### RICHARD IN NORMANDY

Richard now hastened to join his army at Portsmouth. The wind was adverse, but his impatience scorned the advice and warning of the mariners. He set sail: the night proved dark and tempestuous; and the next morning he was happy to escape from the danger by returning into the harbour. After a tedious delay of a fortnight he reached Normandy, and on his landing was met by his brother John. That prince, whose pusillanimity was equal to his ambition, implored on his knees the forgiveness of a sovereign whom he had so cruelly offended. But he had secured a powerful intercessor in the queen mother; at whose request Richard received him into favour, though he sternly refused to restore to him either his lands or his castles.

It would weary the patience of the reader to lead him through a long and languid detail of military actions which have ceased to be interesting. The finances of Philip, as well as those of Richard, were exhausted; and both kings were compelled to conduct their operations on too petty a scale to produce important results. From mere lassitude and impotence they often consented to an armistice; and as often, on pretence of some real or imaginary offence, broke their word and rushed again to arms. At each repetition their passions grew more inflamed; the spirit of retaliation urged them to new cruelties; and at last each party frequently put out the eyes instead of accepting the ransom of their prisoners.<sup>1</sup> Yet so equally balanced were their powers of mischief that, after six years of desultory and sanguinary warfare, it would have been difficult to determine whose fortune had preponderated.

The most brilliant action during the contest was fought between Gisors and Courcelles. Philip had marched from Mantes with three hundred knights, their esquires, and a large body of cavalry. It was his intention to raise the siege of Courcelles; but Courcelles had already surrendered, and he was met by Richard on the road to Gisors. After a sharp engagement, the French fled to that fortress; the bridge broke under the weight of the fugitives; and

<sup>1</sup> Philip had proposed that the quarrel between them should be decided by five champions on each side. Richard sarcastically answered that he could have no objection, if the king of France and himself were to be two of the number.

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the king, with twenty knights, all in armour, was precipitated into the river Epte. The rest perished. Philip was extricated with difficulty, and owed his safety to the devotion of his followers, who gallantly turned on the pursuers, and renewed the battle till all were either taken or slain. Forty barons, one hundred knights, and a hundred and forty chargers, covered with armour, were the reward of the victors. Richard communicated the news to his friends in England, and boasted with scornful complacency that he had made the king of France drink of the waters of the Epte.

Before this the fortune of war had supplied him with a still more pleasing opportunity of gratifying his resentment. The bishop of Beauvais, under the pretence that he had to support the character of a count as well as a bishop, had indulged his martial disposition, fought at the head of his retainers, and acquired the reputation of a bold and fortunate warrior. It chanced, however, that in a skirmish under the walls of Beauvais he was taken by Mercader, the commander of the king's mercenaries. A more acceptable present could not have been offered to Richard. It was to the influence of this prelate, then the French envoy to the court of the emperor Henry, that the English prince attributed the most galling of the indignities which he was compelled to bear in his captivity—that of being put in chains like a criminal.

The bishop was immediately thrown into a dungeon in the castle of Rouen, and loaded with fetters of iron as heavy as his strength could support. In despair of softening the king, he had recourse to the authority of the pontiff, from whom he received a severe but merited reproof. He had, said Celestine, put on the helmet instead of the mitre, and neglected the duties of his station to mix in the fray of battle. And, what added to his offence, he had fought against the champion of the cross, who sought only to recover his own, and in favour of a recreant prince who in violation of his oath had invaded the property of another. Such misconduct rendered him unworthy of the protection of the church or the interposition of the holy see. He might intercede for him as a friend; he could not employ authority as a pontiff. Richard soon afterwards received a letter in which Celestine desired him to pity "his dear son, the bishop of Beauvais"; and in return sent to the pontiff that prelate's coat of mail, with the following scroll attached to it: "Look if this be the coat of thy son or not." "No," replied the pope, with a smile, "it is the coat of a son of Mars. Let Mars deliver him, if he can." Even the king's necessities could not subdue his resentment. He refused a ransom of 10,000 marks; nor did the bishop of Beauvais recover his liberty till Richard was laid in the grave.<sup>d</sup>

#### ENGLAND FROM 1194 TO 1198

On the 12th of May, 1194, Richard crossed the Channel to Barfleur and, says Stubbs,<sup>g</sup> "England saw his face no more, heavily as from time to time she felt the pressure of his hand." For the four following years the kingdom was governed by Hubert Walter, archbishop of Canterbury, who held the office of justiciar and the position of papal legate. Hubert was an able administrator and a successful financier, trained by his uncle, Glanville, in the school of Henry II. The measures which marked his justiciarship were practically a carrying out of the policy of the first Plantagenet. Himself an Englishman, Hubert conscientiously tried to alleviate the condition of the people, rather than oppress them; but the constant demands of Richard for gold rendered his task a weighty one. But his skill made possible a more equitable



distribution of the burden, and those who could bear it probably had to pay more nearly their just share. The sum of £1,100,000, which he is said to have sent to his royal master in the space of four years, is evidence enough of this, for such a sum could never have been obtained from the nation had not the barons and lesser nobility contributed more largely than they had been wont to do. One thing Hubert must be credited with, the importance of which has often been lost sight of in viewing the justiciar as a mere "money-getter"—he did more than any man up to his time to teach the people the habits of self-government. The election of juries to assess taxes, the election of the grand jury for the assizes, the choice of representative knights of the shires for the transaction of judicial work—all these, and more, Hubert taught the people. "The whole working of elective and representative institutions," says Stubbs,<sup>a</sup> "gained greatly under his management—he educated the people against the better time to come."<sup>a</sup>

To exactions so frequent and so vexatious as those demanded by Richard for carrying on his campaigns on the Continent men did not submit without murmuring; and a factious demagogue in the city of London improved the opportunity to direct the public discontent against the higher classes in society. William Fitzosbert, or Longbeard, equally distinguished by the length of his beard and the vehemence of his eloquence, professed himself "the advocate of the people," but at the same time was careful to flatter the wishes of the prince. He did not deny that the war was just and necessary, or that the nation was bound to furnish supplies to the sovereign; but he contended that the rich and powerful among the citizens contrived means to shift the burden from their own shoulders, and to impose it on those who were the least able to bear it. He crossed the sea to lay his sentiments before the king, by whom he was not unfavourably received; returned in haste to London, and by inflammatory harangues from St. Paul's cross threw the whole city into a ferment. Associations were formed; fifty-two thousand persons bound themselves to obey the orders of their "advocate"; and the more wealthy inhabitants trembled for their lives or fortunes. Archbishop Hubert thought it his duty to oppose the demagogue; and in a meeting of the citizens, by his mild and persuasive eloquence, induced them to give him hostages as securities that they would keep the king's peace.

Fitzosbert now saw the storm that was gathering. With an axe he clove the head of the officer sent to arrest him, and fleeing to the church of St. Mary le Bow fortified the tower against his opponents. But the people, separated from their leader, remained quiet; on the fourth day, the church, by design or accident, was set on fire, and Fitzosbert, as he attempted to escape in the confusion, was stabbed in the body by the son of the officer whom he had murdered. The wound did not produce instant death; he was hastily tried, condemned, dragged at the tail of a horse to "the elms" at Tyburn, and hanged in chains with nine of his followers. His friends pronounced him a martyr; and a report was spread that miracles had been wrought at his grave. Some examples of severity dispersed the enthusiasts that collected around it; and in a few weeks the doctrines and the name of Fitzosbert were forgotten. His fate, however, left in the estimation of many a foul blot on the character of Hubert, for during the contest the right of sanctuary had been violated, and that by the order of him whose duty it was to maintain the immunities of the church. This with his other demerits, real or alleged, was urged by his enemies on the attention of the pontiff, who in letters both to the king and the archbishop insisted that Hubert should relinquish those secular offices which he held, and should confine himself to his archiepiscopal

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duties. He had once already tendered his resignation, and had been induced to withdraw it. Now it was tendered a second time, and reluctantly accepted.<sup>1</sup> The celebrated Geoffrey Fitzpeter was appointed his successor.

Richard had the satisfaction of surviving his two great persecutors, the duke of Austria and the emperor of Germany. To save the lives of his hostages he had sent to the former, according to a preceding agreement, the princess of Cyprus, and his niece, the maid of Brittany. Before they arrived Leopold was dead (1195). He had crushed his foot by a fall from his horse: a mortification ensued; and on his death-bed, to obtain the benefit of absolution, he consented to release the hostages, and to order the restitution of the money which he had extorted from the English monarch.<sup>2</sup> Henry, for a while at least, enjoyed the fruit of his dishonesty. With Richard's ransom he raised a powerful army to prosecute his claim on the kingdom of Sicily. A torrent of Germans, pouring from the Alps into Italy, overran Apulia and Campania: and the Sicilians, to escape the ravages of a barbarous enemy, submitted by treaty to his authority.

But the perfidious emperor laughed at the obligation of his word; put out the eyes of the son of Tancred (the father was dead); threw the queen Sybilla, her daughters, and the principal nobility, into chains; and was followed into Germany by a long train of captives, and one hundred and fifty horses laden with the most valuable spoils of the conquered provinces. But in the second expedition his cruelties excited the empress Constanza to join her countrymen against her husband. Besieged in a castle, he condescended to seek reconciliation, which in a short time was followed by his death. Like Leopold, during life he had despised the dictates of his conscience and the papal excommunication; in death, like him, he acknowledged his injustice, and ordered the ransom of Richard to be restored. It is useless to add that the restitution was easily evaded by his successor.

#### DEATH AND CHARACTER OF RICHARD

It was Richard's fate to perish in an ignoble quarrel with one of his barons (1199). A treasure had been discovered on the estate of Guiomar, viscount of Limoges, and though a part had been offered to satisfy the king, he demanded the whole. On the refusal of Guiomar, Richard besieged his castle of Chalus, and contemptuously rejected the conditional offer of surrender made by the garrison. It chanced, as he rode round the walls in company with Mercader, that an arrow wounded him in the left shoulder. The signal for assault was immediately given: the castle was taken by storm; and with the exception of Gourdon, the archer who had wounded the king, the captives were ordered to be hanged as robbers who had detained the property of their sovereign. An unskilful surgeon now extracted the head of the arrow; and symptoms of mortification soon warned the king of his approaching dissolution. He sent for his confessor, received the sacraments with sentiments of compunction, and ordering Gourdon into his presence, gave him his lib-

[<sup>1</sup> Hubert was probably glad enough to lay down the cares of office. Stubbs<sup>o</sup> thinks that probably the refusal of the assembled barons and bishops in the spring of 1198, to accede to Richard's demands—the second refusal of the sort recorded in all English history—had something to do with his retirement. It was at least the occasion of it.]

<sup>2</sup> How much had been received in all is unknown. A portion was spent in building the walls of Vienna. But 4,000 marks were offered to the hostages at their departure, to take to Richard. They refused the charge, lest, if any part should be lost or stolen during the journey, the king should compel them to make up the deficiency.

erty, with one hundred shillings to take him home. But Mercader secretly detained the unhappy youth, and ordered him to be flayed alive. Richard expired in the forty-second year of his age. His body was buried at Fontevrault at the feet of his father; his lion heart (the epithet had formerly flattered him) he bequeathed to the citizens of Rouen, in gratitude for their loyalty and attachment.<sup>d</sup>

In many respects a striking parallel presents itself between this ancient king of England and Charles XII of Sweden. They were both inordinately desirous of war, and rather generals than kings. Both were rather fond of glory than ambitious of empire. Both of them made and deposed sovereigns. They both carried on their wars at a distance from home. They were both made prisoners by a friend and ally. They were both reduced by an adversary inferior in war, but above them in the arts of rule. After spending their lives in remote adventures, each perished at last near home, in enterprises not suited to the splendour of their former exploits. Both died childless; and both, by the neglect of their affairs and the severity of their government, gave their subjects provocation and encouragement to revive their freedom. In all these respects the two characters were alike; but Richard fell as much short of the Swedish hero in temperance, chastity, and equality of mind as he exceeded him in wit and eloquence. Some of his sayings are the most spirited that we find in that time; and some of his verses remain which, in a barbarous age, might have passed for poetry.<sup>p</sup>

#### THE STORY OF ROBIN HOOD

"On the 29th day of March," says Hoveden,<sup>j</sup> "Richard, king of England, went to see Clipstone and the forests of Sherwood, which he had never seen before, and they pleased him greatly; after which, on the same day, he returned to Nottingham." Thierry<sup>m</sup> intimates that it was something beyond the charm of woodland scenery that took Richard to Sherwood in this early spring of 1194. The fame of the forest outlaws had, he imagines, presented an object of attraction to Richard's adventurous spirit. If the king of the Crusades and the greenwood king had met, either as friends or foes, the chroniclers would not, in all likelihood, have been silent on the matter. The first distinct mention of Robin Hood is by Fordun,<sup>n</sup> the Scottish historian, who wrote in the fourteenth century. He says: "Then arose among the disinherited the famous brigand Robert Hode, with his accomplices, whom the common people are so fond of celebrating in their games and stage-plays; and whose exploits, chanted by strolling ballad-singers, delight them above all things." Upon these ballads, adapting themselves, generation by generation, to the changes of language, rests the only historical evidence of the individuality of Robin Hood, beyond this mention by Fordun.

A theory has been set up by some enthusiastic interpreters of song and legend, that Robin Hood, and Little John, and many a nameless outlaw, were great heroes who had been defeated, with Simon de Montfort, at the battle of Evesham in 1265. Others make Robin Hood to have been an earl of Huntingdon. He is the Saxon yeoman, Locksley, of Sir Walter Scott. According to Thierry, the whole of the band that ranged the vast woodland districts of Derby, Nottingham, and Yorkshire were the remnants of the old Saxon race, who had lived in this condition of defiance to Norman oppression from the time of Hereward—the same type of generous robbers and redressers of wrongs as the famous Cumberland bandits, Adam Bell, Clym of



[1199 A.D.]

the Clough, and William of Cloudesley. Without entering upon these controversial theories, we accept Robin Hood as a real personage. There may have been a succession of Robin Hoods, during the long term of Norman tyranny; but whoever he was, and in whatever reign he lived, Robin Hood is the representative of the never-ending protest of the people against misrule—a practical protest which set up a rude kind of democratic justice against the manifold atrocities of aristocratic tyranny. It was a contest, no doubt, of robber against robber; but the popular admiration of the hero of the forests was based upon a more enduring principle than the knightly admiration of the hero of the Crusades.

The ballad-singers have outlived the troubadours. The “blind harpers, or such-like tavern minstrels, that give a fit of mirth for a groat, their matters being for the most part stories of the old time, made purposely for the recreation of the common people,”<sup>r</sup>—these touched the largest sympathies of yeoman and labourer, even when recitals of heavy wrongs and terrible redress were “stories of the old time.” For they sang of one who took the goods of the rich baron to bestow them upon the lowly serf, and defied the horrible penalties of the forest laws, whilst he killed his venison in spite of earl and sheriff. The great body of the people were a suffering race long after the difference in suffering between Saxon and Norman had passed away. The Normans, indeed, brought into England a contempt for the labouring people, the serfs and villeins (by whatever special name called), which did not exist in any such degree before the Conquest. The peasant was, under the Norman rulers, in every respect in bondage. His foreign master plundered him and held him in contempt. His foreign king taxed him by the most odious tallage, whenever a penny was put by after the necessities of life and the exactions of the lord were supplied. The humblest cabin and the coarsest fare were thought almost too good for the villein. “Why should villeins eat beef or any dainty food?” asks one of the Norman jongleurs. These charitable poets give us a pithy proverb:

*Il fait à Dieu honte  
Qui villain haut monte.  
(He shames God who raises a villein.)*

Thus the privations of the peasantry, and the insults, still harder to endure, went on amidst a smouldering hatred, till the great outbreak of the time of Richard II. In such compositions as the Robin Hood ballads the detestation of the oppressors was long kept alive. How thoroughly artificial and extravagant are the lyrics and romances of chivalry compared with these songs of the rustics! Of Richard the Crusader the least extraordinary feat is that he tore out the heart of a hungry lion, which the emperor of Germany introduced into the royal prisoner’s dungeon. But when these minstrels record, not at all implying anything to Richard’s disadvantage, that he gaily supped upon the flesh of a young and fat Saracen, having a longing for pork which could not be gratified; and that he caused a Saracen’s head to be served up to the ambassadors of Saladin—we feel how this “specimen of what crusaders were supposed capable of performing, although totally fabulous, shows,” says Sir Walter Scott, “the idea which the minstrels conceived of such a character, when carried to the highest and most laudable degree of perfection.” On the other hand, having put aside the exaggerations of the Robin Hood ballads, we feel that we are in the natural regions of poetry, surrounded by adventures that might have been real, and by men that have human hearts in their bosoms, when we read the stories of “the gentlest thief that ever was.” Fuller,<sup>s</sup> who

places Robin amongst his "Worthies," says: "Know, reader, he is entered on our catalogue not for his thievery but for his gentleness." In the most popular poetry of what we call the rude ages, the outlaw had the same attributes of bravery and generosity with which the character of Richard the Lion-Hearted has been invested; without exhibiting those ferocious traits which belonged to the chivalric worship of mere brute courage and blind fanaticism. The popular notion of a hero is the more refined one, although Robin be merely "a good yeoman":

So curteyse an outlawe as he was one  
Was never none yfounded.

#### ENGLISH SOCIAL LIFE IN RICHARD'S TIME

In spite of the tyrannous laws which banded men together in the forests, and the oppressions which invested robbers with the character of redressers of wrong, the evils of society had some mitigations. The small agricultural tenants of the feudal lord; the socmen, who were allowed allotments for defined contributions of labour; and even the serfs, who were wholly dependent upon one master, without a choice of other service—these had some compensating circumstances, amidst a great deal of injustice and a habit of life which we now regard as miserable. The duties of these, as well as of every other working member of the community, were in great measure defined. Industry was spared many of those evils of competition which are almost inseparable from the struggles of modern society. The capitalist was the Jew; but his mode of dealing suited only unthrifty abbots and plundering barons; for when the borrower came into the gripe of the Israelite, bond was heaped upon bond, so that we have a record how a debt of £200 became, with accumulated interest, £880 in four years. The yeoman and the burgess sold as fast as they produced, and turned the penny as soon as possible, without the desire or the ability to speculate upon the rise or fall of commodities.

The military training of all classes gave a sort of distinction even to the race of villeins, and kept them in healthful excitement. The universal feeling of devotion, and of obedience to one dominant church, lifted their minds out of the mere material cares of life. They were ignorant, in our sense of ignorance. Their religious observances carry with them an air of much that is ridiculous and debasing. But they were not debased by the undoubting earnestness with which they confided in their spiritual leaders. The distinctions of rank were so clearly defined that no one aspired to belong to a station above him, or to affect to be what he was not. The peasantry had their holidays and rustic games, on which neither the lord nor the priest looked unkindly.

The people of the towns had their indoor amusements, of which gambling was the most attractive to high and low. They had chess; but the rattle of the dice was far more seductive than the marshalling of bishop and knight. The passion of playing for money was so universal that, in the crusade, in which all ranks of men were engaged, the kings of England and France made the most stringent regulations to keep gambling within limits. No man in the army was to play at any kind of game for money, with the exception of knights and the clergy; and no knight or clerk was to lose more than twenty shillings in any one day. The men-at-arms, and "other of the lower orders," as the record runs, who should be found playing of themselves—that is, without their masters looking on and permitting—were to be whipped; and, if mariners,

[1199 A.D.]

were to be plunged into the sea on three successive mornings, "after the usage of sailors." These regulations were to prevent the quarrels which were the natural consequence of gambling, at this period and in most other periods when force stood in the place of argument. We find in an old record that "John, son of King Henry, and Fulco Guarine fell at variance at chess; and John brake Fulco's head with the chess-board, and then Fulco gave him such a blow that he had almost killed him."

In the smooth garden lawns of the towns, and on the village green, the favourite game of the sixteenth century was known in the twelfth or thirteenth; for many "a marvellous good neighbour, in sooth, and a very good bowler" of the days of Elizabeth practised the art as it was practised, with little variation, in the days of John. The rougher games of the people were a supplementary part of their military training. Wrestling was the national pastime, from London to the Land's End, from the west to the north. The sturdy yeomen wrestled for prizes—a ram or a bull, a red gold ring or a pipe of wine. One of the Robin Hood ballads says:

What man beareth him best, ywis,  
The prize shall bear away.

The quarter-staff was the rustic weapon of the west; but the Tanner of Nottingham, whose "staff of oak was eight foot and a half," and Robin Hood had a bout in Sherwood, long celebrated in song and picture. The sword dance of the Saxons came down to their successors, and held its honoured place among popular sports long after the Conquest. The acrobat, who went about to market and fair, was the genuine descendant of the Saxon gleeman, who made knives and balls circle through his hands as adroitly as the modern conjurer. The Anglo-Norman juggler balanced his wheel and his sword; and the "musical girls," whose attractions Richard of Devizes<sup>o</sup> denounces, tumbled before knight and peasant, as the daughter of Herodias "tumbled before Herod." The bearward was not unknown in the towns with his monkey and his drum; and to the country revel came the tabourer and the bagpiper, the dancers and the minstrel.

The minstrel was the privileged wanderer. History says that Longchamp, the chancellor, was the chief instrument of the release of Richard from his dungeon in the Tyrol; but romance will not surrender to chancellor or bishop the fame of Blondel, who, searching about for his beloved master, "became acquainted with them of the castle, as minstrels do easily win acquaintance anywhere." The English minstrels, we may suppose, did not sing such refined verses as those of which Blondel sang one verse before Richard's prison window, and to which the king replied with the second verse. Chester fair, in the time of John, was a great resort of vagabonds; for by the charter of the city no one could be there apprehended for any theft or misdeed except it were committed in the fair. Ranulph, earl of Chester, was a prisoner in Rhuddlan castle; and Lord de Lacy, the constable of Chester, by the help of "the minstrels of all sorts that met at Chester fair, by the allurements of their music got together a vast number of such loose people as, by reason of the before-specified privilege, were then in that city." The minstrels and the loose people alarmed the warders of the Welsh castle, and released the earl. We have said enough to show that even in the Norman times of unequal government the free spirit of the people broke forth in that mingled temper of frolic and kindness which has ever been their characteristic, and that under the worst rulers there was no very enduring time to be chronicled when this was not "Merrie England."<sup>c</sup>



## BEGINNINGS OF PARLIAMENTARY REPRESENTATION

It is in the reign of Richard I that we begin to see the first faint glimmerings of parliamentary representation. The one object of the absentee king was to screw all the money that he could out of the kingdom for which he cared not. The object of his wise ministers, of Archbishop Hubert among the first, was to gain the greatest amount of money for their master, with the least amount of oppression towards the nation. Under Hubert's administration chosen bodies of knights, or other lawful men, acting in characters which become more and more distinctly representative, were summoned for every kind of purpose. How far they were nominated, how far freely elected, is not always clear. It seems most likely that in one stage they were nominated by the sheriff in the county court, while at a later stage they were chosen by the county court itself. In other words, the principle of representation was first established; and then the next stage naturally was that the representatives should be freely chosen. Summoned bodies of knights appear in characters which are the forerunners of grand jurors and of justices of the peace. They appear also in a character which makes them distinctly forerunners of the knights of the shire which were soon to come. A chosen body of knights have to assess the imposts on each shire. From assessing the taxes the next stage was to vote or to refuse them. In 1213 the sheriffs are called on to summon four discreet men from each shire, to come and speak with the king about the affairs of the realm. When we have reached this stage we have come very near to a parliament, name and thing.<sup>f</sup>





## CHAPTER IX

### KING JOHN AND MAGNA CHARTA

[1199-1216 A.D.]

O, now doth Death line his dead chaps with steel;  
The swords of soldiers are his teeth and fangs;  
And now he feasts, mousing the flesh of men,  
In undetermined differences of kings.

SHAKESPEARE (*King John*, Act II, Scene I).

#### JOHN SUCCEEDS TO THE THRONE '(1199 A.D.)

RICHARD had left no legitimate issue.<sup>1</sup> In the strict order of hereditary succession, the crown at his death should have devolved to his nephew Arthur, the son of Geoffrey and duke of Brittany, a boy in the twelfth year of his age. Formerly the young prince had been declared heir-apparent; but his mother Constance by her indiscretion and caprice contrived to alienate the mind of his uncle Richard, while the aged and politic Eleanor laboured with assiduity to draw closer the bonds of affection between her two sons. Under her guidance, John had almost obliterated the memory of his former treasons, and in reward of his fidelity had obtained from his brother the restoration of his lands. When Richard lay on his death-bed, John was present; the claim of Arthur, though formerly admitted by the king, was forgotten; and the expiring monarch is said to have declared his brother successor to his throne and heir to one-third of his property. John immediately received the homage of the knights present, hastened to take possession of Chinon, where Richard had deposited his treasures, and proceeded thence into Touraine, Maine, and Anjou, the ancient patrimony of the Plantagenets.

<sup>1</sup> He had a natural son called Philip, who the same year murdered the viscount of Limoges because he had been the occasion of Richard's death.

To his disappointment, the natives declared in favour of his nephew Arthur, and were supported in that declaration by the promise of support from the king of France, to whom Constance had intrusted the person and the interests of her son. John had no time to waste in the reduction of these provinces; but before his departure he wreaked his vengeance on the two capitals, Le Mans and Angers. Both were sacked. From Angers he rode with

expedition into Normandy, where his friends had secured every voice in his favour; and at Rouen he received the ducal coronet and sword from the hands of the archbishop. In Poitou and Aquitaine he was equally fortunate. In these provinces his mother Eleanor did not hesitate to transfer to her son the homage, fealty, and services of the natives, who submitted without a murmur to their newmaster.

In England not only the form but much of the spirit of an elective monarchy had been hitherto retained. Since the Conquest five kings had ascended the throne, and four of these rested their principal title on the choice of the people. After the death of Richard men were divided between the rival claims of John and of Arthur. On the arrival of Archbishop Hubert and William Marshal from Normandy, the justiciar, Fitzpeter, had commanded all freemen to swear allegiance to "Earl John";<sup>1</sup>



KING JOHN  
(1167-1216)

but they were alarmed by the hesitation which seemed to prevail among the prelates and barons. A great council was, therefore, held at Northampton; threats and promises were artfully employed, and at last a unanimous resolution was procured to swear fealty to John, "duke of Normandy," on the condition that he should respect the present rights of each individual.

On this intelligence he repaired to England, and was crowned with the usual solemnity at Westminster on May 25. The primate opened the ceremony with a remarkable speech, intended to justify the exclusion of Arthur. The crown, he observed, was not the property of any particular person. It was the gift of the nation, which chose, generally from the members of the reigning family, the prince who appeared the most deserving of royalty in the existing circumstances. They had that day assembled to exercise this important duty, and had chosen for their sovereign John, duke of Normandy, brother to the deceased monarch. To these principles John gave a tacit assent; and, after a solemn admonition from the primate, took the accustomed oath.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Our ancient authorities observe the same rule in speaking of John before his accession as they did of Richard. He is Earl John till he receives the ducal coronet; then Duke John till his coronation, after which he is King John.

<sup>2</sup> In the preamble, however, to a law which was published a few days later (June 7th) at Northampton, he was careful to unite both his titles. God had raised him to the throne, which belonged to him by hereditary right, through the unanimous consent and favour of the clergy and people.

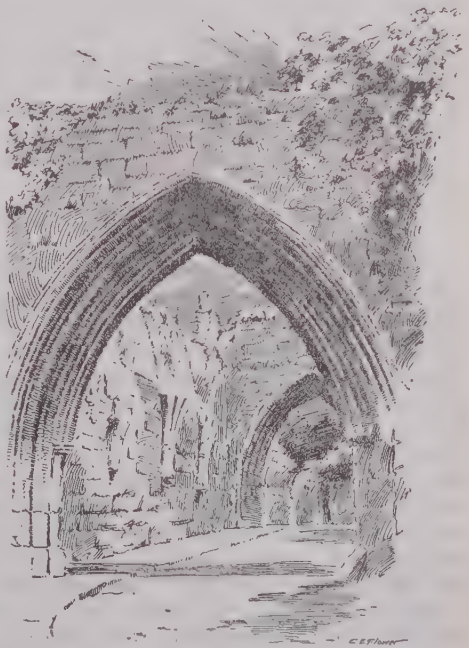


[1199-1200 A.D.]

The French kings had long cast a wistful eye towards the provinces possessed by the English monarchs in France. If the ambition of Philip shrank before the superior prowess of Richard, it expanded again at the accession of his weak and pusillanimous brother. With Arthur in his possession, he determined to fight his own battles, while he pretended to support the cause of an injured orphan; and, having conferred the sword of knighthood on the young prince, he traversed Normandy, burned Evreux, and placed garrisons in the fortresses of Anjou, Maine, and Touraine. An uninteresting war ensued; hostilities, at the solicitation of the cardinal Peter of Capua, were suspended by armistice; and the armistice terminated in a peace, which did little honour to either of the two monarchs. Philip sacrificed the interests of Arthur, acknowledged John for the rightful heir to his late brother, and compelled the young prince to do homage to his uncle for the duchy of Brittany.

But the English king had purchased this advantage by the payment of 20,000 marks as the "relief" for his succession, and by the transfer of the county of Evreux and several valuable fiefs to Louis, the son of Philip, as the marriage portion of his niece, Blanche of Castile, who was immediately married to the French prince. That these transactions might be valid, according to the principles of the feudal jurisprudence, a curious farce was enacted. John had never performed that homage which was requisite to entitle a vassal to the legal possession, and consequently to the power of disposing of his estates. Philip therefore, though he was already master by conquest of several of the places ceded by the treaty, restored them to the English king; who first did homage and swore fealty to his sovereign lord, and then, being thus lawfully seized of his foreign dominions, transferred the stipulated portions with the proper ceremonies to Philip and Louis.

Had John possessed the spirit and enterprise of Richard, he might have obtained very different terms from Philip, who at that moment was engaged in a warm and dangerous controversy with the pontiff Innocent III. Several years before, while Richard was in captivity, he had solicited the hand of Ingeborg, the beautiful sister of the king of Denmark. Ingeborg was conducted to Amiens; the ceremony of her marriage was immediately followed by that of her coronation; and the next morning Philip, to the astonishment of the world, required her attendants to convey her back to her brother. On their refusal, she was sent to a convent;



"THE PENDS" (Scotch vault or covered way)

(Part of cathedral erected between 1159 and 1318, in St. Andrews, Scotland)

and a divorce was pronounced by the archbishop of Rheims under the pretence of affinity, because she was cousin to Philip's deceased wife. The king, though his offers were contemptuously rejected by several princesses, at length found a woman who dared to trust to his honour, in Agnes, the daughter of the duke of Meran. They were married, and continued to cohabit, in defiance of the prohibition of Pope Celestine, who had annulled the sentence of the archbishop.

To Celestine succeeded Innocent, a pontiff who, to the vigour of youth and an unsullied purity of character, added the most lofty notions of the papal authority. At the request of the king of Denmark he espoused the cause of Ingeborg; and his legate, the cardinal Peter, laid the dominions of Philip under an interdict. This was to punish the innocent for the guilty; but it had the effect of subduing that obstinacy which had been proof against the considerations of honour and conscience. Unable to enforce disobedience to the interdict, and assailed by the clamours of his subjects, Philip consented to dismiss Agnes, to treat Ingeborg as queen, and to submit to the revision of the original sentence. In the council of Soissons the beauty and tears of the Danish princess pleaded forcibly in her favour; the objections of her opponents were easily refuted; and the legate had prepared to pronounce judgment, when Philip informed him that he acknowledged the validity of the marriage. Ingeborg derived at the time little benefit from her victory. With the title of queen she was confined in a fortress, and strictly debarred from the society of any but her own women. After some years they were reconciled.

#### JOHN'S SECOND MARRIAGE

The failure of Philip in this attempt to sport with the matrimonial contract did not deter John from following his example. Twelve years had elapsed since his marriage with Hadwisa, or Johanna, the heiress to the earldom of Gloucester. Interest, not affection, had brought about their union; but her estates were of little consequence to the king of England; and a sentence of divorce on the usual plea of consanguinity was readily granted by the archbishop of Bordeaux. John immediately sent ambassadors to Lisbon to demand the princess of Portugal; but before he could receive an answer, he saw by accident Isabella, daughter to Ademar, count of Angoulême, a young lady who in her early years had been publicly promised and privately espoused to Hugh, count of La Marche.<sup>1</sup> The king was captivated by her beauty; the glare of a crown seduced the faith of the father and his daughter; and the unexpected marriage of Isabella and John deprived the princess of Portugal of a husband, the count de la Marche of a wife. The complaints of the one and the threats of the other were equally disregarded. John conducted his bride in triumph to England, and was crowned with her at Westminster by the primate. The next year the same ceremony was repeated at Canterbury, on the festival of Easter.

It is from this inauspicious marriage that we must date the decline of the Plantagenet family. When Isabella was seduced from her betrothed, John was lord of the French coast from the borders of Flanders to the foot of the Pyrenees; in three years he had irrevocably lost the best portion of

<sup>1</sup> This contract would, according to the doctrine of the time, bind Hugh but not Isabella, till it should be confirmed by her after she came to the age of puberty. This, it appears, she had not done, and Ademar contrived to get her out of the hands of the brother of Hugh, to whose care she had been intrusted.

[1202 A.D.]

this valuable territory, the provinces which his predecessors had inherited from William of Normandy and Fulk of Anjou. The sword of the count de la Marche was indeed too feeble to inflict any serious injury. The arrival of John soon restrained his predatory incursions; and a summons to appear with his partisans in the king's court warned him to look round for protection. But he appealed to the justice of Philip, their common lord; nor was that prince sorry that the tergiversation of John afforded him a pretext for humbling so powerful a vassal. The provisions of the late treaty were instantly forgotten. Philip received the homage of Arthur (1202) for Brittany, Anjou, Maine, and Touraine; the discontented barons hastened to join his banner; fortress after fortress surrendered to the confederates; and the heart of John sank in despondency, when an unexpected event arrested the progress of his enemies, and gave him a temporary superiority.

Eleanor, the queen mother, was lodged in the castle of Mirebeau, in Poitou. Its garrison was as weak as its defences were contemptible; and the glory of making her a prisoner was allotted to the young Arthur, her grandson. Accompanied by the barons of the province, he invested Mirebeau. The gates were easily forced; but the queen, retiring into the tower, refused to capitulate, and found means to acquaint her son with her danger. John, roused from his apathy, flew to her relief, routed the enemy who came out to oppose him, entered the walls together with the fugitives, and after a sharp conflict compelled the survivors to ask for quarter. Among the captives was Arthur, whom he placed under a strong guard in the castle of Falaise. Philip, having burned the city of Tours, returned to Paris.

#### THE FATE OF ARTHUR AND LOSS OF NORMANDY

This sudden alteration of fortune had placed in the king's hands the fate of his rival. If the voice of humanity pleaded loudly in favour of a nephew and orphan, an erroneous policy objected the danger of permitting a prince to live, who, as he now claimed, might on some future occasion obtain the crown. It does not, however, appear that John fixed at first on the dreadful expedient of assassination. He visited his captive, exhorted him to desist from his pretensions, and represented the folly of trusting to the friendship of the king of France, the natural enemy of his family. To this admonition the high-spirited youth answered that he would resign his claim only with his breath; and that the crown of England, together with the French provinces, belonged to himself in right of his father. John retired pensive and discontented; Arthur was transferred to the castle of Rouen, and confined in a dungeon of the new tower. Within a few months he had disappeared.

If the manner of his death could have borne investigation, John for his own honour would have made it public. His silence proves that the young prince was murdered. Report ascribed his fate to the dagger of his uncle; but the king of England could surely have hired an assassin without actually dipping his hands in the blood of a nephew.<sup>1</sup> His niece Eleanor, the sister of Arthur, and commonly called the Maid of Brittany, was sent to England, and placed under rigorous but honourable confinement, that she might not, by marriage with a foreign prince, raise up a new competitor for the succession of her father. After a short pause the whispers of suspicion were con-

<sup>1</sup> Guillaume le Breton says he took Arthur into a boat, stabbed him twice with his own hands, and threw the dead body into the river about three miles from the castle.



verted into a conviction of the king's guilt. The Bretons immediately assembled, swore to be revenged on the murderer, and proceeded to settle the succession to the dukedom. Guy of Thouars entered the meeting, carrying in his arms a child of the name of Alice, his daughter by Constance, whom he had married after the death of her first husband. The princess was acknowledged without prejudice to the right of Eleanor, now in the custody of her uncle; and Guy was appointed her guardian, and governor of the duchy.

The bishop of Rennes then hastened to Paris to accuse the English king of the murder; and Philip gladly summoned him to prove his innocence in the presence of the French peers. John, however, refused; and the court pronounced judgment, that "whereas John, duke of Normandy, in violation of his oath to Philip his lord, had murdered the son of his elder brother, a homager of the crown of France and near kinsman to the king, and had perpetrated the crime within the seigniorship of France, he was found guilty of felony and treason, and was therefore adjudged to forfeit all the lands which he held by homage."

To execute this sentence, Philip on the one side and the Bretons on the other entered John's dominions. After the reduction of several minor fortresses, it was resolved to besiege château Gaillard, a strong castle built by the late king on a rock hanging over the Seine. John, on the disappearance of his nephew, had come over to England, was crowned a second time by Archbishop Hubert at Canterbury, and immediately returned to Normandy. Though he assembled a numerous army, he seemed ashamed to show his face to the enemy; and the task of relieving the besieged devolved on his general, the earl of Pembroke. A bridge of boats, which had been thrown across the river, effectually prevented the arrival of supplies to the garrison.

To break through this obstacle, the earl planned a combined attack by land and water. He reached the French camp in the night at the hour appointed, and by the vigour of his assault threw the whole army into confusion. But the flotilla of seventy small vessels, which had been compelled to row against the wind and the current, arrived only in the morning in time to witness the repulse of the earl, and retired hastily from the threatened attack of a victorious enemy. This was the last effort which the king made in defence of his foreign possessions. If we may believe the accounts which have been transmitted to us, he sought to drown the voice of his conscience in scenes of merriment and debauchery. At Rouen, amidst a gay and voluptuous court, he affected to laugh at the progress of the confederates, and openly boasted that in one day he would teach them to regret the success of a whole year. Thus, while his strongest defences were crumbling around him, the infatuated monarch appeared to slumber secure in the lap of pleasure, till the reduction of Radepon, in the vicinity of Rouen, awakened him from his lethargy and induced him to flee with precipitation to England.

Perhaps if it were possible to consult some contemporary historian we might discover the true reason of John's inactivity. He certainly did not acquiesce in his loss with indifference. He complained loudly of the perfidy of his opponents; he claimed the intervention of the pope, to compel Philip by ecclesiastical censures to observe his oaths; and he raised forces and money, both in England and Ireland, to carry on the war. Probably neither his foreign nor his English barons were true to his interests. Many of the former he punished by the forfeiture of their lands in England, and of the latter by exacting from them a seventh of their income and movables. Yet when he had collected a numerous army at Portsmouth, they unanimously informed him by the mouth of Archbishop Hubert that they would not embark.

[1202-1207 A.D.]

At length, after a siege of several months, and when the garrison had been reduced, by the casualties of war and the ravages of famine, to less than two hundred men, the gallant Roger de Lacy surrendered château Gailard to the king of France. Falaise, a place equally strong, and the bulwark of Lower Normandy, was given up by the treachery of Lupicar, the governor, who with his mercenaries entered into the service of Philip. Still the citizens of Rouen, Arques, and Verneuil, animated by a hereditary hatred of the French, resolved to oppose the invaders, concluded a league for their common defence, and implored by messengers the aid of the king of England. Rouen was soon invested; a refusal of assistance from John threw the citizens into despair; and an offer of conditional submission was made to the French king. It was stipulated that unless a peace should be concluded, or the enemy be driven from the walls within thirty days, Philip should be admitted as immediate lord of Rouen, and the citizens should continue to enjoy their accustomed immunities. Arques and Verneuil accepted the same terms, and in like manner opened their gates on the appointed day. Anjou, Maine, and Touraine followed the example of Normandy; and thus by the guilt, or indolence, or bad fortune of John were these extensive and opulent provinces reannexed to the French crown after a separation of two hundred and ninety-two years.<sup>b</sup>

Much as it may have hurt the pride of the English, the loss of Normandy and the other continental possessions of the English king was an unqualified benefit to the nation. Lord Macaulay puts this fact with great force and clearness.<sup>a</sup> "England's interest was so directly opposed to the interest of her rulers," he writes, "that she had no hope but in their errors and misfortunes. The talents and even the virtues of her first six French kings were a curse to her. The follies and vices of the seventh were her salvation. Just at this juncture France, for the first time since the death of Charlemagne, was governed by a prince of great firmness and ability. On the other hand, England, which, since the battle of Hastings, had been ruled generally by wise statesmen, always by brave soldiers, fell under the dominion of a trifler and a coward. From that moment her prospects brightened. The great-grandsons of those who had fought under William, and the great-grandsons of those who had fought under Harold, began to draw near to each other in friendship. Here commences the history of the English nation."<sup>b</sup>

But if John had neglected to preserve, he seemed resolved to recover his transmarine dominions. In a great council at Winchester it was proposed and resolved that every tenth knight in the kingdom should accompany the king, and serve in Poitou at the expense of the other nine. But though a fleet was prepared, though the day of embarkation was fixed and postponed, though John proceeded to Portsmouth, and actually put to sea, yet so weak was the force which he could muster that he returned to land and abandoned the attempt. For this disappointment he consoled himself during the summer by levying fines on the defaulters; and the next year, having secured the co-operation of Guy, viscount of Thouars, he landed at La Rochelle. The castle of Montauban was invested; and John was able to boast that he had reduced in a few days a fortress which Charlemagne had not taken in seven years. He proceeded to Angers, and once more burned that unfortunate city.

But from this state of exertion his mind relapsed into its usual irresolution and apathy. He raised the siege of Nantes to offer battle to Philip; when the armies came within sight, he proposed a negotiation; and as soon as the negotiation was opened slunk away with his army to La Rochelle.

Philip affected to resent the transaction; but at the earnest solicitation of the pope's legate consented to an armistice for two years. John returned to England, and in a great council obtained the grant of a thirteenth for the defence of the rights of the church and the recovery of his inheritance; but his brother Geoffrey, archbishop of York, refused to submit, excommunicated the king's officers, and fled beyond the sea.

#### JOHN AND INNOCENT III

This unfortunate contest with the French king was followed by another with the Roman pontiff, differing indeed in its object, but equally disgraceful in its result.<sup>d</sup> The papal chair was in 1201 filled by Innocent III, who, having attained that dignity at the age of thirty-seven years, and being endowed with a lofty and enterprising genius, gave full scope to his ambition, and attempted, perhaps more openly than any of his predecessors, to convert that superiority which was yielded him by all the European princes into a real dominion over them. [The principle of Innocent's assumption of the temporal power was thus expressed by himself: "As God created two luminaries, one superior for the day, and the other inferior for the night, which last owes its splendour entirely to the first, so he has disposed that the regal dignity should be but a reflection of the papal authority, and entirely subordinate to it."]

The hierarchy, protected by the Roman pontiff, had already carried to an enormous height its usurpations upon the civil power; but in order to extend them further, and render them useful to the court of Rome, it was necessary to reduce the ecclesiastics themselves under an absolute monarchy, and to make them entirely dependent on their spiritual leader. For this purpose Innocent first attempted to impose taxes at pleasure upon the clergy, and in the first year of this century, taking advantage of the popular frenzy for crusades, he sent collectors over all Europe, who levied by his authority the fortieth of all ecclesiastical revenues for the relief of the Holy Land, and received the voluntary contributions of the laity to a like amount. The same year Hubert, archbishop of Canterbury, attempted another innovation, favourable to ecclesiastical and papal power. In the king's absence, he summoned by his legatine authority a synod of all the English clergy, contrary to the inhibition of Geoffrey Fitzpeter, the chief justiciar; and no proper censure was ever passed on this encroachment, the first of the kind, upon the royal power. A favourable incident soon happened, which enabled so aspiring a pontiff as Innocent to extend his usurpations on so contemptible a prince as John.

Hubert Walter, the primate, died in 1205; and as the monks or canons of Christ Church, Canterbury, possessed [or claimed to possess] a right of voting in the election of their archbishop, some of the juniors of the order, who lay in wait for that event, met clandestinely the very night of Hubert's death, and without any *congé d'élire* from the king, chose Reginald, their subprior, for the successor, installed him in the archiepiscopal throne before midnight, and, having enjoined him the strictest secrecy, sent him immediately to Rome, in order to solicit the confirmation of his election. The vanity of Reginald prevailed over his prudence; and he no sooner arrived in Flanders than he revealed to everyone the purpose of his journey, which was immediately known in England. The king was enraged at the novelty and temerity of the attempt, in filling so important an office without his knowledge or



[1205-1207 A.D.]

consent. The suffragan bishops of Canterbury, who were accustomed to concur in the choice of their primate, were no less displeased at the exclusion given them in this election. The senior monks of Christ Church were injured by the irregular proceedings of their juniors. The juniors themselves, ashamed of their conduct, and disgusted with the levity of Reginald, who had broken his engagements with them, were willing to set aside his election; and all men concurred in the design of remedying the false measure which had been taken.

But as John knew that this affair would be canvassed before a superior tribunal, where the interposition of royal authority of bestowing ecclesiastical benefices was very invidious, where even the cause of suffragan bishops was not so favourable as that of monks, he determined to make the new election entirely unexceptionable. [He had long intended the place for John de Gray, bishop of Norwich, whom, without waiting to hear from Rome, he now caused to be elected and placed in possession of the estates of the see.] The king, to obviate all contests, endeavoured to persuade the suffragan bishops not to insist on their claim of concurring in the election. But those prelates, persevering in their pretensions, sent an agent to maintain their cause before Innocent; while the king and the convent of Christ Church despatched twelve monks of that order to support, before the same tribunal, the election of the bishop of Norwich.

Thus there lay three different claims before the pope, whom all parties allowed to be the supreme arbiter in the contest. The claim of the suffragans, being so opposite to the usual maxims of the papal court, was soon set aside. The election of Reginald was so obviously fraudulent and irregular that there was no possibility of defending it. But Innocent maintained that, though this election was null and invalid, it ought previously to have been declared such by the sovereign pontiff, before the monks could proceed to a new election; and that the choice of the bishop of Norwich was, of course, as uncanonical as that of his competitor. Advantage was therefore taken of this subtlety for introducing a precedent, by which the see of Canterbury, the most important dignity in the church after the papal throne, should ever after be at the disposal of the court of Rome.

While the pope maintained so many fierce contests, in order to wrest from princes the right of granting investitures, and to exclude laymen from all authority in conferring ecclesiastical benefices, he was supported by the united influence of the clergy. But no sooner was this point established in some tolerable degree, than the victorious leader aspired to centre all power in his person. The present controversy about the election to the see of Canterbury afforded Innocent an opportunity of claiming this right; and he failed not to perceive and avail himself of the advantage. He sent for the twelve monks deputed by the convent to maintain the cause of the bishop of Norwich, and commanded them, under the penalty of excommunication, to choose for their primate Cardinal Stephen Langton, an Englishman by birth, but educated in France and connected by his interest and attachments with the see of Rome. In vain did the monks represent that they had received from their convent no authority for this purpose; that an election without a previous writ from the king would be deemed highly irregular; and that they were merely agents for another person, whose rights they had no power or pretence to abandon. None of them had the courage to persevere in this opposition except one; the rest complied with his orders and made the election required of them.

John was inflamed with the utmost rage when he heard of this attempt of the court of Rome, and he immediately vented his passion on the monks

of Christ Church, whom he found inclined to support the election made by their fellows at Rome. He sent two knights of his retinue to expel them the convent and take possession of their revenues. These knights entered the monastery with drawn swords, commanded the prior and the monks to depart the kingdom, and menaced them that in case of disobedience they would instantly burn them with the convent. Innocent, prognosticating from the violence and imprudence of these measures that John would finally sink in the contest, persevered the more vigorously in his pretensions, and exhorted the king not to oppose God and the church any longer, nor to persecute that cause for which the holy martyr St. Thomas had sacrificed his life, and which had exalted him equal to the highest saints in heaven.

#### THE KINGDOM PLACED UNDER AN INTERDICT

The pope, finding that John was not sufficiently tamed to submission, sent three prelates, the bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester, to intimate that if he persevered in his disobedience the sovereign pontiff would be obliged to lay the kingdom under an interdict. He burst out into the most indecent invectives against the prelates; swore by God's teeth (his usual oath) that if the pope presumed to lay his kingdom under an interdict he would send to him all the bishops and clergy in England, and would confiscate all their estates; and threatened that if thenceforth he caught any Romans in his dominions he would put out their eyes and cut off their noses, in order to set a mark upon them which might distinguish them from all other nations. Amidst all this idle violence, John stood on such bad terms with his nobility that he never dared to assemble the estates of the kingdom, who, in so just a cause, would probably have adhered to any other monarch, and have defended with vigour the liberties of the nation against these palpable usurpations of the court of Rome. Innocent, therefore, perceiving the king's weakness, fulminated at last the sentence of interdict, which he had for some time held suspended over him.

The sentence of interdict was at that time the great instrument of vengeance and policy employed by the court of Rome; was pronounced against sovereigns for the slightest offences; and made the guilt of one person involve the ruin of millions, even in their spiritual and eternal welfare. The execution of it was calculated to operate with irresistible force on the superstitious minds of the people. The nation was of a sudden deprived of all exterior exercise of its religion; the altars were despoiled of their ornaments; the crosses, the relics, the images, the statues of the saints were laid on the ground. The use of bells entirely ceased in all the churches. Mass was celebrated with shut doors, and none but the priests were admitted to that holy institution. The laity partook of no religious rite, except baptism to new-born infants, and the communion to the dying. The dead were not interred in consecrated ground. Marriages were celebrated in the churchyards. Every circumstance carried symptoms of the deepest distress and of the most immediate apprehension of divine vengeance and indignation.

The quarrel between the king and the see of Rome continued for some years; and though many of the clergy, from the fear of punishment, obeyed the orders of John and celebrated divine service, they complied with the utmost reluctance, and were regarded, both by themselves and the people, as men who betrayed their principles and sacrificed their conscience to temporal regards and interests.

[1208-1209 A.D.]

## JOHN'S IRISH AND WELSH EXPEDITIONS

During this period John appears to have conducted himself with more vigour and decision than at any other part of his reign. He compromised a difference with the king of Scotland, without any actual warfare. He led a great army into Ireland, which had been distracted by the rivalries and oppressions of the proud barons who had been deputed to its administration since the time of Henry II. The presence of the English king with a powerful force was held as a blessing by the native chiefs and the body of the people. William de Braiose, who had received extensive grants of land at the beginning of John's reign, conscious of his crimes, hurried to France, leaving his wife and son in the hands of John. A brief entry in the chronicle of Florence of Worcester<sup>i</sup> tells their fate: "Matilda de Braiose and William her son were starved to death at Windsor." The two De Lacys, amongst the most oppressive of the Norman aristocracy in Ireland, also fled to France, and subsisted as labourers in the garden of an abbey. After two or three years their rank was discovered by the abbot, and through his intercession they were restored to the king's favour.

Ireland was, before the visit of John, a prey to those lawless outrages which are invariably the result of tyrannous government. Dublin was peopled in a great degree by colonists from Bristol, under a grant from Henry II. On some occasion of country festivity at a place called the wood of Cullen, when many of these citizens were present, a great body of lawless people came down from the Wicklow mountains and massacred three hundred men, women, and children. Some of the English laws had been introduced by Henry II, and his grants of land were according to the feudal tenures. John originated some useful reforms. He divided the portions of the kingdom in his possession into shires, each with its sheriff and other officers, and he coined the first sterling money circulated in Ireland. He left John de Gray, bishop of Norwich, as his chief justiciar, a man of talent and discretion. During the troublous future of England in this reign the sister island was tranquil and prosperous.<sup>1</sup> The expedition to Ireland was followed next year, 1211, by an attempt to repress the incursions of the Welsh. John advanced to the foot of Snowdon, and there received twenty-eight young men as hostages from Llewelyn.<sup>c</sup>

Meanwhile, the danger to which his government stood continually exposed from the discontent of ecclesiastics increased his natural propensity to tyranny; and he seems to have ever wantonly disgusted all orders of men, especially his nobles, from whom alone he could reasonably expect support and assistance. He dishonoured their families by his licentious amours; he published edicts prohibiting them from hunting feathered game, and thereby restrained them from their favourite amusement; he ordered all the hedges and fences near his forests to be levelled, that his deer might have more ready access into the fields for pasture; and he continually loaded the nation with arbitrary impositions. Conscious of the general hatred which he had incurred, he required his nobility to give him hostages for security of their allegiance; and they were obliged to put into his hands their sons, nephews, or near relations.

[<sup>1</sup> It was during this interval that John is said to have sent a deputation to solicit the friendship and alliance of Muhammed An-Nasir, the Moorish emir in Spain. John, contemporaries say, went so far as to offer to embrace Mohammedanism—a startling enough proposal, but one that may be easily believed of the English king.]



## JOHN'S EXCOMMUNICATION AND DEPOSITION

The court of Rome had artfully contrived a gradation of sentences, by which she kept offenders in awe; still afforded them an opportunity of preventing the next anathema by submission; and, in case of their obstinacy, was able to refresh the horror of the people against them by new denunciations of the wrath and vengeance of heaven. As the sentence of interdict had not produced the desired effect on John, Innocent, after keeping the thunder long suspended, gave at last authority to the bishops of London, Ely, and Worcester to fulminate the sentence of excommunication against him. These prelates obeyed.

No sooner was the excommunication known than the effects of it appeared. Geoffrey, archdeacon of Norwich, who was intrusted with a considerable office in the court of exchequer, being informed of it while sitting on the bench, observed to his colleague the danger of serving under an excommunicated king, and he immediately left his chair and departed the court. John gave orders to seize him, to throw him into prison, to cover his head with a great leaden cope; and by this and other severe usage he put an end to his life. The bishops, finding themselves exposed either to the jealousy of the king or hatred of the people, gradually stole out of the kingdom, and at last there remained only three prelates to perform the functions of the episcopal office. Many of the nobility, terrified by John's tyranny, and obnoxious to him on different accounts, imitated the example of the bishops; and most of the others who remained were, with reason, suspected of having secretly entered into a confederacy against him. John was alarmed at his dangerous situation. He desired a conference with Langton at Dover; offered to acknowledge him as primate, to submit to the pope, to restore the exiled clergy, even to pay them a limited sum as a compensation for the rents of their confiscated estates. But Langton, perceiving his advantage, was not satisfied with these concessions: he demanded that full restitution and reparation should be made to all the clergy. The king, who had probably not the power of fulfilling it, finally broke off the conference.

The next gradation of papal sentences was to absolve John's subjects from their oaths of fidelity and allegiance, and to declare everyone excommunicated who had any commerce with him in public or in private, at his table, in his council, or even in private conversation; and this sentence was accordingly, with all imaginable solemnity, pronounced against him. But as John still persevered in his contumacy, there remained nothing but the sentence of deposition, and Innocent determined to dart this last thunderbolt against the refractory monarch. But as a sentence of this kind required an armed force to execute it, the pontiff, casting his eyes around, fixed at last on Philip, king of France as the person into whose powerful hand he could most properly intrust that weapon, the ultimate resource of his ghostly authority. And he offered the monarch, besides the remission of all his sins and endless spiritual benefits, the property and possession of the kingdom of England as the reward of his labor.

It was the common concern of all princes to oppose these exorbitant pretensions of the Roman pontiff, by which they themselves were rendered vassals, and vassals totally dependent on the papal crown: yet even Philip, the most able monarch of the age, was seduced by present interest, and by the prospect of so tempting a prize, to accept the liberal offer of the pontiff, and thereby to ratify that authority which, if he ever opposed its boundless usur-

[1211-1213 A.D.]

pations, might next day tumble him from the throne. He levied a great army; summoned all vassals of the crown to attend him at Rouen; collected a fleet of seventeen hundred vessels, great and small, in the seaports of Normandy and Picardy, and prepared a force which seemed equal to the greatness of the enterprise. The king, on the other hand issued writs requiring the attendance of all his military tenants at Dover to defend the kingdom in this dangerous extremity. A great number appeared, and he selected an army of sixty thousand men—a power invincible, had they been united in affection to their prince and animated with a becoming zeal for the defence of their native country. But the people were swayed by superstition, and regarded their king with horror, as anathematised by papal censures: the barons, besides lying under the same prejudices, were all disgusted by his tyranny, and were, many of them, suspected of holding a secret correspondence with the enemy: and the incapacity and cowardice of the king himself made men prognosticate the most fatal effects from the French invasion.

Pandulf, whom the pope had chosen for his legate, had, before he left Rome, asked him whether, if the king of England in this desperate situation were willing to submit to the apostolic see, the church should, without the consent of Philip, grant him any terms of accommodation. Innocent, expecting from his agreement with a prince so abject both in character and fortune more advantages than from his alliance with a great and victorious monarch, who after such mighty acquisitions might become too haughty to be bound by spiritual chains, explained to Pandulf the conditions on which he was willing to be reconciled to the king of England. The legate, therefore, as soon as he arrived in the north of France, sent over two knights Templar to desire an interview of John at Dover, which was readily granted: he there represented to him, in such strong and probably in such true colours, his lost condition, the disaffection of his subjects, the secret combination of his vassals against him, the mighty armament of France, that John yielded at discretion, and subscribed to all the conditions which Pandulf was pleased to impose upon him. He promised, among other articles, that he would submit himself entirely to the judgment of the pope; that he would acknowledge Langton for primate; that he would restore all the exiled clergy and laity who had been banished on account of the contest; that he would make them full restitution of their goods and compensation for all damages, and everyone outlawed or imprisoned for his adherence to the pope should immediately be received into grace and favour. Four barons swore, along with the king, to the observance of this ignominious treaty.

But the ignominy of the king was not yet carried to its full height. Pandulf required him, as the first trial of obedience, to resign his kingdom to the church; and he persuaded him that he could nowise so effectually disappoint the French invasion as by thus putting himself under the immediate protection of the apostolic see. John, lying under the agonies of present terror, made no scruple of submitting to this condition. He issued a charter, in which he said that of his own free will, and by the common advice and consent of his barons, he had, for remission of his own sins and those of his family, resigned England and Ireland to God, to St. Peter and St. Paul, and to Pope Innocent and his successors in the apostolic chair; he agreed to hold these dominions as feudatory of the church of Rome, by the annual payment of 1,000 marks; and he stipulated that, if he or his successors should ever presume to revoke or infringe this charter, they should instantly forfeit all right to their dominions.

In consequence of this agreement, John did homage to Pandulf as the pope's legate, with all the submissive rites which the feudal law required of

vassals before their liege lord and superior. He came disarmed into the legate's presence, who was seated on a throne; he flung himself on his knees before him; he lifted up his joined hands, and put them within those of Pandulf; he swore fealty to the pope; and he paid part of the tribute which he owed for his kingdom as the patrimony of St. Peter. The legate, elated by this supreme triumph of sacerdotal power, could not forbear discovering extravagant symptoms of joy and exultation: he trampled on the money which was laid at his feet as an earnest of the subjection of the kingdom—an insolence of which, however offensive to all the English, no one present, except the archbishop of Dublin, dared to take any notice. But though Pandulf had brought the king to submit to these base conditions, he still refused to free him from the excommunication and interdict till an estimation should be taken of the losses of the ecclesiastics and full compensation and restitution should be made them.<sup>f</sup>

#### THE FIRST ENGLISH NAVAL VICTORY

Five or six days after these transactions Pandulf went over to France, and, to the astonishment and great wrath of Philip, announced to him that he must no longer molest a penitent son and a faithful vassal of the church, nor presume to invade a kingdom which was now part of the patrimony of St. Peter. "But," said Philip, "I have already expended enormous sums of money on this expedition, which I undertook at the pontiff's express commands, and for the remission of my sins." The nuncio repeated his inhibition and withdrew. The French king, however, who was already on the road, continued his march to the coast. Philip, who inveighed publicly against the selfish and treacherous policy of the pope, would not have been prevented from attempting the invasion by the dread of the thunders of the church, which rumbled over his head.

But other circumstances of a more worldly nature interfered: Ferrand, or Ferdinand, count of Flanders, demanded that certain towns which had lately been annexed to the French crown should be restored to him. Philip refused; and now, when he proposed to his great vassals that they should continue the enterprise against England, the count of Flanders, the most powerful of them all, said that his conscience would not permit him to follow his lord in such an unjust attempt, and suddenly withdrew with all his forces. Philip, vowing he would make Flanders a mere province of France, marched after him, and, taking several of the earl's best towns on his way, sat down with his army before the strong city of Ghent. Ferrand had already a secret understanding with John, and now he applied to that king for help. John's fleet lay ready in the harbour of Portsmouth. Seven hundred knights, with a large force of infantry, embarked in five hundred vessels, under the command of William, count of Holland, and William Longsword, earl of Salisbury, and immediately made sail for the coast of Flanders. They found the French fleet at anchor at Damme.<sup>g</sup>

Damme, which was now to be the scene of the first great naval action between the English and French, and the first great naval victory recorded in the English annals, was at that time the port of Bruges, from whence it is about a mile distant, being situated near the junction of the rivers Rey and Lieve.

When the French arrived off this harbour they offered peace to the inhabitants, who were wholly incapable of defending themselves against such a force; they obtained the money which they demanded as its price, and then



[1213 A.D.]

they plundered the place. Not satisfied with this, they proceeded to ravage the country round about; and the sailors, as well as the land forces, were thus employed when the English fleet, cruising in search of their enemy, approached. The English, as they neared the coast, espied many ships lying without the haven, which, capacious as it was, was not large enough to contain them all; many, therefore, were riding at anchor without the haven's mouth and along the coast. Shallops were presently sent out to espy whether they were friends or enemies; and if enemies, what their strength, and in what order they lay. These espies, approaching as if they had been fishermen, came near enough to ascertain that the ships were left without sufficient hands to defend them; and, hastening back, told the commanders that the victory was in their hands, if they would only make good speed.

No time was lost; they made sail towards the enemy, and won the "tall ships" which were riding at anchor, with little difficulty, the men on board only requesting that their lives might be spared. The smaller ones, which were left dry when the tide was low, they spoiled of whatever was useful, and set on fire, the sailors escaping to the shore. This done, they set upon those that lay in the harbour, within the haven; and "here was hard hold for a while," because of the narrowness of the place, allowing no advantage for numbers or for skill. "And those Frenchmen," says the chronicler, "that were gone abroad into the country, perceiving that the enemies were come, by the running away of the mariners, returned with all speed to their ships to aid their fellows, and so made valiant resistance for a time; till the Englishmen, getting on board, and ranging themselves on either side of the haven, beat the Frenchmen so on the sides, and the ships grappling together in front, that they fought as it had been in a pitched field, till that, finally, the Frenchmen were not able to sustain the force of the Englishmen, but were constrained, after long fight and great slaughter, to yield themselves prisoners."

The first act of the conquerors was to give thanks to God for their victory. They then manned three hundred of the prizes, which were laden with corn, wine, oil, and other provisions, and with military stores, and sent them to England—the first fruits of that maritime superiority for which the church bells of this glorious island have so often pealed with joy. A hundred more were burned, because they were drawn up so far upon the sands that they could not be got out without more hands and cost of time than could be spared for them. There still remained a great part of the enemy's fleet, higher up the harbour, and protected by the town, in which Philip had left a sufficient force to protect the stores which he had left there, and the money for the payment of his troops. The English landed, the count of Flanders joined them, and they proceeded to attack the place; but by this there had been sufficient time for the French king to hasten, with an overpowering force, from the siege of Ghent. The English and their allies sustained a sharp action, and were compelled to retreat to their ships, with a loss computed by the French at 2,000 men. But they retreated no further than to the near shores of the isle of Walcheren; and Philip saw the impossibility of saving the remainder of his fleet, considering the unskilfulness of his own seamen, as well as other things. He set fire to them, therefore, himself, that they might not fall into the enemy's hands. Such was the fate of that great naval armament, which is said to be the first French fleet mentioned in history; and, as if the unfortunate town of Damme which he had promised not to injure, and the foreign merchants to whom his word was pledged had not suffered enough by the previous spoil, he set the place on fire also, and it was consumed: and he wasted the country round with fire. Philip thus lost the

means of supporting his army in Flanders, or of transporting it to the English coast: half famished and overcome with vexation, he hurried across his own frontiers, leaving Count Ferrand to recover with ease all that he had lost.

#### JOHN AT VARIANCE WITH HIS BARONS

This first great naval victory transported the English people with joy; but with joy was mingled a malicious confidence and presumption in the heart of John, who now betrayed a determination to break the best part of his recent oaths. Being determined to carry the war into France, he summoned his vassals to meet him at Portsmouth. The barons went armed and appointed, as if ready to sail; but, when ordered to embark, they resolutely refused unless the king recalled the exiles, as he had promised to do. After some tergiversation John granted a reluctant consent, and Archbishop Langton, the bishops of London, Ely, Hereford, Lincoln, and Bath, the monks of Canterbury all, with their companions and numerous dependents, returned.

John and the archbishop met and kissed each other at Winchester; and there, in the porch of the cathedral church, Langton gave full absolution to the king, who again swore to govern justly, and maintain his fealty to the pope. It was, however, clear to all men that Langton placed no confidence in the king; and that the king, who considered him as the chief cause of all his troubles, regarded Langton with all the deadly hatred of which his dark character was capable. John now set sail with a few ships, but his barons were in no hurry to follow him, being far more eager to secure their own liberties than to recover the king's dominions on the Continent. They said that the time of their feudal service was expired, and they withdrew to a great council at St. Albans, where Fitzpeter, the justiciar, presided, and where they published resolves, in the form of royal proclamations, ordering the observance of old laws and denouncing the punishment of death against the sheriff's foresters, or other officers of the king who should exceed their proper and legal authority.

John got as far as the island of Jersey, when, finding that none followed him, he turned back with vows of vengeance. He landed, and marched with a band of mercenaries to the north, where the barons were most contumacious. Burning and destroying, he advanced as far as Northampton. Here Langton overtook him. "These barbarous measures," said the prelate, "are in violation of your oaths; your vassals must stand to the judgment of their peers, and not be wantonly harassed by arms." "Mind you your church," roared the furious king, "and leave me to govern the state." He continued his march to Nottingham, where Langton, who was not a man to be intimidated, again presented himself, and threatened to excommunicate all the ministers and officers that followed him in his lawless course. John then gave way, and, to save appearances, summoned the barons to meet him or his justices.

Langton hastened to London, and there, at a second meeting of the barons, he read the liberal charter which Henry I had granted on his accession; and, after inducing them to embrace its provisions, he made them swear to be true to each other, and to conquer or to die in support of their liberties. This was on the 25th of August. On the 29th of September a new legate from the pope, Cardinal Nicholas, arrived in England to settle the indemnity due to the exiles and to take off the interdict. John renewed his oath of fealty to Innocent, knelt in homage before the legate, paid 15,000 marks, and promised 40,000 more to the bishops. The interdict was removed; and from this moment the court of Rome changed sides, and, abandoning the cause of

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liberty and the barons, stood for the king. This abandonment, however, did not discourage the nobles, nor did it even detach Archbishop Langton from the cause for which they had confederated.

A formidable league was now formed (1214) against the French king, and John was enabled to join it with some vigour. Ferrand, count of Flanders, Reynaud, count of Boulogne, and Otto, the new emperor of Germany, nephew to John, determined to invade France and divide that kingdom among them. Philip himself marched towards the frontiers of Flanders. He sent his son Louis into Brittany, whither the English king now advanced. John was kept in check, or lost his opportunity through cowardice and indolence, while his allies were thoroughly defeated at the battle of Bouvines—one of the most memorable battles of the Middle Ages, in which the emperor was completely ruined, and the count of Flanders, the count of Boulogne, and the earl of Salisbury were taken prisoners, with an immense number of inferior lords and knights.

This battle was fought on the 27th of July, near Bouvines, between Lille and Tournay. On the 19th of October following, John begged a truce, and obtained one for five years, on condition of abandoning all the towns and castles he had taken on the Continent. He arrived in England on the 20th of October, and, as if he would take vengeance on his English subjects for the reverses and shame he had suffered, he again let loose his foreign mercenaries on the land and began to violate all his most solemn promises. Fitzpeter, his justiciar, the only one of his ministers that could moderate his fury, had now been dead some months. John, who feared him, rejoiced at his death. "It is well," cried he, laughing as they told him the news; "in hell he may again shake hands with Hubert, our late primate, for surely he will find him there. By God's teeth, now for the first time I am king and lord of England."

But there were men at work resolute and skilful. Immediately after his arrival, the barons met to talk of the league they had formed with Langton. On the 20th of November they met in crowds at Bury St. Edmunds, where they finally determined to demand their rights, in a body, in the royal court at the festival of Christmas. The spirit of freedom was awakened, not soon to sleep again: they advanced one by one, according to seniority, to the high altar, and, laying their hands on it, they solemnly swore that if the king refused the rights they claimed they would withdraw their fealty and make war upon him, till, by a charter under his own seal, he should confirm their just petitions. They then parted, to meet again at the feast of the Nativity. When that solemn but festive season arrived, John found himself at Worcester, and almost alone; for none of his great vassals came as usual to congratulate him, and the countenances of his own attendants seemed gloomy and unquiet. He suddenly departed, and riding to London, there shut himself up in the strong house of the knights Templar. The barons followed close on the coward's steps, and on the feast of the Epiphany (at every move they chose some day consecrated by religion) they presented themselves in such force that he was obliged to admit them to an audience.

At first he attempted to browbeat the nobles, but they were firm to their purpose. John turned pale, and trembled. He then changed his tone, and cajoled instead of threatening. "Your petition," he said, "contains matter weighty and arduous. You must grant me time till Easter, that, with due deliberation, I may be able to do justice to myself and satisfy the dignity of my crown." The majority consented, on condition that Cardinal Langton, the bishop of Ely, and William, earl of Pembroke, should be the king's sureties that he would give them the satisfaction they demanded on the appointed



day. They were no sooner gone than John adopted measures which he fondly hoped would frustrate all their plans. He began by courting the church, and formally renounced the important prerogative, that had been hitherto so zealously contended for by himself and his great ancestors, touching the election of bishops and abbots. Having thus, as he thought, bound the clergy to his service, he turned his attention to the body of the people, whose progress had been slow, but steady, and whose importance was now immense. He ordered his sheriffs to assemble all the free men of their several counties and tender to them a new oath of allegiance.

His next step was to send an agent to Rome, to appeal to the pope against what he termed the treasonable violence of his vassals. The barons, too, despatched an envoy to the Eternal City; but it was soon made more than ever evident that Innocent would support the king through right and wrong. He wrote a startling letter to Cardinal Langton; but that extraordinary priest was deaf to the voice of his spiritual chief where the interests of his country were concerned. To make himself still surer, John took the cross on the 2d of February, solemnly swearing that he would lead an army to the Holy Land. This taking of the cross seemed to John the best of all defences.

#### RUNNYMEDE (1215 A.D.)

On the appointed day in Easter week the barons met at Stamford with great military pomp, being followed by two thousand knights and a host of retainers. The king was at Oxford. The barons marched to Brackley, within a few miles of that city, where they were met by a deputation from the sovereign, composed of Cardinal Langton, the earl of Pembroke, and the earl of Warenne. The confederates delivered the schedule containing the chief articles of their petition. "These are our claims," they said, "and, if they are not instantly granted, our arms shall do us justice." When the deputies returned, and Langton expounded the contents of the parchment he held in his hand, John exclaimed, in a fury, "And why do they not demand my crown also? By God's teeth, I will not grant them liberties which will make me a slave." He then made some evasive offers, which the barons understood and rejected. Pandulf, who was with the king, now contended that the cardinal-primate ought to excommunicate the confederates; but Langton said he knew the pope's real intentions had not been signified, and that unless the king dismissed the foreign mercenaries, whom he had brought into the kingdom for its ruin, he would presently excommunicate them.

The barons now proclaimed themselves "the army of God and of holy church," and unanimously elected Robert Fitzwalter, earl of Dunmore, to be their general. They then marched against the castle of Northampton. The garrison, composed of foreigners, stood out for the king; and after fifteen days they gave up the siege and marched to Bedford. On whichever side the free burghers of England threw their substantial weight, that party must prevail, and, as yet, no declaration had been made in favour of the confederates. But now anxiety vanished—the people of Bedford threw open their gates; and soon after messengers arrived from the capital with secret advice that the principal citizens of London were devoted to their cause and would receive them with joy. Losing no time, they pursued their course to London. It was the 24th of May, and a Sunday: the gates were open—the people hearing mass in their churches—when the army entered the city in excellent order and profound silence. On the following day the barons issued proclamations

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requiring all who had hitherto remained neutral to join them against the perjured John. In all parts of the kingdom the lords and knights quitted their castles to join the national standard at London. The heart of John again turned to water: he saw himself almost entirely deserted, only seven knights remaining near his person. Recovering, however, from his first stupefaction, he resorted to his old arts: he assumed a cheerful countenance; said what his lieges had done was well done; and he despatched the earl of Pembroke to London, to assure the barons that, for the good of peace and the exaltation of his reign, he was ready freely to grant all the rights and liberties, and only wished them to name a day and place of meeting. "Let the day," replied the barons, "be the 15th of June—the place, Runnymede."

On the morning of the appointed day, the king moving from Windsor Castle and the barons from the town of Staines, the parties met on the green meadow, close by the Thames, which the barons had named. With John came eight bishops, Pandulf, Almerie, the master of the English Templars, the earl of Pembroke, and thirteen other gentlemen; but the majority of this party, though they attended him as friends and advisers, were known to be in their hearts favourable to the cause of the barons. On the other side stood Fitzwalter and the whole nobility of England. With scarcely an attempt to modify any of its clauses, and with a facility that might justly have raised suspicion, the king signed the scroll presented to him. This was Magna Charta. As the profound duplicity and immorality of John were well known, the barons exacted securities. They required that he should disband and send out of the kingdom all his foreign officers, with their families and followers; that for the ensuing two months the barons should keep possession of the city, and Langton of the Tower of London; and that they should be allowed to choose twenty-five members from their own body to be guardians or conservators of the liberties of the kingdom, with power, in case of any breach of the charter—such breach not being redressed immediately—to make war on the king; to distrain and distress him by seizing his castles, lands, possessions, and in any other manner they could, till the grievance should be redressed; always, however, saving harmless the person of the said lord the king, the person of the queen, and the persons of their royal children.<sup>e</sup>

## MAGNA CHARTA

Magna Charta, the Great Charter of Liberties, is commonly regarded as the basis of English freedom. This is, to some extent, a misconception. It was a code of laws, expressed in simple language, embodying two principles: the first, such limitations of the feudal claims of the king as would prevent their abuse; the second, such specification of the general rights of all freemen as were derived from the ancient laws of the realm, however these rights had been neglected or perverted. It contained no assertion of abstract principles of freedom or justice, but met unquestionable evils by practical remedies. To imagine that this charter contained any large views of government that were not consistent with the condition of society at the time of its enactment is to believe that the men who enforced it, with their swords in their hands, were, to use a modern expression, before their age. If they had been before their age, by any fortuitous possession of greater wisdom, foresight, and liberality than belonged to their age, that charter would not have stood up against the regal power which again and again assailed it. It was built, as all English freedom has been built, upon something which had gone before it.

It was not a revolution. It was a conservative reform. It demanded no limitation of the regal power which had not been acknowledged, in theory, by every king who had taken the coronation oath. It made that oath, which had been regarded as a mere form of words, a binding reality. It defined, in broad terms of practical application, the essential difference between a limited and a despotic monarchy. It preserved all the proper attributes of the kingly power, whilst it guarded against the king being a tyrant. The feudal monarch was invested with many privileges, as the lord of a body of feudatories; and these privileges, as society gradually assumed a character less and less feudal, became the sources of endless oppressions for several centuries, and were slowly swept away, one by one, in the gradual development of representative government. To have imagined that the barons of Runnymede could have regarded the king simply as the sovereign of the realm—as the chief magistrate, as the fountain of justice, as the great central point of administration—is to imagine an impossibility. They had feudal interests to regard as a feudal aristocracy. It is both unjust and unwise to consider the barons as mere selfish men, because the charter provided a remedy for many wrongs that more especially bore upon themselves in their feudal relations to the king.

It limited the royal practice of extracting arbitrary sums under the name of reliefs; of wasting the estates of wards; of disposing in marriage of heirs during minority; and so of heiresses, and of widows. It brought back the right to demand aids strictly to the original conditions of the feudal tenures, which had been perpetually extended at the pleasure of the king. To levy an aid upon the tenants of the crown, in any case beyond the legal ones of the king's personal captivity, the knighthood of his eldest son, or the marriage of his daughter, the consent of the great council of the tenants in chief was necessary.<sup>1</sup> So also was limited the right to scutage, or compensation for knight-service. But at the same time the chief tenants agreed that "every liberty and custom which the king had granted to his tenants, as far as concerned him, should be observed by the clergy and laity towards their tenants as far as concerned them." Such are the principal clauses of the charter as regards the great body of feudatories, in relation to the crown and in relation to their subtenants.

But there were other conditions of more permanent importance, which had regard to the sovereign authority over all men. These were derived from the great Saxon principles of freedom, which a century and a half of Norman power had more or less obliterated but had not destroyed. Twysden,<sup>k</sup> an old writer upon the English constitution, during the great struggle of the days of Charles I, says, "Never people in Europe have had the rights of monarchy better limited, with the preservation of the subject's liberty, than the English, from this basis." But that basis, he also says, was contained "in the ancient customs of the kingdom." The charter was in accordance with the great principle of preservation and progress, by which it has been maintained and extended for more than six hundred years. Let us briefly notice what the English derive from this charter, which still belongs to our own time and is an essential part of the rights of every Englishman. A large portion of the people, the villeins and serfs, had little or no participation in the rights which it asserted, but the very assertion hastened a period when all should be equal before the law.

Passing over the clauses of the charter which protected the tenants and subtenants from illegal distresses of the crown—which attempted to limit

<sup>1</sup> This clause was subsequently expunged from the charter by the influence of the Crown



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the abuse of purveyance, or the right of the king's officers to take necessities for the royal household, on their own terms; which prescribed an uniformity of weights and measures; which protected merchant strangers; and which confirmed the liberties and free customs of London, and other cities and towns—let us look at the broad principle of government which is contained in these words: "No free man shall be taken, or imprisoned, or disseised, or outlawed, or banished, or any otherwise destroyed; nor will we pass upon him, nor send upon him, unless by the legal judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land. To no man will we sell, to no man will we deny or delay right or justice." In the charter of Henry III, which was a confirmation of that of John, we find that no man was to be "disseised of his freehold, or liberties, or free customs" by any arbitrary proceeding. Life, liberty, and property were thus protected. No man, from that time, could be detained in prison without trial. No man would have to buy justice. The charter recognised the court of common pleas, and the circuits of judges of assize, which had been before established. But it put an end to that enormous corruption by which justice was sold, not by mere personal bribery of corrupt ministers of the crown, but by bribing the crown through their hands.

The Great Charter, as we see, in these broad provisions, applied only to free men. A large portion of the people were in the condition of villeinage. Some were in a state of slavery. Those who held by servile tenures were thus incidentally mentioned in a clause respecting wardship: "The warder of the lands of such heir who shall be under age shall take of the land of such heir only reasonable issues, reasonable customs, and reasonable services, and that without destruction and waste of the men and things." The men went with the land as chattels. One sole piece of consideration for the "*ascripti glebe*" occurs in the charter, upon the subject of amercement, or fines to the king—the mulcts of the Anglo-Saxons: "A free man shall not be amerced for a small fault, but according to the degree of the fault, and for a great crime in proportion according to its magnitude: saving alway to the freeman his tenement, and after the same manner saving to a merchant his merchandise. And a villein shall be amerced after the same manner, saving to him his wainage, if he falls under our mercy: and none of the aforesaid amercements shall be imposed except by the oath of the good men of the neighbourhood." The expression, "*salvo wainagio suo*," saves to the villein his implements of husbandry—his carts and ploughs. It was a small privilege, but it indicates that this class was not out of the protection of the law.

The specific provisions of the Great Charter went to the remedy of existing evils as they presented themselves in the existing state of society. Generations passed away before villeinage and slavery ceased to exist in England. Their abolition was the result of the internal forces, so to speak, of society, and not of sovereign grace or legislative enactment. The barons of England did the work which was called for in their generation; and they left to their successors in the battle for liberty, whether they were noble or plebeian, to carry on the same work in the same practical and temperate spirit. "From this era," says Hallam<sup>l</sup>, "a new soul was infused into the people of England." The principle was rooted in English earth, like the Ankerwyke Yew, which was a vigorous tree on the opposite bank of the Thames when "the army of God and holy church" stood upon Runnymede, and which still bears its green leaf.<sup>c</sup>

The following is a literal translation of the full text of the Great Charter:

## MAGNA CHARTA

JOHN, by the grace of God king of England, lord of Ireland, duke of Normandy and Aquitaine, and count of Anjou, to his archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, barons, justiciaries, foresters, sheriffs, governors, officers, and to all bailiffs, and faithful subjects, greeting. Know ye, that we, in the presence of God, and for the salvation of our soul, and the souls of all our ancestors and heirs, and unto the honour of God and the advancement of Holy Church, and amendment of our Realm, by advice of our venerable Fathers, STEPHEN, Archbishop of Canterbury, primate of all England and cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, HENRY, Archbishop of Dublin, WILLIAM of London, PETER of Winchester, JOCELIN of Bath and Glastonbury, HUGH of Lincoln, WALTER of Worcester, WILLIAM of Coventry, BENEDICT of Rochester, Bishops; of Master PANDULF, Sub-Deacon and Familiar of our Lord the Pope, Brother AYMERIC, Master of the Knights-Templars in England; and of the Noble Persons, WILLIAM MARESCALL, Earl of Pembroke, WILLIAM, Earl of Salisbury, WILLIAM, Earl of Warren, WILLIAM, Earl of Arundel, ALAN DE GALLOWAY, Constable of Scotland, WARIN FITZ GERALD, PETER FITZ HERBERT, and HUBERT DE BURGH, Seneschal of Poitou, HUGH DE NEVILLE, MATTHEW FITZ HERBERT, THOMAS BASSET, ALAN BASSET, PHILIP OF ALBINEY, ROBERT DE ROPPELL, JOHN MARESCAL, JOHN FITZ HUGH, and others our liegemen, have, in the first place, granted to God, and by this our present Charter confirmed, for us and our heirs forever:

1. That the Church of England shall be free, and have her whole rights, and her liberties inviolable; and we will have them so observed, that it may appear thence, that the freedom of elections, which is reckoned chief and indispensable to the English Church, and which we granted and confirmed by our Charter, and obtained the confirmation of the same from our Lord the Pope Innocent III, before the discord between us and our barons, was granted of mere free will; which Charter we shall observe, and we do will it to be faithfully observed by our heirs forever. We also have granted to all the freemen of our kingdom, for us and for our heirs forever, all the underwritten liberties, to be had and holden by them and their heirs, of us and our heirs forever.

2. If any of our earls, or barons, or others, who hold of us in chief by military service, shall die, and at the time of his death his heir shall be of full age, and owes a relief, he shall have his inheritance by paying the ancient relief; that is to say, the heir or heirs of an earl, for a whole earldom, by a hundred pounds; the heir or heirs of a baron, for a whole barony, by a hundred pounds; the heir or heirs of a knight, for a whole knight's fee, by a hundred shillings at most; and whoever oweth less shall give less, according to the ancient custom of fees.

3. But if the heir of any such shall be under age, and shall be in ward when he comes of age, he shall have his inheritance without relief and without fine.

4. The keeper of the land of such an heir who shall be under age, shall take of the land of the heir none but reasonable issues, reasonable customs, and reasonable services, and that without destruction and waste of his men and his goods; and if we commit the custody of any such lands to the sheriff, or any other who is answerable to us for the issues of the land, and he shall make destruction and waste of the lands which he hath in custody, we will

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take of him amends, and the land shall be committed to two lawful and discreet men of that fee, who shall answer for the issues to us, or to him to whom we shall assign them: and if we sell or give to anyone the custody of any such lands, and he therein make destruction or waste, he shall lose the same custody, which shall be committed to two lawful and discreet men of that fee, who shall in like manner answer to us as aforesaid.

5. Moreover the keeper, so long as he shall have the custody of the land, shall keep up the houses, parks, warrens, ponds, mills, and other things pertaining to the land, out of the issues of the same land; and shall deliver to the heir, when he comes of full age, his whole land, stocked with ploughs and carriages, according as the time of wainage shall require, and the issues of the land can reasonably bear.

6. Heirs shall be married without disparagement, and so that before matrimony shall be contracted those who are near in blood to the heir shall have notice.

7. A widow, after the death of her husband, shall forthwith and without difficulty have her marriage portion and inheritance; nor shall she give anything for her dower, or her marriage portion or her inheritance, which her husband and she held at the day of his death; and she may remain in the mansion house of her husband forty days after his death, within which term her dower shall be assigned to her.

8. No widow shall be distrained to marry again, so long as she has a mind to live without a husband; but yet she shall give security that she will not marry without our assent, if she holds of us; or without the consent of the lord of whom she holds, if she hold of another.

9. Neither we nor our bailiffs shall seize any land or rent for any debt, so long as the chattels of the debtor are sufficient to pay the debt: nor shall the sureties of the debtor be distrained so long as the principal debtor is sufficient for the payment of the debt; but, if the principal debtor shall fail in the payment of the debt, not having wherewithal to pay it, then the sureties shall answer for the debt; and if they will they shall have the lands and rents of the debtor, until they shall be satisfied for the debt which they paid for him, unless the principal debtor can show himself acquitted thereof against the said sureties.

10. If anyone have borrowed anything of the Jews, more or less, and die before the debt be satisfied, there shall be no interest paid for that debt, so long as the heir is under age, of whomsoever he may hold; and if the debt fall into our hands we will only take the chattel mentioned in the deed.

11. And if anyone shall die indebted to the Jews, his wife shall have her dower and pay nothing of that debt; and if the deceased left children under age, they shall have necessaries provided for them, according to the tenement of the deceased; and out of the residue the debt shall be paid, saving however the service due to the lords; and in like manner shall it be done touching debts due to others than the Jews.

12. No scutage or aid shall be imposed in our kingdom, unless by the general council of our kingdom; except for ransoming our person, making our eldest son a knight, and once for marrying our eldest daughter; and for these there shall be paid only a reasonable aid. In like manner it shall be concerning the aids of the City of London.

13. And the City of London shall have all its ancient liberties and free customs, as well by land as by water: furthermore we will and grant, that all other cities and boroughs, and towns and ports, shall have all their liberties and free customs.



14. And for holding the general council of the kingdom concerning the assessment of aids, except in the three cases aforesaid, and for the assessing of scutages, we shall cause to be summoned the archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, and greater barons of the realm, singly by our letters. And furthermore we shall cause to be summoned generally by our sheriffs and bailiffs, all others who hold of us in chief, for a certain day, that is to say, forty days before their meeting at least, and to a certain place; and in all letters of such summons we will declare the cause of such summons. And summons being thus made, the business of the day shall proceed on the day appointed, according to the advice of such as shall be present, although all that were summoned come not.

15. We will not for the future grant to anyone the right to take aid of his own free tenants, unless to ransom his body, and to make his eldest son a knight, and once to marry his eldest daughter; and for this there shall be only paid a reasonable aid.

16. No man shall be distrained to perform more service for a knight's fee, or other free tenement, than is due from thence.

17. Common pleas shall not follow our court, but shall be holden in some place certain.

18. Assizes of novel disseisin, and of mort d'ancestor, and of darrien presentment, shall not be taken but in their proper counties, and after this manner: We, or, if we should be out of the realm, our chief justiciar, shall send two justiciaries through every county four times a year, who, with four knights, chosen out of every shire by the people, shall hold the said assizes, in the county, on the day, and at the place appointed.

19. And if any matters cannot be determined on the day appointed for holding the assizes in each county, so many of the knights and freeholders as have been at the assizes aforesaid, shall stay to decide them, as is necessary, according as there is more or less business.

20. A freeman shall not be amerced for a small offence, except according to the measure of the offence; and for a great crime according to the heinousness of it, saving to him his contentement; and after the same manner a merchant, saving to him his merchandise. And a villein shall be amerced after the same manner, saving to him his wainage, if he falls under our mercy; and none of the aforesaid amerciements shall be assessed save upon the oath of honest men in the neighbourhood.

21. Earls and barons shall not be amerced, but by their peers, and according to the degree of the offence.

22. No ecclesiastical person shall be amerced for his lay tenement, except according to the proportion of the others aforesaid, and not according to the value of his ecclesiastical benefice.

23. Neither a town nor any tenant shall be distrained to make bridges or banks unless anciently and of right they are bound to do it.

24. No sheriff, constable, coroner, or other of our bailiffs, shall hold pleas of the crown.

25. All counties, hundreds, wapentakes, and tithings, shall stand at the old rents, without any increase, except in our demesne manors.

26. If anyone holding of us a lay-fee shall die, and the sheriff, or our bailiffs, can show our letters patent, containing our summons for the debt which the dead man did owe to us, it shall be lawful for the sheriff or our bailiff to attach and inroll the chattels of the dead, found upon his lay-fee, to the value of the debt, by the view of lawful men, so, however, that nothing be removed until our whole clear debt be paid; and the rest shall be left to

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the executors to fulfil the testament of the dead, and if there be nothing due from him to us, all the chattels shall go to the use prescribed by the dead, saving to his wife and children their reasonable shares.

27. If any freeman shall die intestate, his chattels shall be distributed by the hands of his nearest relations and friends, by view of the church; saving to everyone the debts which the deceased owed to him.

28. No constable or bailiff of ours shall take corn or other chattels of any man, unless he presently give him money for it, or hath respite of payment by the good-will of the seller.

29. No constable shall distrain any knight to give money for castle ward, if he himself will do it in his person, or by another able man in case he cannot do it through any reasonable cause. And if we lead him, or send him in an army, he shall be free from such ward for the time he shall be in the army by our command.

30. No sheriff or bailiff of ours, or any other, shall take horses or carts of any freeman for carriage, but by the good-will of the said freeman.

31. Neither shall we nor our bailiffs take any man's timber for our castles or other uses, unless by the consent of the owner of the timber.

32. We will retain the lands of those convicted of felony only one year and a day, and then they shall be delivered to the lord of the fee.

33. All weirs for the time to come shall be done away with in the rivers of Thames and Medway, and throughout all England, except upon the sea-coast.

34. The writ which is called *præcipe*, for the future, shall not be served upon anyone, of any tenement, whereby a freeman may lose his court.

35. There shall be one measure of wine and one of ale through our whole realm; and one measure of corn, that is to say, the London quarter; and one breadth of dyed cloth, and russets, and haberjeets, that is to say, two ells within the lists; and it shall be of weights as it is of measures.

36. Nothing from henceforth shall be given or taken for a writ of inquisition of life or limb, but it shall be granted freely, and not denied.

37. If any do hold of us by fee-farm, or by socage, or by burgage, and he hold also lands of any other by knight's service, we will not have the custody of the heir or land, which is holden of another man's fee by reason of that fee-farm, socage, or burgage; neither will we have the custody of such fee-farm, socage, or burgage, except knight's service was due to us out of the same fee-farm. We will not have the custody of an heir, nor of any land which he holds of another by knight's service, by reason of any petty serjeanty that holds of us, by the service of paying a knife, an arrow, or the like.

38. No bailiff from henceforth shall put any man to his law upon his own bare assertion, without credible witnesses to prove it.

39. No freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or disseised, or outlawed, or banished, or any ways destroyed, nor will we pass upon him, nor will we send upon him, save by the lawful judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.

40. We will sell to no man, we will not deny to any man, either justice or right.

41. All merchants shall have safe and secure conduct, to go out of, and to come into England, and to stay there, and to pass as well by land as by water, for the purpose of buying and selling according to the ancient and allowed customs, without any evil tolls; except in time of war, or when they are of any nation at war with us. And if there be found any such in our land, in the beginning of the war, they shall be held, without damage to their bodies or goods, until it be known unto us or our chief justiciar, how our mer-

chants be treated in the nation at war with us; and if ours be safe there, the others shall be safe in our dominions.

42. It shall be lawful, henceforth, for anyone to go out of our kingdom, and return safely and securely, by land or by water, saving his allegiance to us; unless in time of war, for some short space, for the common benefit of the realm; but prisoners and outlaws, according to the law of the land, shall be excepted, and people at war with us, and merchants who shall be in such condition as is above mentioned.

43. If any man hold of any escheat, as of the honour of Wallingford, Nottingham, Boulogne, Lancaster, or of other escheats which be in our hands, and are baronies, and shall die, his heir shall give no other relief, and perform no other service to us, than he would to the baron, if it were in the baron's hand; we will hold it after the same manner as the baron held it.

44. Those men who dwelt without the forest, from henceforth shall not come before our justiciaries of the forest, upon common summons, but such as are impleaded, or are pledges for any that are attached for something concerning the forest.

45. *We will not make any justices, constables, sheriffs, or bailiffs, unless they are such as know the law of the realm and mean duly to observe it.*

46. All barons who have founded abbeys, and have the kings of England's charters of advowson, or the ancient tenure thereof, shall have the keeping of them, when vacant, as they ought to have.

47. All forests that have been made forests in our time, shall forthwith be disforested; and the same shall be done with the river banks that have been fenced in by us in our time.

48. All evil customs concerning forests, warrens, foresters and warreners, sheriffs and their officers, rivers and their keepers, shall forthwith be inquired into in each county, by twelve sworn knights of the same shire, chosen by creditable persons of the same county; and within forty days after the said inquest, be utterly abolished, so as never to be restored: so that we are first acquainted therewith, or our justiciar, if we should not be in England.

49. We will immediately give up all hostages and charters delivered unto us by our English subjects, as securities for their keeping the peace, and yielding us faithful service.

50. We will entirely remove from our bailiwicks the relations of Gerard de Atheyes, so that for the future they shall have no bailiwick in England; we will also remove Engelard de Cygnes, Andrew, Peter, and Gyon de Chanceles; Gyon de Cygnes, Geoffrey de Martyn and his brothers; Philip Mark and his brothers, and his nephew, Geoffrey, and their whole retinue.

51. As soon as peace is restored, we will send out of the kingdom all foreign soldiers, cross-bowmen, and stipendiaries, who are come with horses and arms to the prejudice of our people.

52. If anyone has been dispossessed or deprived by us, without the legal judgment of his peers, of his lands, castles, liberties, or right, we will forthwith restore them to him; and if any dispute arise upon this head, it shall be decided by the five-and-twenty barons hereafter mentioned, for the preservation of the peace. As for all those things of which any person has, without the legal judgment of his peers, been dispossessed or deprived, either by King Henry our father, or our brother King Richard, and which we have in our hands, or are possessed by others, and which we are bound to warrant and make good, we shall have a respite till the term usually allowed the crusaders; excepting those things about which there is a plea depending, or whereof an inquest hath been made, by our order, before we undertook the



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crusade, but when we return from our pilgrimage, or if perchance we tarry at home and do not make our pilgrimage, we will immediately cause full justice to be administered therein.

53. The same respite we shall have (and in the same manner about administering justice, disafforesting the forests, or letting them continue) for disafforesting the forests, which Henry our father, and our brother Richard have afforested; and for the keeping of the lands which are in another's fee, in the same manner as we have hitherto enjoyed those wardships, by reason of a fee held of us by knight's service; and for the abbeyes founded in any other fee than our own, in which the lord of the fee says he has a right; and when we return from our pilgrimage, or if we tarry at home, and do not make our pilgrimage, we will immediately do full justice to all the complainants in this behalf.

54. No man shall be taken or imprisoned upon the appeal of a woman, for the death of any other than her husband.

55. All unjust and illegal fines made by us, and all amerciements imposed unjustly and contrary to the law of the land, shall be entirely given up, or else be left to the decision of the five-and-twenty barons hereafter mentioned as sureties of the peace, or of the major part of them, together with the aforesaid Stephen, archbishop of Canterbury, if he can be present, and others whom he shall think fit to associate with him; and if he cannot be present, the business shall notwithstanding go on without him; but so that if one or more of the aforesaid five-and-twenty barons be plaintiffs in the same cause, they shall be set aside as to what concerns this particular affair, and others be chosen in their room, out of the said five-and-twenty, and sworn by the rest to decide the matter.

56. If we have disseised or dispossessed the Welsh, of any lands, liberties, or other things, without the legal judgment of their peers, either in England or in Wales, they shall be immediately restored to them; and if any dispute arise upon this head, the matter shall be determined in the March by the judgment of their peers; for tenements in England according to the law of England, for tenements in Wales according to the law of Wales, for tenements of the March according to the law of the March; the same shall the Welsh do to us and our subjects.

57. As for all those things of which a Welshman hath, without the legal judgment of his peers, been disseised or deprived of by King Henry our father, or our brother King Richard, and which we either have in our hands, or others are possessed of, and for which we are obliged to give a guarantee, we shall have a respite till the time generally allowed the crusaders; excepting those things about which a suit is depending, or whereof an inquest has been made by our order, before we undertook the crusade: but when we return, or if we stay at home without performing our pilgrimage, we will immediately do them full justice, according to the laws of the Welsh and of the parts before mentioned.

58. We will without delay dismiss the son of Llewelyn, and all the Welsh hostages, and release them from the engagements they have entered into with us for the preservation of the peace.

59. We will treat with Alexander, King of the Scots, concerning the restoring his sisters and hostages, and his right and liberties, in the same form and manner as we shall do to the rest of our barons of England; unless by the charters which we have from his father, William, late King of the Scots, it ought to be otherwise; but this shall be left to the determination of his peers in our court.

60. All the aforesaid customs and liberties, which we have decreed to be observed in our kingdom, as far as it belongs to us, towards our people of our kingdom, the clergy as well as laity shall observe, as far as they are concerned, towards their own dependents.

61. And whereas, for the honour of God and the amendment of our kingdom, and for the better quieting the discord that has arisen between us and our barons, we have granted all these things aforesaid; willing to render them firm and lasting, we do give and grant our subjects the underwritten security, namely, that the barons may choose five-and-twenty barons of the kingdom, whom they think worthy; who shall take care, with all their might, to hold and observe, and cause to be observed, the peace and liberties we have granted them, and by this our present charter confirmed; so that if we, our justiciar, our bailiffs, or any of our officers, shall in any circumstance fail in the performance of them, towards any person, or shall break through any of these articles of peace and security, and the offence be notified to four barons chosen out of the five-and-twenty before mentioned, the said four barons shall repair to us, or our justiciar, if we are out of the realm, and, laying open the grievance, shall petition to have it redressed without delay: and if it be not redressed by us, or if we should chance to be out of the realm, if it should not be redressed by our justiciar, within forty days, reckoning from the time it has been notified to us, or to our justiciar (if we should be out of the realm), the four barons aforesaid shall lay the cause before the rest of the five-and-twenty barons; and the said five-and-twenty barons, together with the community of the whole kingdom, shall distrain and distress us in all possible ways, by seizing our castles, lands, possessions, and in any other manner they can, till the grievance is redressed according to their pleasure; saving harmless our own person, and the persons of our queen and children; and when it is redressed, they shall obey us as before. And any person whatsoever in the kingdom may swear that he will obey the orders of the five-and-twenty barons aforesaid, in the execution of the premises, and will distress us, jointly with them, to the utmost of his power; and we give public and free liberty to anyone that shall please to swear to this, and never will hinder any person from taking the same oath.

62. As for all those of our subjects who will not, of their own accord, swear to join the five-and-twenty barons in distraining and distressing us, we will issue orders to make them take the same oath as aforesaid. And if any one of the five-and-twenty barons dies, or goes out of the kingdom, or is hindered any other way from carrying the things aforesaid into execution, the rest of the said five-and-twenty barons may choose another in his room, at their discretion, who shall be sworn in like manner as the rest. In all things that are committed to the execution of these five-and-twenty barons, if, when they are all assembled together, they should happen to disagree about any matter, and some of them, when summoned, will not, or cannot, come, whatever is agreed upon, or enjoined, by the major part of those that are present, shall be reputed as firm and valid as if all the five-and-twenty had given their consent; and the aforesaid five-and-twenty shall swear that all the premises they shall faithfully observe, and cause with all their power to be observed. And we will not, by ourselves, or by any other, procure anything whereby any of these concessions and liberties may be revoked or lessened; and if any such thing be obtained, let it be null and void; neither shall we ever make use of it, either by ourselves or any other. And all the ill-will, indignations, and rancours that have arisen between us and our subjects, of the clergy and laity, from the first breaking out of the dissensions between

[1215 A.D.]

us, we do fully remit and forgive: moreover, all trespasses occasioned by the said dissensions, from Easter in the fifteenth year of our reign, till the restoration of peace and tranquillity, we hereby entirely remit to all, both clergy and laity, and as far as in us lies do fully forgive. We have, moreover, caused to be made for them the letters patent testimonial of Stephen, lord archbishop of Canterbury, Henry, lord archbishop of Dublin, and the bishops aforesaid, as also of master Pandulf, for the security and concessions aforesaid.

63. Wherefore we will and firmly enjoin, that the Church of England be free, and that all the men in our kingdom have and hold all the aforesaid liberties, rights, and concessions, truly and peaceably, freely and quietly, fully and wholly to themselves and their heirs, of us and our heirs, in all things and places, forever, as is aforesaid. It is also sworn, as well on our part as on the part of the barons, that all the things aforesaid shall be observed in good faith and without evil intent. Given under our hand, in the presence of the witnesses above named, and many others, in the meadow called Runingmede, between Windsor and Staines, the 15th day of June, in the 17th year of our reign.<sup>m</sup>

## CIVIL WAR

As soon as the great assembly dispersed, and John found himself in Windsor castle safe from the observing eyes of his subjects, he called a few foreign adventurers around him, and gave vent to rage and curses against the charter. According to the chroniclers his behaviour was that of a frantic madman; for, besides swearing, he gnashed his teeth, rolled his eyes, and gnawed sticks and straws. The creatures who would be ruined and expelled by the charter roused him by appealing to his passion of revenge, and he forthwith despatched two of them to the Continent to procure him the means of undoing all that he had been obliged to do. One of these adventurers went to Flanders, Poitou, Aquitaine, and Gascony, to hire other adventurers to come to England and fight against the barons; the other went to Rome, to implore the aid of Innocent. John then sent messengers to such governors of his castles as were foreigners or men devoted to him, commanding them silently, and without exciting notice, to lay in provisions and put themselves in a state of defence.

The king now withdrew to Winchester, where, alarmed at the whole course of his conduct, a deputation waited on him on the 27th of June. He laughed at their suspicions—swore, with his usual volubility, that they were unfounded, and that he was ready to do all those things to which he was pledged. He issued a few writs required of him, and then withdrew still further to the Isle of Wight. Here he remained about three weeks. He was at Oxford on the 21st of July, where he appointed a conference which he did not attend, posting away to Dover, where he stayed during the whole of September, anxiously awaiting the arrival of his mercenary recruits from the Continent. When the barons learned that troops of Brabançons and others were stealing into the land in small parties, they despatched William D'Albiny, at the head of a chosen band, to take possession of the royal castle of Rochester.

D'Albiny had scarcely entered the castle, which he found almost destitute of stores and engines of defence, when John found himself sufficiently strong to venture from Dover. The un-English despot, followed by the outcasts and freebooters of Europe, laid siege to Rochester castle at the beginning of October. The barons, knowing the insufficient means of defence within the castle, marched from London to its relief, but they were obliged to retreat before the superior force of the foreigners, who, day after day, were joined by fresh



adventurers from the other side of the Channel. Fortunately for England, one Hugh de Boves and a vast horde of marauders perished in a tempest on their way from Calais to Dover. John bewailed this loss like a maniac, but he pressed the siege of Rochester castle, and still prevented the barons from relieving it. After a gallant resistance of eight weeks, D'Albigny surrendered. John ordered him to be hanged, with his whole garrison; but Savaric de Mauléon, the leader of one of the foreign bands, opposed this barbarous mandate, because he feared the English might retaliate on his own followers, if any should fall into their hands. The tyrant was therefore contented to butcher the inferior prisoners, while all the knights were sent to the castles of Corfe and Nottingham.

The loss of Rochester castle was a serious blow to the cause of the barons, who were soon after excommunicated by the pope. Innocent declared that the barons were worse than Saracens for molesting a vassal of the holy see—a religious king who had taken the cross. Thus emboldened, John marched from Kent to St. Albans, accompanied by a mixed and savage host. It was thought at one time he would turn upon London, but the attitude of the capital struck him with terror; and, leaving a strong division to devastate the southeastern counties, he moved towards Nottingham, marking his progress with flames and blood.

Alexander, the young king of Scotland, had entered into an alliance with the English barons, and, having crossed the border, was investing the castle of Norham. A few days after the feast of Christmas, when the ground was covered with deep snow, John marched from Nottingham into Yorkshire, burning and slaying, and becoming more savage the further he advanced and the less he was opposed. Every hamlet, every house on the road, felt the fury of his execrable host—he himself giving the example, and setting fire with his own hands in the morning to the house in which he had rested the preceding night. His foreign soldiery put his native subjects to the torture to make them confess where they had concealed their money. All the castles and towns they could take were given to the flames; and the people of Yorkshire and Northumberland were reminded of the expedition of William the Conqueror. The Scottish king retired before a superior force, and John, vowing he would “unkennel the young fox,” followed him as far as Edinburgh. Here, meeting with opposition, he paused, and then, never having any valour except when unopposed, he turned back to England. In the mean time the division left in the south committed equal atrocities, and wherever the castle of a noble was taken, it was given, with the adjoining estate, to some hungry adventurer.

On the 16th of December another sentence of excommunication was promulgated, and the city of London was laid under an interdict. This measure excited some fear and wavering in the country, but the citizens of London had the boldness to despise it. According to Matthew Paris,<sup>n</sup> they asserted that the pontiff had no right to interfere in worldly concerns; and, spite of the interdict, they kept open their churches, rang their bells, and celebrated their Christmas with unusual festivity.

#### THE CROWN OFFERED TO LOUIS OF FRANCE

But the barons in London, who saw their property the prey to new invaders, and who knew the full extent of the danger to which the nation was exposed, were sorely disquieted, and knew not what measures to adopt. At

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last they unanimously resolved upon the very equivocal and perilous expedient of calling in foreign aid. They sent to offer the crown to Philip's eldest son, Prince Louis, who was connected with the reigning family by his marriage with Blanche of Castile, John's own niece; believing that, should he land amongst them, the mercenaries now with John, who were chiefly subjects of France, would join his standard, or at least refuse to bear arms against him. Philip and Louis eagerly grasped at this offer, but the wary old king moderated the impatience of his son, and would not permit him to venture into England until twenty-four hostages, sons of the noblest of the English, were sent into France. Then a fleet, with a small army, was sent up the Thames. It arrived at London at the end of February, and the commander assured the barons that Louis himself would be there with a proper force by the feast of Easter.

Innocent, in the mean while, was not inactive in John's, or rather in his own cause; he despatched a new legate to England; and Gualo, on his journey, reached France in time to witness and to endeavour to prevent the preparations making for invasion. He boldly asked both king and prince how they dared attack the patrimony of the church, and threatened them with instant excommunication. To the astonishment of the churchman, Louis advanced a claim to the English throne through right of his wife, and departed for Calais, where his army was collecting. At the appointed time he set sail from Calais with a numerous and well-appointed army. His passage was stormy. The mariners of the Cinque Ports, who adhered to the English king, cut off and took some of his ships, but on the 30th of May he landed safely at Sandwich. John, who had come round to Dover with a numerous army, fled before the French landed, and, burning and ravaging the country, he went to Guildford, then to Winchester, and then to Bristol, where Gualo, the pope's legate, soon joined him. Leaving Dover castle in his rear, Louis besieged and took the castle of Rochester. He then marched to the capital, where, on the 2d of June, 1216, he was joyfully received by the barons and citizens, who conducted him, with a magnificent procession, to St. Paul's. After he had offered up his prayers, the nobles and citizens did homage and swore fealty to him. And then he, with his hand on the gospels, also swore to restore to all orders their good laws, and to each individual the estates and property of which he had been robbed. Soon after Louis published a manifesto, addressed to the king of Scotland and all the nobles not present in London.

An immense effect was presently seen: nearly every one of the few nobles who had followed John now left him and repaired to London; all the men of the north, from Lincolnshire to the Borders, rose up in arms against him; the Scottish king made ready to march to the south; and, at first in small troops and then in masses, all the foreign mercenaries, with the exception of those of Gascony and Poitou, deserted the standard of the tyrant, and either returned to their homes or took service under Louis and the barons, who were now enabled to retake many of their castles. Gualo, the legate, did all he could to keep up the drooping, abject spirit of John; but at the very moment of crisis, on the 16th of July, the pope himself, the mighty Innocent, died, and left the church to be wholly occupied for some time by the election of a new pontiff.

Louis marched to Dover and laid siege to the castle, which was most bravely defended for the king by Hubert de Burgh; and at the same time some of the barons attacked Windsor castle, which was equally well defended. When the siege of Dover castle had lasted several weeks, Louis found himself obliged to convert it into a blockade. Withdrawing his army beyond reach of the arrows of the garrison, he swore that he would reduce the place by

famine, and then hang all its defenders. The barons raised the siege of Windsor castle entirely in order to repel John, who, after running from place to place, had at last made his appearance near them, and was pillaging the estates of some of those nobles. At their approach he fell back, and eluding their pursuit by skill, or, more probably, by hard running, he reached the town of Stamford. The barons wheeled round and joined Louis at Dover, where much valuable time was lost in inactivity, for that prince would neither assault the castle nor move from it. Other circumstances at the same time caused discontent; Louis treated the English with disrespect, and began to make grants of estates and titles in England to his French followers. Several barons and knights withdrew from Dover, and though few would trust John, all began to doubt whether they had not committed a fatal mistake in calling in the aid of a foreign prince. As these doubts prevailed more and more, the cause of John brightened. Soon after eluding the pursuit of the barons, he had made himself master of Lincoln, where he established his headquarters for some time. Associations were formed in his favour in several of the maritime counties, and the English cruisers frequently captured the supplies from the Continent destined for Louis.

#### THE DEATH OF JOHN (1216 A.D.)

At the beginning of October, marching through Peterborough, John entered the district of Croyland, and plundered and burned the farm-houses belonging to that celebrated abbey; he then proceeded to the town of Lynn, where he had a depot of provisions and other stores. Here, turning his face again towards the north, he marched to Wisbeach, and from Wisbeach he proceeded to a place called the Cross Keys, on the southern side of the Wash. It is not clear why he took that dangerous route, but he resolved to cross the Wash by the sands. At low water this estuary is passable, but it is subject to sudden rises of the tide. John and his army had nearly reached the opposite shore, called the Fossdike, when the returning tide began to roar. Pressing forward in haste and terror, they escaped; but, on looking back, John beheld the carriages and sumpter horses, which carried his money, overtaken by the waters; the surge broke furiously over them, and they presently disappeared—carriages, horses, treasures, and men being swallowed up in a whirlpool, caused by the impetuous ascent of the tide and the descending current of the river Welland. In a mournful silence, broken only by curses and useless complaints, John travelled on to the Cistercian abbey of Swineshead, where he rested for the night. Here he ate gluttonously of some peaches or pears, and drank new cider immoderately.

The popular story of his being poisoned by a monk may be true or false; but it is told in two ways, and was never told at all by any writer living at the time, or within half a century of it; and the excess already mentioned, acting upon an irritated mind and fevered body, seems to be cause enough for what followed. He passed the night sleepless, restless, and in horror. At an early hour on the following morning, the 15th of October, he mounted his horse to pursue his march, but he was soon compelled, by a burning fever and acute pain, to dismount. His attendants then brought up a horse-litter, in which they laid him, and so conveyed him to the castle of Sleaford. Here he rested for the night, which brought him no repose, but an increase of his disorder. The next day they carried him with great difficulty to the castle of Newark, on the Trent, and there he sent for a confessor, and laid himself down to die.



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The abbot of Croxton, who was equally skilled in medicine and divinity, attended him in his last hours, and witnessed his anguish and tardy repentance.

He named his eldest son, Henry, his successor, and dictated a letter to the recently elected pope, Honorius III, imploring the protection of the church for his young and helpless children. He made all the knights who were with him swear fealty to Henry, and he sent orders to the sheriffs of counties and the governors of castles to be faithful to the prince. Messengers arrived from some of the barons, who were disgusted with Louis, and proposed returning to their allegiance. This gleam of hope came too late—the “tyrant fever” had destroyed the tyrant. The abbot of Croxton asked him where he would have his body buried. John groaned, “I commit my soul to God, and my body to St. Wulfstan!” and soon after he expired, on the 18th of October, in the forty-ninth year of his age and the seventeenth of his wretched reign. They carried his body to Worcester, and interred it in the cathedral church there, of which St. Wulfstan was the patron saint. In this way the dying malediction of the heartbroken Henry II upon his rebellious children had not fallen in vain. Richard, after all his military glory, perished before a paltry fortress; John died a disgraced and baffled fugitive, in the midst of subjects who triumphed over his death as a happy national deliverance.<sup>e</sup>

#### THE CHARACTER OF KING JOHN

It has been the fate of few personages in English history, certainly of no one who ever wore the crown, to be so universally despised as John Lackland. From his own day to the present there have been none to praise, and few to apologise for him. “Foul as it is, hell itself is defiled by the fouler presence of John,” wrote one of his contemporaries. And this has become the verdict of history. He was endowed by nature with good qualities in abundance, but all his life long he seems to have delighted in hiding them and in allowing his evil propensities to dominate him. Great abilities he possessed in more than the average measure, but he appeared to enjoy rather to prevent them than to use them in strengthening himself and his kingdom. In his external characteristics, as Green<sup>h</sup> picturesquely points out, John possessed all the cleverness, the vivacity, the good humour, and the personal charm of manner of the Plantagenets, but in his inner soul he was the worst outcome of the Angevins. “Within himself,” says that author, “he united into one mass of wickedness their insolence, their selfishness, their unbridled lust, their cruelty and tyranny, their shamelessness, their superstition, their cynical indifference to honour and truth.”

A traitor first to his father, then to his brother, he seems to have been utterly lacking in faithfulness to high or low. Possessing a singular power of attracting men and women, he utilised it basely by despoiling the men of their possessions and the women of their honour. Throughout his reign there are brief periods marked by outbursts of his inborn genius for war, his wonderful powers of recuperation, his ability to see and take instant advantage of his enemies. It was John who, at the moment of Philip's greatness, effected the formation of a confederacy that all but resulted in his overthrow. “A closer study of John's history,” concludes Green,<sup>h</sup> “clears away the charges of sloth and incapacity with which men tried to explain the greatness of his fall. The awful lesson of his life rests on the fact that it was no weak and indolent voluptuary, but the ablest and most ruthless of the Angevins, who

lost Normandy, became the vassal of the pope, and perished in a struggle of despair against English freedom."

The estimate of Burke,<sup>i</sup> while differing in some respects from that of Green, is perhaps more in agreement with the opinion ordinarily held of the king. "He was indolent," says Burke, "yet restless in his disposition; fond of working by violent methods, without any vigour; boastful, but continually betraying his fears; showing on all occasions such a desire of peace as hindered him from ever enjoying it. Having no spirit of order, he never looked forward—content by any temporary expedient to extricate himself from a present difficulty. Rash, arrogant, perfidious, irreligious, unquiet, he made a tolerable head of a party, but a bad king; and had talents fit to disturb another's government, not to support his own. A most striking contrast presents itself between the conduct and fortune of John and his adversary Philip. Philip came to the crown when many of the provinces of France, by being in the hands of too powerful vassals, were in a manner dismembered from the kingdom; the royal authority was very low in what remained. He reunited to the crown a country as valuable as what belonged to it before; he reduced his subjects of all orders to a stricter obedience than they had given to his predecessors. He withstood the papal usurpation, and yet used it as an instrument of his designs; whilst John, who inherited a great territory, and an entire prerogative, by his vices and weakness gave up his independency to the pope, his prerogative to his subjects, and a large part of his dominions to the king of France."<sup>a</sup>



ELTHAM PALACE

(Built in 1370)



## CHAPTER X

### THE REIGN OF HENRY III

[1216-1272 A. D.]

It was a newly awakened burst of national feeling which placed Henry III on the throne, and every event of his long and weary reign tended to draw out that national feeling in more definite shapes, and to draw all the sons of the soil, of whatever race and whatever rank, close together in one body, as fellow workers in the great strife against pope and king.—FREEMAN.<sup>b</sup>

HENRY of Winchester had just completed his tenth year when he found himself, by the sudden death of his father, in possession of the title but with little of the power of a king. In the capital and the opulent provinces of the south of England Louis reigned almost without an opponent; in the other counties his partisans were the more active, and his cause the more popular; and on the west and north the princes of Wales and the king of Scotland had acknowledged his authority and become his vassals. Still the son of John could depend on the swords of the barons and foreigners, who had remained faithful to his father, on the powerful protection of the holy see, on the wavering disposition of the natives who adhered to his rival, and on the pity which would naturally be excited by his youth and innocence.

On the tenth day after the decease of the late monarch he was led to the abbey church of Gloucester, and, having taken the oath usually administered to the English kings, and sworn fealty to Pope Honorius, was crowned by the legate Gualo, and the bishops of Winchester, Exeter, and Bath; who placed on his temples a plain circle of gold in lieu of the crown, which had been lost with the rest of the royal treasures. The next day a proclamation was issued, in which the new king, lamenting the dissension between his father and the barons, a dissension which he would forever dismiss from his memory, promised to all his subjects a full amnesty for the past and their lawful liberties for the future; required the tenants of the crown to do homage and swear fealty to himself as their legitimate sovereign; and forbade any person to appear in public during the next month without a white fillet round the head in honour of his coronation. The care of his person was intrusted to the earl of Pembroke, earl marshal, with the title of guardian of the kingdom.



## REPUBLICATION OF MAGNA CHARTA

A great council had been summoned to meet in a fortnight at Bristol, and was attended by all the bishops and abbots, by several earls and barons, and by many knights, who took the oath of allegiance and performed the feudal ceremony of homage. But the great object of the meeting was to reconcile the claims of the crown with those of the subject, to satisfy the demands of the adverse barons, without trenching too deeply on the royal prerogative. For this purpose the Great Charter was revised, and cut down from 63 chapters to 42. Every clause of a temporary nature, or which personally regarded the late king and his opponents, was struck out.

Several clauses were omitted which appeared to bear hard on the ancient claims of the crown; particularly those which related to the right of levying aids and scutages, and of convoking the great council; which abolished the abuses of forests and foresters, warrens and warreners, sheriffs, bailiffs, and other royal officers; which required notice to be given to the relations before the marriage of the heir; which granted the liberty of egress out of, and ingress into the kingdom; and which allowed the goods of persons dying intestate to be divided among their relations after the payment of their just debts. But it was distinctly stated that these provisions had not been repealed. Their operation was only suspended till they could be submitted to the consideration of a full assembly of the barons of both parties.

Some improvements were introduced; the lord was forbidden to assume the custody of the person and lands of the heir, till he had received the homage of his ward; because, before that homage, he was not bound to



HENRY III  
(1207-1272)

defend the interest of his vassal. All the provisions respecting wardships were extended to the custody of vacant benefices, with this exception—that such custody should not be sold. The rate at which carriages might be taken for the king's use was fixed; and some regulations were added respecting the payment of his debts. The ratification of the charter in this form was received with gratitude by the royalists; nor was it violently condemned by their opponents, when they learned that the clauses which had been omitted were still reserved for future discussion.

If Louis had rejoiced at the death of John, he now discovered that the son would prove a more formidable competitor than the father. The youth and innocence of Henry excited universal compassion. John indeed, it was said, had been a tyrant; but what crime had the prince committed that he should forfeit the crown to which he was born? His rival was a Frenchman, who daily betrayed an unjust partiality in favour of his countrymen. Even now, while his success depended on the efforts of his English adherents, many

[1216-1217 A.D.]

a native saw with indignation the honours which he claimed as a right bestowed as a reward by this foreign prince on his foreign retainers. To aid such favourable impressions, and to foment the jealousy and discontent of their adversaries, became the policy of Gualo and Pembroke.<sup>1</sup>

To all who returned to their allegiance their former liberties were confirmed; tales of the arrogance of the French, and of their contempt for the natives, were industriously circulated; the report of a conspiracy against the chief of the English nobility was revived and believed; and the minds of men were awed and confounded by the weekly repetition of the excommunication fulminated against Louis and his adherents. Neither did the pontiff forget the interests of his young vassal. By his letters he stimulated the zeal of the legate, and sought to awaken sentiments of loyalty in the barons. To justify their rebellion, he observed that they had formerly alleged the tyranny of John; but that plea must now be abandoned. The tyranny of John had perished with the tyrant; and, if they persisted to oppose the succession of his son, they would prove that their former assertions were but pretences, and that they had been actuated by motives which they were ashamed to avow. By these means a revolution was gradually wrought in the public mind to the advantage of Henry; and the hopes of the royalists were cheered by the return of the earl of Salisbury and of several knights, who came to swear fealty to their native sovereign. Even William D'Albiny, as soon as he had recovered his liberty by the payment of 6,000 marks, unfurled the royal standard.

#### THE BATTLE OF LINCOLN AND DEFEAT OF THE FRENCH FLEET (1217 A.D.)

Louis had at last raised the siege of Dover, and, to compensate himself for the loss of his time at the foot of that fortress, had taken the two castles of Hertford and Berkhamstead. Pembroke surrendered to him two others, as the price of a truce till the festival of Easter—a suspension of hostilities equally useful to both parties. The French prince employed the interval to revisit the Continent and collect a numerous band of auxiliaries; the marshal profited by his absence to detach more of the confederates from his interests.

At the termination of the armistice hostilities recommenced with the siege of Montsorel by the royalists. To relieve the fortress, the confederate army, to the number of six hundred knights and twenty thousand men, marched from London under the command of the count of Perche. Its route was marked by every kind of excess, particularly on the part of the foreign infantry. The royalists did not await their approach; and the confederates, instead of pursuing the fugitives, entered Lincoln amidst the acclamations of the inhabitants, and besieged the castle, which was gallantly defended by a celebrated heroine, Nichola de Camville. Pembroke immediately summoned the tenants of the crown to meet him at Newark, and was able to number among his followers four hundred knights with their esquires, two hundred and fifty crossbow-men, and a numerous body of infantry. Three days were employed in marshalling the army. The legate exhorted the soldiers to fight for their God, their king, and their country; excommunicated all their oppo-

[<sup>1</sup> "Louis' party," says Stubbs, c "had only one point of union—the hatred and distrust inspired by John; and when John was once removed, the disruption of the party and the expulsion of Louis were sure to come in time. It was certain that all real national feeling would take part against a foreign king."]

nents; and imparted to the combatants the privileges usually granted to the crusaders. They marched from Newark in seven divisions with white crosses sewed on their breasts; the bowmen kept a mile in advance, and the baggage a mile in the rear. This disposition deceived the confederates, who, taking the baggage for a second army, unwisely shut themselves up within the walls, and at the same time, by way of bravado, made a brisk assault on the castle. But the bowmen, who had been admitted by a postern into the fortress thinned with their arrows the ranks of the assailants, and, by killing the horses of the knights, laid them in their armour on the ground. The rest of the royalists, wheeling round, burst open after a sharp conflict the northern gate; and at the same moment a sortie was made from the castle.

Dismay and confusion now spread through the ranks of the barons. The most spirited, unable to withstand the torrent that rushed into the city, were carried before it; the crowd ran to the opposite portal, but the narrow and winding passage was soon choked, and the fugitives were compelled to recoil on the pursuers. The meaner combatants met with no mercy; but little noble blood was spilled by the victors, who, prompted by relationship or the hope of ransom, sought not to slay but to capture their enemies. The count of Perche alone lost his life. He fought in a churchyard till his horse was killed; and when a voice called out to him to accept of quarter, he replied with an oath that he would never surrender to an English traitor. Irritated by the reproach, a soldier thrust his pike through the eye of the count's visor, into his brain. The number of the captives amounted to three earls, eleven barons, and four hundred knights. Two hundred others escaped by different roads to London; the foot soldiers, seeking to follow them, were massacred by the inhabitants of the villages which lay in their route.

This victory, which secured the crown on the head of the young king, was called, in the quaint language of the time, the "fair of Lincoln." As soon as resistance ceased, the city, which had long been distinguished by its attachment to the barons, was given up to pillage. Even the privileges of the churches could not save them from the rapacity of the royalists. But the fate of the women and children was more deplorable. When the gate was forced, they crowded for security into the boats on the river. Some sank under the weight, others were lost by mismanagement, and of the fugitives the greater part were drowned.

The destruction of his army confined Louis within the walls of London, where, though he had built up all the gates except one, and had compelled the citizens to renew their oaths of allegiance, he was perpetually alarmed with the discovery of conspiracies against him. His only hope rested on the exertions of his consort, Blanche of Castile, who in person solicited aid from the most powerful of the French nobles. At length an armament of eighty large vessels, besides galleys and smaller ships, put to sea from Calais under the command of the celebrated pirate Eustace the Monk. To oppose this formidable fleet Hubert de Burgh, the justiciar, had collected forty sail from the Cinque Ports; but the disparity of force was so alarming that several knights refused to embark, under the pretence that they were not acquainted with the manner of naval engagements.

Nor was Hubert himself unaware of the danger. Before his departure he gave the most positive orders that the castle of Dover should not be surrendered to the enemy on any terms, not even to save his own life, in the event of his being made prisoner. The English were soon in sight of the French, sailed past them, as if their object were to surprise Calais, and suddenly tacking bore down in a line on their rear. The bowmen and archers began



[1217 A.D.]

the engagement with a volley of arrows; as soon as the ships came in contact, they were fastened together with chains and hooks; powder of quick-lime was scattered in the air, that it might be carried by the wind into the eyes of the enemy; and the English, leaping on board with axes in their hands, rendered the ships unmanageable by cutting the rigging. The French, unaccustomed to this manner of fighting, made but a feeble resistance, and only fifteen vessels out of the whole number escaped. One hundred and fifteen knights with their esquires, and more than eight hundred inferior officers, were taken. Eustace, who had secreted himself in the hold of his ship, offered a large sum for his ransom; but Richard Fitzroy, one of John's illegitimate children by a daughter of the earl Warenne, spurned the proposal, and instantly struck off his head, which was afterwards carried on a pole from town to town as a proof of the victory.

## ENGLAND AFTER THE TREATY OF LAMBETH (1217 A.D.)

With this fleet perished the hopes of Louis, who, on the approach of the royal army, gladly accepted the offer of an accommodation made by the legate and the earl marshal. It was agreed [by the articles of a treaty drawn up at Lambeth] that he should give back to the English barons their fealty and homage, and then Henry should grant to them a full amnesty on their return to their allegiance; that peace on similar terms should be offered by Henry to the king of Scots and the prince of Wales; and that arrangement should be made for the discharge of debts and the ransom and liberation of prisoners of war. This is what appears on the face of the instrument interchanged between the parties; but in addition Henry paid to Louis the sum of 10,000 marks to enable him to discharge his debts; and Louis made, so we are told, a promise to Henry, confirmed by oath, that on his accession to the French throne he would restore all the provinces which formerly belonged to Henry's father: a promise which indeed was the most that could be given by a prince not yet in possession, but which it was plain that he would not have the will, when he came into possession, or, if he had the will, would not have the power to execute. After the departure of Louis with his countrymen, the king of Scotland was the first to take advantage of the pacification. He "came to the faith and service" of the young king, and did his devoir to him at Northampton. Llewelyn after some hesitation followed his example, and did homage to his sovereign lord at Worcester.

The departure of Louis secured the crown to Henry; but the young king had not a single relation to whom he could recur for advice or to whom he might intrust the care of his interests. Even the queen mother, who by her misconduct had already forfeited the confidence of the nation, abandoned her son to hasten back to France and marry her former lover, the count de la Marche. But Pope Honorius, as feudal superior, declared himself the guardian of the orphan, and commanded Gualo to reside near his person, watch over his safety, and protect his just rights. The legate discharged his trust with fidelity, and found in the earl marshal a coadjutor actuated by the same zeal and concurring in the same sentiments. The itinerant justices were ordered to summon all knights and freemen to their courts, and to administer to them an oath that they would keep the king's peace, observe the good laws and rightful customs of the realm, and at command of the king and council assemble and oppose the enemies of the king and kingdom.

The charter was again confirmed, but with additional alterations.<sup>1</sup> It was provided that the widow should have for her dower the third part of all the lands which had belonged to her husband during the coverture, unless she had been endowed with a smaller portion at the door of the church; that no freeman should lawfully alienate so much of his land as to render himself incapable of performing his services to the lord of the fee; and, as a check on alienations in mortmain, that no one should give his lands to a religious house, to hold it again of the same house; nor, on the other hand, should any religious house receive lands, to lease them out to the donor. Assizes of darrein presentment were sent back to the justices of the bench; the county courts were ordered to be held only once a month, the sheriff's tourn only twice in the year, and the view of frankpledge only at Michaelmas.

Lastly, it was enacted that all men should enjoy equal liberties; that escuage or scutage should be levied in the same manner as in the reign of Henry II; and that every castle built or rebuilt since the commencement of the civil war should be demolished immediately. At the same time the chapters regarding the forests and warrens were withdrawn, to form a new instrument, called the Charter of Forests. By this all forests enclosed since the death of King Richard were thrown open; all outlawries for offences of the forest incurred within the same period were reversed; the punishment for killing the king's venison was commuted into a heavy fine or a year's imprisonment; the courts of the foresters were regulated, unjust tolls abolished, and the right to cultivate and improve their own lands was confirmed to the holders of estates within the royal forests. In addition, to prevent the diminution of the revenue, a law was passed prohibiting the king's ministers, during his minority, to put the great seal to any charter or letter of confirmation or sale, or alienation, or gift in perpetuity, and declaring beforehand all such instruments invalid and of no effect.

The late contest had generated a spirit of insubordination, which bore with impatience the restraint of legitimate authority, and the legate and marshal sought to heal these wounds by conciliation. By degrees tranquillity was restored, and in the autumn Gualo returned to Rome. He was succeeded by Pandulf, who followed the example of his predecessor, and watched with solicitude over the interests of the young king. His presence was rendered the more necessary by the death of Pembroke, the earl marshal (1219); after which the exercise of the royal authority was intrusted to Hubert de Burgh, the justiciar, and the custody of the royal person to Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester. With the former the reader is already acquainted; Des Roches was a Poitevin, who had enjoyed the confidence of John, and more than once had been appointed by him guardian of the kingdom.

These ministers were rivals: if the justiciar possessed a greater share of power, the bishop enjoyed more opportunities of cultivating the friendship of his pupil; and, while the one sought the support of the native families, the other proclaimed himself the protector of the foreigners whom the policy of John had settled in the island. The presence of Pandulf was a constant check on the ambition of these rivals; by his letters and speeches he reproved their negligence and stimulated their industry; and by his advice the justiciar and chancellor were made to swear that during the minority they would not dispose of any of the great fiefs of the crown. He repaired to Wales, and

[<sup>1</sup> This may be regarded as the end of the first phase of the struggle over the Magna Charta. Stubbs points this well by saying: "It was now become permanently the palladium of English constitutional liberty; it was recognised as the salvation of king and kingdom, and the legate, instead of anathematising, had turned and blessed it."]

[1219-1225 A.D.]

restored peace on the borders; he met the king of Scots at York, and negotiated a peace between the two kingdoms; and by his letters and services he greatly contributed to prolong the truce between England and France. As doubts had been raised respecting the coronation at Gloucester, that ceremony was again performed (1220) with the accustomed solemnity by the archbishop, who, with the permission of Honorius, had returned to England; and the next year (1221) Alexander of Scotland married, at York, Joan, the elder of the two sisters of Henry, and did homage to his brother-in-law. Margaret, one of the Scottish princesses, who had so long been in the custody of the English crown, was married to Hubert. Pandulf immediately returned to Rome.<sup>1</sup>

During the contest between John and the barons that prince had lavishly distributed the crown lands among his partisans, as well foreigners as natives; and those who had the command of the royal castles at his death pertinaciously refused to give them up to the government, alleging that they kept them in trust for the king during his minority. To wrest these fortresses from the hands of the powerful vassals who held them was an important but difficult object. The bishop of Winchester and the justiciar demanded from the holders all escheats and wardships; and at last solemnly declared, at the request and with the assent of the great council, that Henry was of sufficient age to have the free disposal of his lands, castles, and wards, though not to plead or be impleaded in courts of justice. Hubert, in the king's name, demanded the surrender of the wards and castles.<sup>d</sup>

The first noteworthy resistance was met with from William, earl of Aumale, or Albemarle, whose grandfather of the same name in a like situation had resisted Henry II in the early years of his reign. The earl now refused to surrender Rockingham to the king, on Hubert's demand, and an armed force was at once despatched to take it from him. The earl and his followers fled, but later, in 1221, he seized two more royal castles, and it was only after a fierce struggle, in which both the excommunication of the church and the strong hand of the earl marshal were resorted to, that he was subdued and banished. The second serious attempt at resistance had the more important result of ridding the country at once of Falkes de Breauté, one of the most obnoxious of the foreigners who were attracted to the island by John's gold; and of Peter des Roches, the bishop of Winchester, who betook himself to the Continent as a result of the triumph of his rival Hubert. In 1224 Falkes seized one of the king's justices, who had decided against him at the assizes at Dunstable, and imprisoned him in the castle of Bedford, which he held. Hubert gladly grasped at the opportunity of chastising one whom Des Roches looked to as a strong supporter of his policy, and Bedford was besieged by an army, which was nominally commanded by the young king in person, and after a stout resistance forced to capitulate. Falkes, who had managed to escape, was captured in Coventry and banished.<sup>a</sup>

The consequences of the improvident grants made by the last two monarchs now began to unfold themselves. Under the pretence of resisting an invasion threatened by the king of France, Henry assembled a great council (1225) and most urgently demanded an aid. The demand was at first refused; but the wants of the crown would admit of no delay; and, after some

[While Pandulf undoubtedly, like Gualo before him, exercised a very considerable influence in the affairs of the realm during these years, Lingard,<sup>d</sup> through dislike of Hubert, probably exaggerates it. In 1220 Langton obtained from the pope a promise that during his life there should be no other legate in England, and this Pandulf apparently regarded as his own recall. Therefore, having secured an election to the see of Norwich, he resigned his legatine office in 1221.]



negotiation, it was stipulated that a fifteenth of all movables should be granted, but on the condition that the two charters should be solemnly ratified. They had already been confirmed twice since the commencement of his reign; but the king's officers had laughed at their confirmation, and refused to carry their provisions into effect. Now, however, it was no longer necessary for the barons to take up arms; poverty had subdued the reluctance of the king and his ministers, and the two charters were solemnly ratified in that form which they have ever since retained.<sup>d</sup>

In the month of April (1225), Richard, earl of Cornwall, the king's brother, was sent to Guienne, under the guidance of the earl of Salisbury, with an English army. But the French king had taken the cross against the Albigenes. A papal legate interfered, threatened the English with excommunication if they raised obstacles to Louis in his holy war, and at last made both parties agree to a truce for one year. Before the term expired the French king died at Paris, after a brief reign of three years, and was succeeded by his son Louis IX, who was only in his twelfth year. A stormy minority ensued; and Henry, who was now twenty years of age, might have taken advantage of it had his character and his own circumstances been somewhat different. The armistice was subsequently renewed year after year, the English never recovering La Rochelle, and the French making no further progress of importance.

#### THE FALL OF HUBERT DE BURGH (1229 A.D.)

It was at length, however, resolved to carry war into France. Henry was twenty-two years old, Louis only fifteen; but Blanche, the mother of the latter prince, and regent, put the kingdom into a position of defence. When Henry went to Portsmouth, he found that the shipping provided was not sufficient to carry over his army, and after a violent altercation with Hubert de Burgh, who was accused of being the cause of this deficiency, the expedition was given up till the following year. At length the English king set sail for the Continent, and landed at St. Malo, in Brittany, where he was joined by a host of Bretons. He advanced to Nantes, where, like his father before him, he wasted his time and his means in feasts and pageantries. In the mean time young Louis, accompanied by his mother, took several towns belonging to Henry. In the beginning of October the English king returned home, covered with disgrace; and his ally, the duke of Brittany, was obliged to appear at the foot of the throne of Louis with a rope round his neck. De Burgh had accompanied his master on this expedition; and in spite of his known honour, bravery, and ability, the king attempted to throw all the blame of the miserable failure upon Hubert. The people, however, took a different view of the case, and set Henry down as a trifler and a coward. When he applied to parliament for a further grant of money, and complained of the poverty to which his French expedition had reduced him, they refused the aid.

Hubert had now (1232) been eight years at the head of affairs. He enjoyed the good opinion of the people, whom he had never wantonly oppressed; but many of the nobles envied him his power, and hated him for his zeal in resuming the castles and other possessions of the crown. But the proverbial ingratitude of princes was fostered in the present case by other circumstances, the most cogent of all being that the minister was rich and the king woefully in want of money. On a sudden, Hubert saw his old rival Peter des Roches

[1232-1233 A.D.]

reappear at court, and he must have felt from that moment that his ruin was concerted. In fact, very soon after, Henry threw off his faithful guardian and able minister and left him to the persecutions of his enemies. The frivolous charges brought against Hubert lead to a conviction that he was guilty of no breach of trust or abuse of authority. Among other things, he was accused of winning the affections of the king by means of magic and enchantment. The fallen minister took refuge in Merton abbey.

His flight gave unwonted courage to the king, who vapoured and stormed, and then commanded the mayor of London to force the asylum and seize Hubert dead or alive. The mayor set forth; but the king, being reminded by the archbishop of Dublin of the illegality and sacrilegiousness of such a procedure, despatched messengers in a great hurry and recalled him. Hubert obtained a delay of four months, that he might prepare for his defence, and the king gave him a safe-conduct. Relying on this, De Burgh departed to visit his wife, the Scottish princess, at Bury St. Edmunds; but he had scarcely begun his journey when the king, notwithstanding his plighted faith, sent Sir Godfrey de Crancumb to surprise and seize him. Hubert contrived to escape to a parish church.

His furious enemies, however, were not deterred by any considerations, and bursting into the church with drawn swords they dragged him forth, and sent for a smith to make shackles for him. The poor artisan, struck with the sad state of the great man, and moved with generous feelings, said he would rather die the worst of deaths than forge fetters for the brave defender of Dover castle and the conqueror of the French at sea. But Sir Godfrey placed the earl on horseback, naked, and, tying his feet under the girths, so conveyed him to the Tower of London. As soon as this violation of sanctuary was known, an outcry was raised by the bishops; and the king was in consequence obliged to order those who had seized him to carry the prisoner back to the parish church; but at the same time he commanded the sheriff of Essex, on pain of death, to prevent the earl's escape, and to compel him to an unconditional surrender. The sheriff dug a deep trench round the sanctuary, erected palisades, and effectually prevented all ingress or egress. Thus cut off from every communication, unprovided with fuel and proper clothing (the winter was setting in), and at last left without provisions, Hubert de Burgh came forth, on the fortieth day of his beleaguering, and surrendered to the "black band," who again carried him to the Tower of London. A few days after, Henry ordered him to be released, and to appear before the court of his peers.

When Hubert appeared in court in the midst of his enemies, he declined pleading: some were urgent for a sentence of death, but the king proposed an award which was finally adopted by all parties. Hubert forfeited to the crown all such lands as had been granted him in the time of King John, or been obtained by him, by purchase or otherwise, under Henry. He retained for himself and his heirs the property he had inherited from his family, together with some estates he held in fief of mesne lords. Thus clipped and shorn, the brave Hubert was committed to the castle of Devizes. Within these walls Hubert remained for nearly a year, when he was induced to adopt a desperate mode of escape, by learning that the custody of the castle had just been given to a dependent of his bitter enemy the Poitevin bishop of Winchester. In a dark night he climbed over the battlements and dropped from the high wall into the moat. From the moat he made his way to a country church; but there he was presently surrounded by an armed band, led on by the sheriff. Circumstances, however, were materially altered:

several of the barons who had before been intent on the destruction of the minister, were now at open war with the king, and anxious to secure the co-operation of so able a man as De Burgh. A strong body of horse released him from the hands of his captors and carried him off into Wales, where the insurgent nobles were then assembled. Some eighteen months later, when peace was restored, Hubert received back his estates and honours: he was even readmitted into the king's council; but he had the wisdom never again to aspire to the dangerous post of chief minister.

#### THE REVIVAL OF FOREIGN INFLUENCES

Peter des Roches, who succeeded to power on the first displacement and captivity of Hubert, soon rendered himself odious to all classes of the nation. He encouraged the king's growing antipathy to the English barons and to Magna Charta; and he crowded the court, the offices of government, the royal fortresses, with hosts of hungry Poitevins, Gascons, and other Frenchmen, who ruled and wasted at their pleasure. The nature of an opposition, constitutional and legal in all its operations, was as yet a discovery to be made. The barons withdrew and took up arms. When again summoned, they answered that unless the king dismissed his Poitevins and the other foreigners, they would drive both them and him out of the kingdom.

Peter des Roches averted his ruin for the present by sowing dissensions among the English nobles. Several battles or skirmishes, which defy anything like a clear narration, were fought in the heart of England and on the Welsh borders. Richard Marshal, earl of Pembroke,<sup>1</sup> the son of the virtuous protector to whom King Henry was so deeply indebted, was treacherously and most barbarously murdered; and, following up his temporary success, the Poitevin bishop confiscated the estates of several of the English nobles without any legal trial, and bestowed them on adventurers from his own land. Edmund Rich the new archbishop of Canterbury, who had succeeded Langton, took up the national cause, and threatened the king with excommunication if he did not instantly dismiss Des Roches and his associates. Henry trembled and complied: the foreigners were banished, and the archbishop for a short time governed the land with great prudence, and according to the charters.

Henry now married (1236) Eleanor of Provence, who came to England with a numerous retinue, and was soon followed by fresh swarms of foreigners. William, the bishop of Valence, the queen's maternal uncle, was made chief minister. Boniface of Savoy, another uncle, was promoted to the see of Canterbury; and Peter, a third uncle, was invested with the earldom of Richmond, and received the profitable wardship of the earl of Warenne. The queen invited over damsels from Provence, and the king married them to the young nobles of England of whom he had the wardship. This was bad enough, but it was not all: the queen-mother, Isabella, whom the nation detested, had now four sons by the count de la Marche, and she sent over all four—Guy, William, Geoffrey, and Aymer—to be provided for in England.

[<sup>1</sup> Richard Marshal was a man of unusual ability, an accomplished knight, and a lover and patron of learning. After the return of Peter des Roches, the earl suggested and delivered in person both the refusal of the barons to sit in the same council with Peter, and their positive demand for the dismissal of the foreign officials. This opposition was construed as treason; the king marched against him, and drove him into alliance with the Welsh borderers. Peter lured him by stratagem over to Ireland, where he was murdered. For many years after his death (1234) the barons were without a strong leader.]



[1236-1248 A.D.]

The king heaped honours and riches upon these half-brothers, who were soon followed by new herds of adventurers from Guienne.

Henry's resources were soon exhausted, and he found himself without money and without credit. When he asked aids from the parliament, the parliament told him that he must dismiss the foreigners, who devoured the substance of the land; and they several times voted him small supplies, on the express condition that he should so do, and also redress other grievances; but he forgot his promises as soon as he got the money. The barons then bound him by oath; and Henry took the oaths, broke them, and acted just as before.

Isabella, the queen-mother, added alike to the odium in which she was held by the English, and to the embarrassments and unpopularity of her son, by hurrying him into a war with France (1242). Louis, now in the prime of manhood, was loved and respected by his subjects; whereas Henry was despised by his. When the English parliament was called upon for a supply of men and money, they resolutely refused both. Henry contrived to fill thirty hogsheads with silver, and, sailing from Portsmouth with his queen, his brother Richard, and three hundred knights, he made for the river Garonne. Soon after his landing he was joined by nearly twenty thousand men, some his own vassals, some who were anxious, not to re-establish the supremacy of the English king in the south, but to render themselves independent of the crown of France-at his expense.

Louis met Henry with a superior force on the banks of the river Charente, in Saintonge, and defeated him in a pitched battle near Taillebourg. The English king retreated down the river to the town of Saintes, where he was beaten in a second battle, fought on the very next day. His mother's husband, the count de la Marche, who had led him into this disastrous campaign, then abandoned him, and made his own terms with the French king. Henry fled from Saintes across Saintonge, to Blaye. A terrible dysentery which broke out in his army, some scruples of conscience, and the singular moderation of his own views, prevented Louis from following up his successes, and induced him to agree to a truce for five years.

#### HENRY AND HIS PARLIAMENTS

When Henry met his parliament in 1244 he found it more refractory than it had ever been. In reply to his demands for money, they taxed him with extravagance, with his frequent breaches of the Great Charter; they told him, in short, that they would no longer trust him, and that they must have in their own hands the appointment of the chief justiciar, the chancellor, and other great officers. The king would consent to nothing more than another ratification of Magna Charta, and therefore the parliament would only vote him twenty shillings on each knight's fee for the marriage of his eldest daughter to the Scottish king. After this he looked to a meeting of parliament as a meeting of his personal enemies, and to avoid it he raised money by stretching his prerogative in respect to fines, benevolences, purveyances, and the other undefinable branches of the ancient revenue. He also tormented and ransacked the Jews; and he begged, besides, from town to town, from castle to castle, until he obtained the reputation of being the sturdiest beggar in all England. In the year 1248 he was again obliged to meet his barons in parliament. They now told him that he ought to blush to ask aid from his people whom he professed to hate, and whom he shunned for the society

of aliens; they reproached him with disparaging the nobles of England by forcing them into mean marriages with foreigners. They enlarged upon the abuse of the right of purveyance, telling him that foreign merchants, knowing the dangers to which their goods were exposed, shunned the ports of England as if they were in possession of pirates; that the poor fishermen of the coast, finding they could not escape his hungry purveyors and courtiers, were frequently obliged to carry their fish to the other side of the Channel. In reply to the remonstrance of his barons, Henry gave nothing but fair promises which could no longer deceive, and he got nothing save the cutting reproof to which he had been obliged to listen.

The king now racked his imagination in devising pretexts on which to obtain what he wanted. At one time he said he was resolved to reconquer all the continental dominions of the crown; but, unfortunately, all men knew that Louis had departed for the East, and that Henry had contracted the most solemn obligations not to make war upon him during his crusade. He next took the cross himself, pretending to be anxious to sail for Palestine forthwith; but here again it was well known he had no such intention, and only wanted money to pay his debts and satisfy his foreign favourites. At a moment of urgent necessity he was advised to sell all his plate and jewels. "Who will buy them?" said he. His advisers answered, "The citizens of London, of course." He rejoined bitterly, "By my troth, if the treasures of Augustus were put up to sale, the citizens would be the purchasers! These clowns, who assume the style of barons, abound in all things, while we are wanting in common necessities." It is said that the king was thenceforth more inimical and rapacious towards the Londoners than he had been before. To annoy them and touch them in a sensitive part, he established a new fair at Westminster, to last fifteen days, during which all trading was prohibited in London. He went to keep his Christmas in the city, and let loose his purveyors among the inhabitants; he made them offer New Year's gifts; and shortly after, in spite of remonstrances, he compelled them to pay him the sum of £2,000, by the most open violation of law and right.

In 1253 Henry was again obliged to meet his parliament, and this he did, averring to all men that he only wanted a proper Christian aid that he might go and recover the tomb of Christ. If he thought that this old pretence would gain unlimited confidence he was deceived. The barons, who had been duped so often, treated his application with coldness and contempt; but they at last held out the hope of a liberal grant on condition of his consenting to a fresh and most solemn confirmation of their liberties. On the third day of May the king went to Westminster hall, where the barons, prelates, and abbots were assembled. The bishops and abbots were apparelled in their canonical robes, and every one of them held a burning taper in his hand. A taper was offered to the king, but he refused it, saying he was no priest. Then the archbishop of Canterbury stood up before the people and denounced sentence of excommunication against all those who should, either directly or indirectly, infringe the charters of the kingdom. Every striking, every terrific part of this ceremony was performed: the prelates and abbots dashed their tapers to the ground, and as the lights went out in smoke, they exclaimed, "May the soul of everyone who incurs this sentence so stink and be extinguished in hell!" The king subjoined, on his own behalf, "So help me God! I will keep these charters inviolate, as I am a man, as I am a Christian, as I am a knight, and as I am a king crowned and anointed!" His outward behaviour during this awful performance was exemplary; he held his hand on his heart, and made his countenance express a devout acquiescence;

[1253-1256 A.D.]

but the ceremony was scarcely over when, following the impulse given him by his foreign favourites, he returned to his old courses, and thus utterly uprooted whatever confidence the nation yet had in him.

With the money thus obtained Henry went to Guienne, where Alfonso, the king of Castile, had set up a claim to the earldom, and induced many of the fickle nobles to revolt against the English crown. This expedition was less dishonourable than the former ones; indeed, it was successful on the whole, and led to a friendly alliance between England and Castile—Prince Edward marrying Eleanor, the daughter of Alfonso. But Henry concealed these arrangements for some time, in order to obtain a fresh grant from his parliament, under colour of carrying on the war. He returned penniless; for the partial re-establishment of his authority in the south of France seems never to have benefited his exchequer. The expedients to which he had recourse in England rendered him more and more odious and contemptible. When his fortunes were at this low ebb, he blindly embarked in a project to raise one of his sons to the throne of the Two Sicilies. On the death of Frederick II, who died excommunicated, Pope Innocent IV offered the crown to Henry for his second son, Prince Edmund. Henry was placed in circumstances in which he could do little, and, wavering and timid, he did nothing at all, except give his son the empty title of king of Sicily. The pope ordered the English clergy to lend money for the expedition, and even to pawn the property of their church to obtain it.

Backed by the pope, Henry levied enormous contributions on the churches of England and Ireland. The native clergy were already disaffected, but these proceedings made them as openly hostile to the king as were the lay barons. The wholesale spoliation of the church had also the effect of lessening the clergy's reverence for the pope, and of shaking that power which had already attained its highest pitch, and which was thenceforward gradually to decline. The bishop of London said that the pope and king were, indeed, more powerful than he, but if they took his mitre from his head, he would clap on a warrior's helmet. The legate, Rustan, moderated his demands and withdrew, fully convinced that a storm was approaching and that the Sicilian speculation had completed the ruin of the bankrupt king. As long as his brother Richard, the great earl of Cornwall,<sup>1</sup> remained in England, and in possession of the treasures he had hoarded, there was a powerful check upon insurrection; for though the earl's abilities in public affairs seem hardly to have been equal to his wealth, still the influence he possessed in the nation was most extensive. He had repeatedly opposed the illegal courses of the king, and had even been out in arms with the barons more than once; but he was averse to extreme measures, and, from his position, not likely to permit any invasion of the just prerogative of the crown. The Germans were setting up their empire for sale, and Richard's vanity and ambition induced him to become a purchaser. Having spent immense sums, he was elected, in the beginning of 1256, as "king of the Romans," which was considered the sure step to the dignity of emperor. But there was a schism among the electors, part of whom, a few weeks later, gave their suffrages to Alfonso, king of Cas-

[<sup>1</sup> Richard of Cornwall, king of the Romans, the second son of John, was a man of considerably more energy and ability than his brother Henry. He had much of the political sagacity of his nephew Edward, and, like him, at times acted with the baronial opposition in resisting Henry's foolish designs. "A more careful view of his career," says Stubbs, "leads to the conclusion that both his abilities and his success were underrated. As an English earl we find him always acting as a mediator and arbitrator, never urging the king to his deceitful and despotic courses. He was the wisest and most moderate, it would seem, of Henry's advisers."] . . .



tile. Richard, however, went over to the Continent, was crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle, and left the crown of England to be dragged through the mire.

A scarcity of provisions disposed the people to desperate measures. On the 2d of May (1258) Henry called a parliament at Westminster. The barons went to the hall in complete armour. As the king entered there was a rattling of swords; his eye glanced timidly along the mailed ranks, and he said, with a faltering voice, "What means this? Am I a prisoner?" "Not so," replied Roger Bigod; "but your foreign favourites and your own extravagance have involved this realm in great wretchedness; wherefore we demand that the powers of government be intrusted and made over to a committee of bishops and barons, that the same may root up abuses and enact good laws." One of the king's foreign half-brothers vapoured and talked loudly, but as for himself, he could do nothing else than give an unconditional assent to the demands of the barons, who thereupon promised that, if he proved sincere, they would help him to pay his debts and prosecute the claims of his son in Italy. The parliament then dissolved, appointing an early day to meet again at Oxford, where the committee of government should be appointed, and the affairs of the state finally adjusted.

#### SIMON DE MONTFORT; THE MAD PARLIAMENT

The present leader of the barons, and in all respects the most remarkable man among them, was the earl of Leicester. It is evident that the monkish chroniclers were incapable of understanding or properly appreciating the extraordinary character of this foreign champion for English liberties; and those writers have scarcely left materials to enable us to form an accurate judgment. Simon de Montfort was the youngest son of the count Simon de Montfort in France, who had gained an unhappy celebrity in the barbarous crusades against the Albigenses. In right of his mother, Amicia, he had succeeded to the earldom of Leicester; but he appears to have been little known in England until the year 1238, when he came over from his native country, and married Eleanor, the countess-dowager of Pembroke, a sister of King Henry. This match was carried by the royal favour and authority; for Richard, earl of Cornwall, the king's brother, and many of the English barons, tried to prevent it, on the ground that it was not fitting a princess should be married to a foreign subject.

But the earl had no sooner secured his marriage, and made himself known in the country, than he set himself forward as the decided opponent of foreign encroachment and foreign favourites of all kinds; and such was his ability that he caused people to overlook the anomaly of his position, and to forget that he himself was a foreigner. He not only captivated the good will of the English nobles, but endeared himself in an extraordinary degree to the English people, whose worth and importance in the state he certainly seems to have been one of the first to discover and count upon. His devotional feelings (which, upon no ground that we can discover, have been regarded as hypocritical) gained him the favour of the clergy; his literary acquirements, so unusual in those times, increased his influence and reputation. There seems to be no good reason for refusing him the merits of a skilful politician; and he was a master of the art of war as it was then understood and practised.

The favour of the king was soon turned into a hatred as bitter as Henry's supine and not cruel nature was capable of: it seemed monstrous that a foreigner should be, not a courtier but the popular idol; and Leicester was

[1258 A.D.]

banished the court. He was afterwards intrusted with the government of Guienne, where, if he did not achieve the impossibility of giving entire satisfaction to the turbulent and intriguing nobles, he did good service to the king his master, and acquitted himself with ability and honour. Henry, however, was weak enough to listen to the complaints of some of his southern vassals, who did not relish the firm rule of the earl. Leicester was hastily recalled, and his master called him traitor to his face. Thus insulted by a man he despised, the earl gave the lie to his sovereign, and told him that, but for his kingly rank, he would make him repent the wrong he had done him. This happened in 1252. Leicester withdrew for a season into France, but Henry was soon reconciled, in appearance, and the earl returned to England, where his popularity increased in proportion to the growing weakness and misgov-



NORTH STOKE CHURCH, NEAR ARUNDEL  
(Thirteenth Century)

ernment of the king. He was one of the armed barons that met in Westminster hall, and now he was ready to follow up those demonstrations at Oxford.

On the 11th of June the parliament, which the royalists called the Mad Parliament, met at Oxford. Having no reliance on the king, who had so often broken both promise and oath, the great barons summoned all who owed them military service to attend in arms on the occasion. Thus secured from the attack of the foreigners in the king's pay, they proceeded to their object with great vigour and determination. The committee of government was appointed without a murmur on the part of the timid Henry; it consisted of twenty-four members, twelve of whom were chosen by the barons and twelve by the king. The king's choice fell upon his nephew Henry, the son of Richard, the titular king of the Romans; upon Guy and William, his own half-brothers; the bishops of London and Winchester; the earls of Warwick and Warenne; the abbots of Westminster and St. Martin's, London; on John Mansel, a friar; and Peter of Savoy, a relation of the queen. The members appointed by the barons were the bishop of Worcester; the earls Simon of Leicester, Richard of Gloucester, Humphrey of Hereford, Roger of Norfolk, earl marshal; the lords Roger Mortimer, John Fitzgeoffrey, Hugh Bigod, Richard de Grey, William Bardolf, Peter de Montfort, and Hugh le Despenser.

The earl of Leicester was at the head of this supreme council, to the maintenance of whose ordinances the king, and afterwards his son Edward, took

a solemn oath. The parliament then proceeded to enact that four knights should be chosen by the votes of the freeholders in each county, to lay before the parliament all breaches of law and justice that might occur; that a new sheriff should be annually chosen by the freeholders in each county; and that three sessions of parliament should be held regularly every year: the first, eight days after Michaelmas; the second, the morrow after Candlemas Day; and the third, on the first day of June.

The benefits derived from the acts of this parliament were prospective rather than immediate, for the first consequences were seven or eight years of anarchy and confusion, the fruits of insincerity and discontent on the part of the court, and of ambition and intrigue on the part of the great barons. Prince Edward, the heir to the throne, the earl of Warenne, and others took the oaths to the Statutes or Provisions of Oxford with unconcealed reluctance and ill-humour. Though their leaders were liberally included among the twenty-four guardians of the kingdom, the foreign faction was excessively dissatisfied with the recent changes, and said openly, and wherever they went, that the acts of Oxford ought to be set aside as illegal and degrading to the king's majesty. Irritated by their opposition and their secret intrigues, Leicester and his party scared the four half-brothers of the king and a herd of their relations and retainers out of the kingdom. The departure of these foreigners increased the popularity of the barons with the English people; but they were seduced by the temptations of ambition and an easy triumph over all opposition; they filled up the posts vacated in the committee of government with their own adherents, leaving scarcely a member in it to represent the king; and they finally lodged the whole authority of government in the hands of their council of state and a standing committee of twelve persons. This great power was abused, as all unlimited power, whether held by a king, or an oligarchy, or a democracy, ever will be, and the barons soon disagreed among themselves.

#### QUARREL BETWEEN LEICESTER AND GLOUCESTER

About six months after the meeting at Oxford (1259), Richard, king of the Romans, having spent all his money among the Germans, was anxious to return to England that he might get more. At St. Omer he was met by a messenger from Leicester, who told him that he must not set foot in the kingdom unless he swore beforehand to observe the Provisions of Oxford. Richard finally gave an ungracious assent: he took the oath, joined his brother, and immediately commenced organising an opposition to the committee of government. Soon after his arrival it was seen that the barons disagreed more than ever. The earl of Gloucester started up as a rival to Leicester, and a violent quarrel—the first of many—broke out between these two powerful lords. Then there was presented a petition from the knights of shires or counties, complaining that the barons had held possession of the sovereign authority for eighteen months, and had done no good in the way of reform. A few improvements, chiefly regarding the administration of justice, were then enacted; but their slender amount did not satisfy the nation, and most of the barons were more anxious for the prolongation of their own powers and profits than for anything else.

By degrees two factions were formed in the committee: when that of Gloucester obtained the ascendancy, Leicester withdrew into France. Then Gloucester would have reconciled himself with the king, but as soon as Prince



[1259-1263 A.D.]

Edward saw this he declared for Leicester, who returned. The manœuvres and intrigues of party now become almost as unintelligible as they are uninteresting; reconciliations and breaches between the Leicester and Gloucester factions, and then between the barons generally and the court, a changing and a changing again of sides and principles, perplex and disgrace a scene where nothing seems fixed except Leicester's dislike and distrust of the king, and a general but somewhat vague affection among the barons of both parties for the provisions of Magna Charta.

Henry, who had long rejoiced at the division among the barons, now (1261) thought the moment was come for escaping from their authority. He had a papal dispensation in his pocket for the oaths he had taken at Oxford, and this set his conscience quite at ease. On the 2d of February he ventured to tell the committee of government that, seeing the abuse they had made of their authority, he should henceforward govern without them. He then hastened to the Tower, which had recently been repaired and strengthened, and seized all the money in the mint. From behind those strong walls he ordered that the gates of London should be closed, and that all the citizens should swear fresh fealty to him.

The barons called out their vassals and marched upon the capital. Prince Edward was amusing himself in France at a tournament, and it was agreed by both parties to await his arrival. He came in haste, and, instead of joining his father in the Tower, joined the barons. In spite of this junction—or perhaps we ought rather to say, in consequence of it—many of the nobles went over and joined the king, who published the pope's bull of dispensation, together with a manifesto in which he set forth that he had reigned forty-five years in peace and according to justice, never committing such deeds of wrong and violence as the barons had recently committed. For a time he met with success, and Leicester returned once more to France, vowing that he would never trust the faith of a perjured king.

In 1263 another change and shifting of parts took place. The earl of Gloucester was dead, and his son, a very young man, instead of being the rival became for a while the bosom friend of Leicester. Prince Edward, on the other hand, veered round to the court, and had made himself unpopular by calling in a foreign guard. In the month of March young Gloucester called his retainers and confederates together at Oxford, and the earl of Leicester returned to England in the month of April, and put himself at their head. The great earl at once raised the banner of war, and after taking several royal castles and towns, marched rapidly upon London, where the mayor and the common people declared for him. The king was safe in the Tower; Prince Edward fled to Windsor castle, and the queen, his mother, attempted to escape by water in the same direction; but when she approached London bridge, a cry ran among the populace, who hated her, of "Drown the witch!" and filth and stones were thrown at the barge. The mayor took pity on her, and carried her for safety to St. Paul's.

Richard of Cornwall contrived to effect a hollow reconciliation between the barons and his unwarlike brother, who yielded everything, only reserving to himself the usual resource of breaking his compact as soon as circumstances should seem favourable. It is true his subjects had repeatedly exacted too much, but it is equally certain that he never made the smallest concession to them in good faith, and with a determination to respect it. Foreigners were once more banished the kingdom, and the custody of the royal castles was again intrusted to Leicester and his associates. Peace and amity were sworn in July; but by the month of October the king was in arms against the

barons, and nearly succeeded in taking Leicester prisoner. This new crisis was mainly attributable to a condition exacted by that great earl—that the authority of the committee of government should not only last for the lifetime of the king, but be prolonged during the reign of his successor. Up to this point Prince Edward had pretended a great respect for his oath, professing to doubt whether an absolution from Rome could excuse perjury, and he had frequently protested that, having sworn to the Provisions of Oxford, he would religiously keep that vow; but this last measure removed all his scruples, and denouncing the barons as rebels, traitors, and usurpers, he openly declared against them and all their statutes.

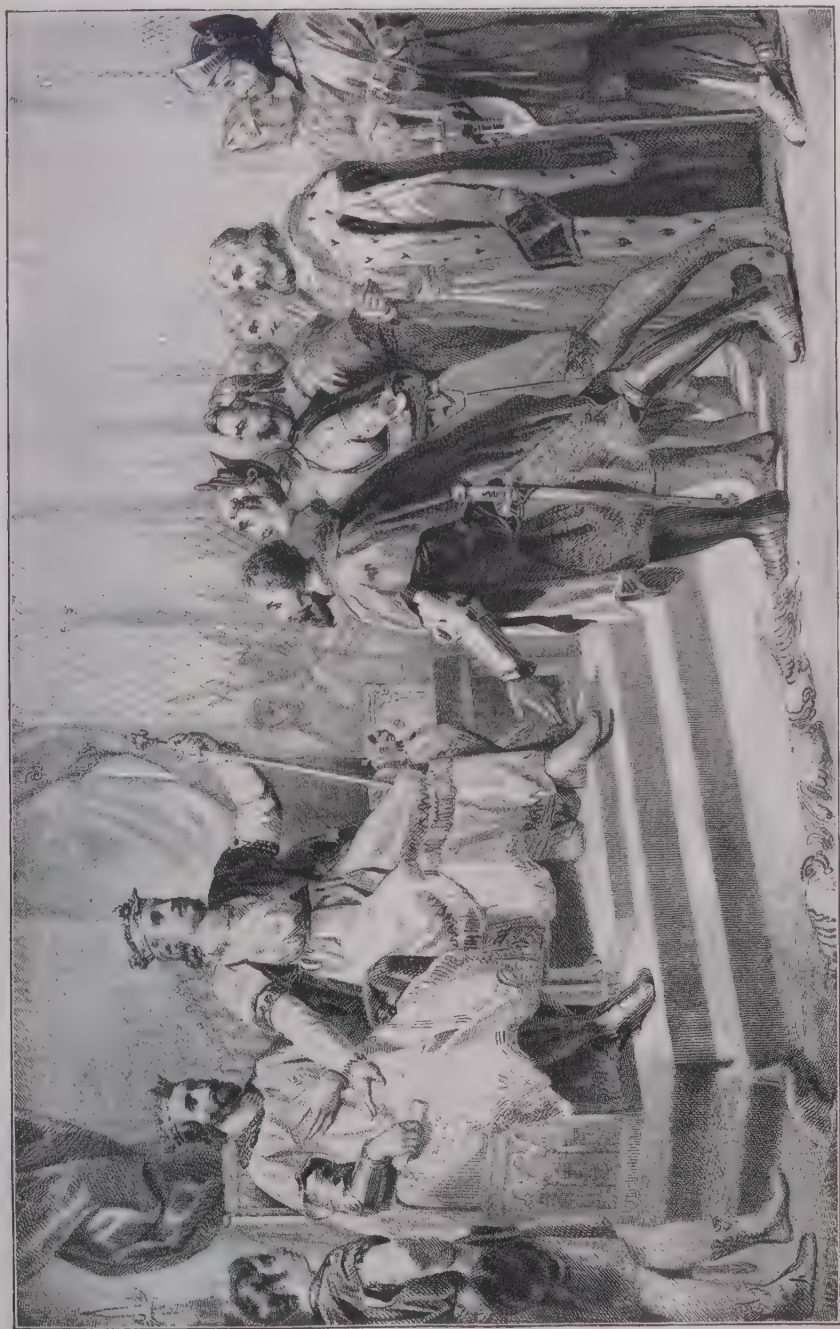
To stop the horrors of a civil war, some of the bishops induced both parties to refer their differences to the arbitration of the French king (1264). The conscientious and justice-loving Louis IX pronounced his award in the beginning of February (1264). He insisted on the observance of the Great Charter; but otherwise his decision was in favour of the king, as he set aside the Provisions of Oxford, ordered that the royal castles should be restored, and that the sovereign should have full power of choosing his own ministers and officers, whether from among foreigners or natives. The barons, who were better acquainted than Louis with the character of their king, well knew that if the securities they had exacted were all given up, the provisions of the national charters would be despised, as they were previously to the parliament of Oxford; and they therefore resolved not to be bound by the award, which, they insisted, had been obtained through the unfair influence of the wife of Louis, who was sister-in-law to King Henry.

The civil war was therefore renewed with more fury than ever. The strength of the royalists lay in the counties of the north and the extreme west; that of the barons in the midland counties, the southeast, the Cinque Ports, and, above all, in the city of London and its neighbourhood. At the tolling of the great bell of St. Paul's the citizens of London assembled as an armed host. In the midst of this excitement they fell upon the unfortunate Jews, and, after plundering them, massacred above five hundred—men, women, and children—in cold blood. In other parts of the kingdom the royalists robbed and murdered the Jews under pretext of their being friends to the barons; and the barons' party did the like, alleging that they were allied with the king, and that they kept Greek fire hid in their houses in order to destroy the friends of liberty.

#### THE BATTLE OF LEWES; DE MONTFORT'S GOVERNMENT (1264 A.D.)

The opening of the campaign was in favour of the royalists; but their fortunes changed when they advanced to the southern coast and endeavoured to win over the powerful Cinque Ports. Leicester, who had remained quietly in London organising his forces, at length marched from the capital with the resolution of fighting a decisive battle. He found the king at Lewes, in Sussex—a bad position, in a hollow—which Henry, relying on his superiority of numbers, did not quit on the earl's approach. Leicester encamped on the downs about two miles from Lewes. On the following morning, the 14th of May, leaving a strong reserve on the downs, he descended into the hollow.

The two armies soon joined battle. On the king's side were the great houses of Bigod and Bohun, all the foreigners in the kingdom, the Percys with their warlike borderers, and from beyond the borders John Comyn, John de Baliol,



ST. LOUIS MEDIATING BETWEEN KING HENRY III OF ENGLAND AND HIS BARONS, 1264 A.D.

(From the engraving by T. M. Fontaine of the painting by Georges Rouget in the Museum of Versailles)





[1264 A.D.]

and Robert de Bruce—names that were soon to appear in a very different drama. On the earl's side were Gloucester, Derby, Wareme, the Despensers, Robert de Roos, William Marmion, Richard de Grey, John Fitzjohn, Nicholas Seagrave, Godfrey de Lucy, John de Vesey, and others of noble lineage and great estates. Prince Edward, who was destined to acquire the rudiments of war in the slaughter of his own subjects, began the battle by falling desperately upon a body of Londoners, who had followed Leicester to the field. This burgher militia could not stand against the trained cavalry of the prince, who chased and slew them by heaps. Eager to take a bloody vengeance for the insults the Londoners had offered his mother, Edward spurred forward, regardless of the manœuvres of the other divisions of the royalist army. He was as yet a young soldier, and the experienced and skilful leader of the barons made him pay dearly for his mistake. Leicester made a concentrated attack on the king, beat him most completely, and took him prisoner, with his brother, the king of the Romans, John Comyn, and Robert de Bruce, before the prince returned from his headlong pursuit. When Edward arrived at the field of battle, he saw it covered with the slain of his own party, and learned that his father, with many nobles, was in Leicester's hands and shut up in the priory of Lewes. Before he could recover himself he was charged by a body of horse and made prisoner. The king's half-brothers, who were again in England, fled to Pevensey, whence they escaped to the Continent.

The victory of the barons does not seem to have been disgraced by cruelty, but it is said to have cost the lives of more than five thousand Englishmen, who fell on the field. On the following morning a treaty, or the *Mise* of Lewes, as it was called, was concluded. It was agreed that Edward and his cousin Henry, the son of the king of the Romans, should remain as hostages for their fathers, and that the whole quarrel should be again submitted to a peaceful arbitration. But Leicester, who had now the right of the strongest, kept both the king and his brother prisoners as well as their sons, and, feeling his own greatness, began to be less tractable. Although the pope excommunicated him and his party, the people regarded the sentence with indifference; and many of the native clergy, who had long been disgusted both with pope and king, praised him in their sermons as the reformer of abuses, the protector of the oppressed, the father of the poor, the saviour of his country, the avenger of the church. Thus supported, and indeed carried forward by a boundless popularity, he soon forced all such barons as held out for the king to surrender their castles and submit to the judgment of their peers. These men were condemned merely to short periods of exile in Ireland; not one suffered death, or chains, or forfeiture.

Every act of government was still performed in the name of the king, whose captivity was made so light as to be scarcely apparent, and who was treated with every outward demonstration of respect. The queen had retired to the Continent before the battle of Lewes, and having busied herself in collecting a host of foreign mercenaries, she now lay at Damme, in Flanders, almost ready to cross over and renew the civil war. The steps taken by Leicester show at once his entire confidence in the good will of the nation, and his personal bravery and activity. He summoned the whole force of the country—from castles and towns, cities and boroughs—to meet in arms on Barham Downs, and having encamped them there he threw himself among the mariners of England, and, taking the command of a fleet, cruised between the English and Flemish coasts to meet the invaders at sea. But the queen's fleet never ventured out of port, her land forces disbanded, and that enterprise fell to the ground.

The ruin of Leicester was effected by very different means. Confident in his talents and popularity, he ventured to display too marked a superiority above his fellows in the same cause; this excited hostile feelings in several of the barons, whose jealousies and pretensions were skilfully worked upon by Prince Edward, who had by this time been removed from Dover castle, into which he had been thrown after the battle of Lewes, and placed, with his father, in the enjoyment of considerable personal liberty, by the order of a parliament which Leicester had summoned expressly to consider his case, in the beginning of the year 1265, which is memorable in the history of the constitution as the first in which we have certain evidence of the appearance of representatives from the cities and boroughs.<sup>e</sup>

Simon de Montfort, at the very moment of his fall, set the example of an extensive reformation in the frame of parliament, which, though his authority was not acknowledged by the punctilious adherents to the letter and forms of law, was afterwards legally adopted by Edward, and rendered the parliament of that year the model of the British parliament, and in a considerable degree affected the constitution of all other representative assemblies. It may, indeed, be considered as the practical discovery of popular representation. The particulars of the war are faintly discerned at the distance of six or seven centuries. The reformation of parliament, which first afforded proof from experience that liberty, order, greatness, power, and wealth are capable of being blended together in a degree of harmony which the wisest men had not before believed to be possible, will be held in everlasting remembrance.<sup>m</sup>

The earl of Derby opened a correspondence with the prince, and the earl of Gloucester set himself up as a rival to Montfort, and then, by means of his brother, Thomas de Clare, who had been placed about the prince's person, concerted a plan for releasing Edward. This plan was successful; and on Thursday in Whitsunweek the prince escaped on a fleet horse which had been conveyed to him, and joined the earl of Gloucester at Ludlow, where the royal banner was raised. The prince was made to swear that he would respect the charters, govern according to law, and expel foreigners; and it was upon these express conditions that Gloucester surrendered to him the command of the troops. This earl was a vain, weak young man, but his jealous fury against Leicester could not blind him to the obvious fact that but few of the nobility would make any sacrifices for the royal cause unless their attachment to constitutional liberty were gratified by such pledges.

#### THE BATTLE OF EVESHAM (1265 A.D.)

About the same time the earl of Warenne, who had escaped from the battle of Lewes, landed in South Wales with 120 knights and a troop of archers; and other royalist chiefs rose in different parts of the country, according to a plan which seems to have been suggested by the military sagacity of Prince Edward. The earl of Leicester, keeping good hold of the king, remained at Hereford, while his eldest son, Simon de Montfort, with a part of his army, was in Sussex. The object of the prince was to prevent the junction of these separated forces, and to keep the earl on the right bank of the Severn. Edward destroyed all the bridges and boats on that river and secured the fords; but, after some skilful manœuvres, the earl crossed the Severn and encamped near Worcester, where he expected his son would join him.

But Simon's conduct in war was not equal to his father's, for he allowed himself to be surprised by night near Kenilworth, where Edward took his



[1265 A.D.]

horses and treasure, and most of his knights, and forced him to take refuge, almost naked, in the castle there, the principal residence of the De Montfort family. The earl, still hoping to meet his son's forces, advanced to Evesham, on the river Avon. On the morning of the 4th of August, as he looked towards the hills in the direction of Kenilworth, he saw his own standards advancing. His joy, however, was but momentary; for he discovered, when too late to retreat, that they were his son's banners in the hands of his enemies, and, nearly at the same time, he saw the heads of columns showing themselves on either flank and in his rear. These well-conceived combined movements had been executed with unusual precision: the earl was surrounded—every road was blocked up. As he observed the skilful way in which the hostile forces were disposed, he uttered the complaint so often used by old generals, "They have learned from me the art of war"; and then, it is said, he added, "The Lord have mercy on our souls, for I see our bodies are Prince Edward's." He did not, however, neglect the duties of the commander, but marshalled his men in the best manner. He then spent a short time in prayer and took the sacrament, as was his wont, before going into battle.

Having failed in an attempt to force the road to Kenilworth, he formed in a solid circle on the summit of a hill, and several times repulsed the charges of his foes, who gradually closed round him, attacking at all points. The king, being in the earl's camp when the royalists appeared, was encased in armour which concealed his features and put upon a war-horse. In one of the charges the imbecile old man was dismounted, and in danger of being slain, but he cried out, "Hold your hand! I am Harry of Winchester," and the prince, who happened to be near, ran to his rescue and carried him out of the *mêlée*. Leicester's horse was killed under him, but the earl rose unhurt from his fall and fought bravely on foot. A body of Welsh were broken and fled, and the number of his enemies still seemed to increase on all sides. He then asked the royalists if they gave quarter, and was told that there was no quarter for traitors. His gallant son Henry was killed before his eyes; the bravest and best of his friends fell in heaps around him, and at last the great earl himself died with his sword in his hand.

The hatred of the royalists was too much inflamed to admit of the humanities of usages of chivalry. No prisoners were taken; the slaughter, usually confined to the "meaner sort," who could not pay ransom, was extended to the noblest and wealthiest, and all the barons and knights of Leicester's party, to the number of 180, were despatched. After the battle the corpse of Leicester was brutally mangled, and treated with every kind of indignity; but by the people his memory was affectionately cherished, and long after he was spoken of among them under the title of Sir Simon the Righteous.<sup>e</sup>

#### THE CHARACTER OF SIMON DE MONTFORT

"The man who gave to English freedom," says Freeman,<sup>b</sup> "its second and more lasting shape, the hero and martyr of England in the greatest of her constitutional struggles, was Simon de Montfort." His most recent biographer, Prothero,<sup>h</sup> has well said that a juster estimate of his personal character can be reached by a simple review of his actions, than by any sort of analysis of what we to-day think the man must necessarily have been who achieved the great things that Simon did.<sup>a</sup>

"Nothing is more difficult," wrote Dr. Robert Henry,<sup>i</sup> "than to form a just idea of the character of this illustrious person who was abhorred as a

devil by one half of England, and adored as a saint or guardian angel by the other. He was unquestionably one of the greatest generals and politicians of his age: bold, ambitious, and enterprising, ever considered by friends and enemies as the very soul of the party which he espoused."

These words are true, but they contain only half the truth. He was more than a great general, more than a great politician, far more than a mere party leader, inasmuch as he obeyed to the death that ruling principle which his own words expressed, "I would rather die without a foot of land than break the oath that I have made." This was why he was worshipped as a saint and a martyr; and if we smile at the popular superstition which believed in the miracles wrought at his tomb, we can look up to the popular instinct which recognised in him that rarest of all miracles, a true patriot. The form of government which he set up, and the constitutional measures he adopted to strengthen it, sufficiently disprove the assertion that he used the pretext of reform to cover the designs of a purely selfish ambition. The fact that he never aimed at supreme power, in spite of the insults and injuries he received at the hands of Henry, until it became evident that in no other way could justice be done, acquits him of the charge of traitorous disloyalty to his king. The fact that he was the only one of the greater nobles who remained true to his cause shows how far he was above the prejudices of class, and what temptations he had to surmount before he left the common rut in which his peers were content to move, and marked out for himself the nobler and more dangerous course to which duty called him. A conviction of his own honesty of purpose, a firm faith that the right would triumph, as well as an overweening confidence in his own powers, led him to persevere in that course to the end, and to essay the impossible. He failed, but he was fortunate in that he did not live to feel the bitterness of failure.<sup>h</sup>

The value and permanency of the great earl's work have by no one been better set forth than by the pen of England's greatest constitutional historian, Bishop Stubbs.<sup>i</sup> "Had he lived longer," says Stubbs, "the prospect of the throne might have opened before him, and he might have become a destroyer instead of a saviour. If he had succeeded in such a design, he could not have made a better king than Edward; if he had failed, England would have lain at the feet of Edward, a ruler whose virtues would have made him more dangerous as a despot than his father's vices had made him in his attempt at despotism. He was greater as an opponent of tyranny than as a deviser of liberties; the fetters imposed on royal autocracy, cumbrous and entangled as they were, seem to have been an integral part of his policy; the means he took for admitting the nation to self-government wear very much the form of an occasional or party expedient, which a longer tenure of undivided power might have led him either to develop or to discard. The idea of representative government had, however, ripened under his hand; and although the germ of the growth lay in the primitive institutions of the land, Simon has the merit of having been one of the first to see the uses and the glories to which it would ultimately grow."

If in his public life he cannot be altogether freed from blame, his private life was beyond reproach. A blameless husband, a kind, too kind, father, a constant friend—he was the model of a Christian knight and gentleman. That he was the best hated as he was the best loved man of his day is but natural. His character was one calculated to offend as many as it attracted. In a rough age, one may perhaps say in political matters in every age, no one can do great things without some ambition, some imperiousness, some selfishness, if one is to stamp with that name the necessary self-assertion of a strong

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character. Who shall say in what proportion these are to be mingled with other and nobler attributes—sympathy, devotion, uprightness, perseverance, energy, faith? No man is faultless, and he was no exception to the rule; but if any faults can be said to ennoble a character, they are those of Simon de Montfort.

A man of Simon's greatness was naturally much written about by contemporary writers. One of the best of these estimates, that of Rishanger,<sup>k</sup> the monk of St. Albans, we give in conclusion:

"He was indeed a mighty man, and prudent, and circumspect; in the use of arms and in experience of warfare superior to all others of his time; commendably endowed with knowledge of letters; fond of hearing the offices of the church by day and night; sparing of food and drink, as those who were about him saw with their own eyes; in time of night watching more than he slept, as his more intimate friends have oft related. In the greatest difficulties which he went through while handling affairs of state, he was found trustworthy; notably in Gascony, whither he went by command of the king, and there subdued to the king's majesty rebels beforetime unconquered, and sent them to England to his lord the king. He was, moreover, pleasant and witty in speech, and ever aimed at the reward of an admirable faith: on account of which he did not fear to undergo death, as shall be told hereafter. His constancy all men, even his enemies, admired; for when others had sworn to observe the Provisions of Oxford, and the most part of them despised and rejected that to which they had sworn, he, having once taken the oath, like an immovable pillar stood firm, and neither by threats, nor promises, nor gifts, nor flattery could be moved to depart in any way with the other magnates from the oath which he had taken to reform the state of the realm.

"He commended himself to the prayers of the religious, and humbly, as with brotherly affection, he begged to be allied with them, in the pouring out of prayers to God for the state of the realm and the peace of the church; and he was constant in supplication that divine grace might keep him spotless from avarice and covetousness of earthly things, knowing for a surety that many in those days were encumbered by such vices, as the issue of things afterwards made clear. To the religious and other prelates of the church, commended by honesty of life, he showed all due reverence. The blessed Robert, once bishop of Lincoln, is related to have enjoined upon the earl, for the remission of his sins, that he should take upon himself that cause for which he fought even unto death; declaring that the peace of the English church could never be secured without the temporal sword, and constantly affirming that all who died in her and for her should receive the crown of martyrdom. It is related by trustworthy persons that the bishop once placed his hands on the head of the earl's first-born son, and said to him, 'My dearest son, thou and thy father shall both die on one day and by one hurt, for the cause of justice.' And the earl, like a second Joshua, worshipped justice, as the very medicine of his soul."

#### THE PERMANENCY OF SIMON'S REFORMS

Though Simon de Montfort was slain, his lifeless remains outraged, his acts branded as those of a usurper, and his name, held in abhorrence by the powerful, was distinguished only by the blessings of the poor and the praise of the learned—yet, in spite of authority and prejudice, his bold and fortunate innovations survived.



When the barons originally took up arms against John they exercised the indisputable right of resistance to oppression. They gave a wholesome warning to sovereigns, and breathed into the hearts of nations a high sense of their rights. But in this first stage they knew not how to improve their victory; they took no securities, and made no lasting provision for the time to come. Both parties might have won successive victory, with no other fruit than alternate tyranny.

In the second stage of the contest the national leaders obtained, in the Great Charter, a solemn recognition of the rights of mankind; and some provisions which, by reserving to a national assembly the power over many taxes, laid the foundation of a permanent and effective control over the crown. Still the means of redressing grievances chiefly lay in an appeal to arms—a coarse and perilous expedient, which, however justifiable by an extreme necessity, is always of uncertain issue, and of which the frequent repetition is incompatible with the peace and order of human society. Such were the plans of government in the Great Charter, the Provisions of Oxford, and the Mise or Agreement of Lewes.

The third epoch is distinguished by the establishment of a permanent assembly, which was on ordinary occasions capable of checking the prerogative by a quiet and constant action, yet strong enough to oppose it more decisively if no other means of preventing tyranny should be left. Hence the unspeakable importance of the new constitution given to parliament by Simon de Montfort. Hence also arose the necessity under which the succeeding king, with all his policy and energy, found himself of adopting this precedent from a hated usurper. It would have been vain to have legally strengthened parliament against the crown, unless it had been actually strengthened by widening its foundations, by rendering it a bond of union between orders of men jealous of each other, and by multiplying its points of contact with the people—the sole allies from whom succour could be hoped. The introduction of knights, citizens, and burgesses into the legislature, by its continuance in circumstances so apparently inauspicious, showed how exactly it suited the necessities and demands of society at that moment. No sooner had events thrown forward the measure, than its fitness to the state of the community became apparent. It is often thus that in the clamours of men for a succession of objects, society, by a sort of elective attraction, seems to select from among them what has an affinity with itself, and what easily combines with it in its state at the time. The enlargement of the basis of the legislature thus stood the test which discriminates visionary prospects from necessary repair and prudent reformation. It would be nowise inconsistent with this view of the subject, if we were to suppose that De Montfort, by this novelty, paid court to the lower orders to gain allies against the nobility—the surmise of one ancient chronicler, eagerly adopted by several modern historians. That he might entertain such a project as a temporary expedient is by no means improbable. To ascribe to him a more extensive foresight would be unreasonable in times better than his. If the supposition could be substantiated, it would only prove more clearly that his ambition was guided by sagacity—that he saw the part of society that was growing in strength, and with which a provident government ought to seek an alliance—that, amidst the noise and confusion of popular complaint, he had learned the art of deciphering its often wayward-language, and of discriminating the clamour of a moment from demands rooted in the nature and circumstances of society.<sup>m</sup>

[1265-1267 A.D.]

## THE RESTORATION OF THE KING

After the decisive victory of Evesham, the king, resuming the sceptre, went to Warwick, where he was joined by his brother, the king of the Romans, who, with many other prisoners taken by Leicester at Lewes, now first recovered his liberty. Early in the next month, on the "feast of the Translation of St. Edward," a parliament assembled at Winchester. Here it was seen that, even in the moment of success, the king could not venture to revoke any part of the Great Charter. His victory had been achieved by the arms of English barons, who, generally speaking, had concurred in the former measures against his faithless government, and whose opposition to the earl of Leicester's too great power had in no sense weakened their love of constitutional safeguards, or their hatred of an absolute king. Led away, however, by personal animosities, the parliament of Winchester passed some severe sentences against the family and partisans of the late earl, and deprived the citizens of London of their charter.

A desperate resistance was thus provoked, and successive insurrections broke out in different parts of the kingdom. Young Simon de Montfort and his associates maintained themselves for a long time in the isles of Ely and Axholme; the Cinque Ports refused to submit; the castle of Kenilworth defied several royal armies; and Adam Gordon, a most warlike baron, maintained himself in the forests of Hampshire. Prince Edward's valour and ability had full occupation for nearly two years, and at last it was found necessary to relax the severity of government, and grant easier terms to the vanquished, in order to obtain the restoration of internal tranquillity. With this view a committee was appointed of twelve bishops and barons, and their award, called the Dictum of Kenilworth, was confirmed by the king and parliament.

The earl of Gloucester, whose personal quarrel with Leicester had been the chief cause of the overthrow of the baronial oligarchy and the restoration of Henry, quarrelled with the king and once more took up arms, alleging that even the Dictum of Kenilworth was too harsh, and that the court was seeking to infringe the Provisions of Oxford, and breaking the promises given on the field of Evesham. The dissatisfied Londoners made common cause with him, and received him within their walls; but, losing heart at the approach of the king's army, Gloucester opened negotiations, and submitted on condition of receiving a full pardon for himself. At the same time the Londoners compounded for a fine of 25,000 marks. The pope most laudably laboured to diffuse the spirit of mercy and moderation; and the gallantry and generosity shown by Prince Edward on one occasion did more in subduing opposition than a hundred executions on the scaffold could have done. In a battle fought in a wood near Alton the prince engaged Adam Gordon hand to hand, and vanquished that redoubtable knight in fair single combat. When Adam was brought to the ground, instead of despatching him, he generously gave him his life. On that very night he introduced him to the queen at Guildford, procured him his pardon, received him into his own especial favour, and was from that time forward most faithfully served by Sir Adam.

On the 18th of November, 1267,<sup>1</sup> two years and three months after the battle of Evesham, the king, in parliament at Marlborough, adopted some of

<sup>1</sup> "It is curious that in the most disturbed period of this turbulent reign, when ignorance seemed to be thickening and the human intellect to decline, there was written and given to the world the best treatise upon law of which England could boast till the publication of Blackstone's *Commentaries* in the middle of the eighteenth century. The author, usually styled Henry de Bracton,<sup>n</sup> has gone by the names of Brycton, Britton, Briton, Breton, and Brets;

the most valuable of the provisions of the earl of Leicester, and enacted other good laws.<sup>1</sup> Thus all resistance was disarmed, and the patriots, or the outlaws, in the isle of Ely, who were the last to submit, threw down their arms and accepted the conditions of the Dictum of Kenilworth. As soon as the country was thoroughly tranquillised, Prince Edward and his cousin Henry took the cross, in which they were followed by nearly one hundred and fifty English lords and knights.<sup>e</sup>

Historians have been fond of conjecturing as to the causes that could have led to Edward's apparently extraordinary action at this time in going upon a crusade and leaving the kingdom under an aged and weak king in the distracted state that always follows a bitter civil war. Hume<sup>f</sup> thinks that Edward subordinated all else to his love of glory. Knight<sup>g</sup> believes we are too apt to minimise the power of religious enthusiasm. Lingard<sup>d</sup> suggests that there was more of policy than devotion in his conduct. Stubbs<sup>c</sup> inclines to this latter view, and says: "Edward knew that he had made enemies in the late war; a few years would heal the old wounds. He knew that the land was exhausted; a few years' rest would give it time to recruit. If he were likely to be the cause of unrest he were better away; and even if he should not return until he returned as king, he might begin his new career less hampered than he would otherwise have been by the policy of his father."<sup>a</sup>

Having taken many precautionary measures in case his father should die during his absence, and having most wisely obtained the grant of a new charter, with the restoration of their liberties, to the citizens of London, and a free pardon to a few nobles who still lay under the king's ban, Edward departed with his wife Eleanor, his cousin Henry, and his knights, in the month of July, 1270. Many of the choicest chivalry of England left their bones to bleach on the Syrian shore; but the fate of Henry d'Almaine, as they called the son of the king of the Romans, was more tragical, as well as much more unusual. He was assassinated in a church at Viterbo, in Italy, by his two cousins, Simon and Guy de Montfort, who, with their mother, the countess of Leicester, King Henry's own sister, had been driven out of England, and who considered the king of the Romans the bitterest enemy of their house. That vain old man, the king of the Romans, was rejoicing in the possession, or display, of a young German bride, and was still flattering himself with the hopes of the imperial crown when the melancholy catastrophe of his son reminded him of the vanity of human wishes. He did not long survive the shock; he died in the month of December, 1271; and in the following winter his brother, Henry III, followed him to the grave, expiring at Westminster, after a long illness and great demonstrations of piety, on the feast of St. Edmund, the 16th of November, 1272. Henry had lived sixty-eight years, and had been fifty-six years a king—at least in name.<sup>e</sup>

and some have doubted whether all these names are not imaginary. From the elegance of his style, and the familiar knowledge he displays of the Roman law, I cannot doubt that he was an ecclesiastic who had addicted himself to the study of jurisprudence. For comprehensiveness, for lucid arrangement, for logical precision, this author was unrivalled during many ages."—LORD CAMPBELL'S *a Lives of the Chancellors*.

[Hallam<sup>p</sup> lays great emphasis on what he calls the "most prominent and characteristic distinction between the constitution of England and that of every other country in Europe"—namely, the refusal of civil privileges to the lower nobility, or gentry. Everywhere else the appellations of nobleman and gentleman are synonymous. In England the law has never taken notice of gentlemen. A comparison of two almost contemporary French and English legal writers, Beaumanoir<sup>o</sup> and Bracton<sup>n</sup>, makes clear the distinction between the Continent and England in this respect. The Frenchman ranges the people into three classes: noble, free, and servile; the Englishman into the divisions of freedom and villeinage. On the whole there was a virtual equality of rights among all the commoners of England, while the English peerage in itself imparted no privilege except to its actual possessor.]



[1272 A.D.]

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## THE CHARACTER OF HENRY III

The characteristics of Henry III. were so well known as to admit of but little difference of opinion, and estimates of him, either contemporary or modern, are in singular agreement. Like many another prince who has had the fortune, or ill fortune, to be born to the purple, he was by temperament absolutely unfitted to be a ruler. His virtues were of the priestly order; his vices, at the worst, were those of self-indulgence, ill temper, and prodigality. He is generally acknowledged to have been accomplished and refined in an unusual degree. But he was lavishly liberal rather than heartily generous, and rash rather than brave. Impulsive, ambitious, pious, and in an ordinary sense virtuous, he was still, as Stubbs<sup>i</sup> truly says, "utterly devoid of all the elements of greatness." "As a subject," writes Prothero,<sup>l</sup> "he would have been harmless, and even perhaps respectable; as a king he was weak, hasty, imprudent, equally incapable in the position of a ruler, an administrator, or a general."

Seldom has the character of a sovereign had a more important bearing on the events of his reign than Henry's had on his. His follies and weaknesses gave the opportunity for the successors of the barons who had forced the Great Charter from his father at Runnymede to reassert the national liberties there acknowledged, in such firm and enduring form that the mightiest of his successors were never able completely to overthrow them. Stubbs<sup>i</sup> makes a striking comparison between Henry and John. "Unlike his father, who was incapable of receiving any impression," he says, "Henry was so susceptible to impressions that none of them could last long; John's heart was of millstone, Henry's of wax; yet they had in common a certain feminine quality of irresolute pertinacity, which it would be a mockery to call elasticity. Both contrived to make inveterate enemies, both had a gift of rash, humorous, unpardonable sarcasm; both were utterly deficient in a sense of truth or justice. Henry had undoubtedly to pay for some of the sins of John; he inherited personal enmities and utterly baseless ideas as to the character of English royalty. He outlived the enmities, and in the hour of his triumph found that his ideas could not be realised. Coming between the worst and the best of English kings, he shared the punishment that his father deserved and the discipline that trained the genius of his son, without himself either unlearning the evil or learning the good."<sup>a</sup>



## CHAPTER XI

### THE REIGN OF EDWARD I

[1272-1307 A.D.]

To strengthen and develop the royal power; to widen the hold of the king on the nation by taking the people themselves into partnership with him in the administration of his inheritance; to work out under happier auspices the great ideas of Montfort, and to turn schemes meant to bring about a revolution into devices for the regular government of the realm; to stand forth, above all, as the truly national king, who ruled through the advice of his own nobles and scorned the foreign favourite and parasite—such were among the main lines of Edward's work as a king.—T. F. Tout.<sup>b</sup>

#### EDWARD'S CRUSADE

FROM the abbey church of Westminster the barons, who had attended his father's funeral, went to the new temple and proclaimed the absent Edward by the style of "king of England, lord of Ireland, and duke of Aquitaine." This was on Sunday, the 20th of November, four days after the demise of Henry. A new great seal was made; Walter de Merton was appointed chancellor; Walter Giffard, archbishop of York, the earl of Cornwall, a surviving son of Richard, king of the Romans, and the earl of Gloucester, assumed conjointly the office of guardians or regents of the kingdom; and such wise measures were taken that the public peace was in no way disturbed; and the accession of Edward, though he was far away, and exposed to the chances of war and shipwreck, was more tranquil than that of any preceding king since the Conquest.

When Edward departed on the crusade he found that the French king, instead of sailing for Syria or Palestine, had turned aside to attack the Musulman bey of Tunis. Louis landed on the African shore in the midst of summer, and took the camp and town of Carthage; but the king himself was attacked by a fatal dysentery, and he laid himself down to die among the ruins of ancient Carthage. When Prince Edward arrived he found that Louis was dead, and that more than half of his army had perished by disease. The survivors had, however, made advantageous terms with the bey of Tunis,

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and showed little inclination to leave that country and encounter fresh dangers in Palestine. The English then recrossed the Mediterranean to Sicily; but Edward would not renounce his project, or return home. He passed the winter at Trapani, vowing that, though all his soldiers should desert him, he would go to Acre attended only by Fowen, his groom.

Early in the following spring he set sail from Sicily, and landed at Acre, which was now almost the only residue of the crusaders' conquests in the East, with a force which did not exceed one thousand men. But the fame of Richard was still bright on those shores; and while the Mohammedans trembled, the Christians gathered round the standard of the successor of Lion Heart, to whom Edward was scarcely inferior in physical strength and courage, while he was his superior in coolness and policy. The sultan of Babylon, who had prepared to take Acre by assault, immediately retreated from its vicinity, and crossing the desert went into Egypt. Edward advanced, and obtained temporary possession of Nazareth, which was taken by storm. The prince, and many of the English with him, were soon after attacked with sickness, and returned to Acre, where they lingered some fifteen months, doing little or nothing; for the first enthusiasm among the Latin Christians had subsided upon seeing that Edward had scarcely any money, and received no reinforcements.

The Mohammedans were not strong enough to attack Acre, which was so fortified as to be enabled to defy them for twenty years longer, when the Mamelukes of Egypt took it and drove the crusaders and their descendants from every part of the Holy Land. Edward on his side was always too weak to attempt any extensive operations. His presence, however, both annoyed and distressed the Turks, and an attempt was made to get rid of him by assassination. The emir of Jaffa, under pretence of embracing the Christian religion, opened a correspondence with the English prince, and gradually gained his confidence. The emir sent letters and presents, till his messengers were allowed to pass and repass without examination or suspicion. On the Friday of Whitsunweek, about the hour of vespers, as Edward was reclining on a couch, with nothing on him but a loose robe, the emir's messenger made his usual salaam at the door of his apartment: he was admitted; and as he knelt and presented a letter with one hand, he drew a concealed dagger with the other and aimed a blow at the prince's heart. Edward, though wounded, caught the murderer in his iron grasp, threw him to the ground, and despatched him with his own weapon. The prince's wound was not deep, but the dagger had been smeared with poison. Fortunately there was at Acre an English surgeon with skill and nerve enough to pare away the sides of the wound, and the grand master of the Templars sent some precious drugs to stop the progress of the venom. The affectionate attentions of his loving wife, Eleanor, may have contributed very effectually to his cure, but there is no good ground for believing that she sucked the poison from her husband's wound.<sup>1</sup>

#### THE RETURN TO ENGLAND

Henry had already implored his son to return to England, and now Edward gladly listened to proposals of peace made by the sultan. A truce was therefore concluded for ten years, and Edward sailed again for Sicily. Teobaldo, arch-

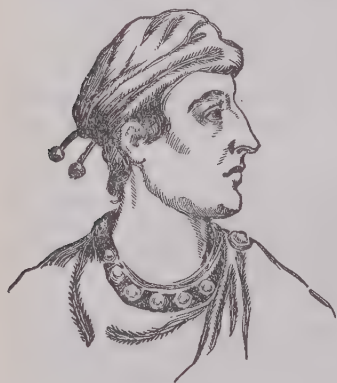
<sup>1</sup> The story of Eleanor's sucking the wound is not mentioned by any chronicler living near the time. It seems to be of Spanish origin, and to have been first mentioned a century or two after the time.



deacon of Liège, who had accompanied the prince to Palestine, had been recalled some months before from Acre to fill the vacant chair of St. Peter. At Trapani, Edward received an earnest invitation from this old companion and steadfast friend, now Gregory X, to visit him at Rome.

The prince crossed from Sicily to travel by land through the Italian peninsula. At a mountain village in Calabria he met messengers, by whom he was informed, for the first time, of the death of his father. By the month of February, 1273, he was at Rome; but his friend, the pope, being absent, he stayed only two days in the Eternal City, and then turned aside to Cività Vecchia, where the pope received him with honour and affection. Edward demanded justice on the assassins of Henry d'Almaine; but Simon de Montfort, one of them, had gone to account for his crimes before a higher tribunal; and as Guy de Montfort had absconded, the king of England was obliged to

be satisfied with a very imperfect vengeance. Leaving the pontiff, he continued his journey through Italy, and was received in triumph at every town. On crossing the Alps, Edward was met by a deputation from England. He travelled on to Paris, where he was courteously received by his cousin, Philip the Bold, and did homage to that king for the lands which he held in France.<sup>d</sup> From Paris it was expected that he would hasten to England; but he was called back to Guienne by the distracted state of that province, and detained there till the conclusion of the general council, which had been summoned to meet at Lyons. It was during this interval that he was challenged to a tournament by the count de Châlons; who, it was afterwards said, under the pretence of doing him honour, concealed a most atrocious design against his life. The pontiff by letters



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(1239-1307)

earnestly exhorted the king to refuse, observing to him that no monarch had ever condescended to tilt at a tournament; that such feats of arms had been forbidden by the church, on account of the murders with which they were frequently disgraced; and that it was folly in him thus to expose himself to the sword of the assassin, who, he had reason to suspect, at that very time thirsted for his blood.<sup>1</sup> But Edward's honour was at stake; on the appointed day he entered the lists, attended by a thousand champions partly on foot, partly on horseback, and was met by his antagonist with a retinue nearly double in number.

It might be that the English were exasperated by their suspicions, or that their opponents really entertained projects of bloodshed—but the trial of skill and strength was soon converted into a most deadly battle; Edward's archers drove their opponents out of the field, mixed among the knights, and sometimes cutting the girths of their saddles, sometimes ripping up the bowels of their horses, brought the riders to the ground and secured them as prisoners. The count de Châlons, a most athletic man, after tilting with his spear, threw his arms round the king's neck to pull him from his seat. Edward's charger sprang forward at the same moment, and the count fell to the ground. He

<sup>1</sup> These assertions of Gregory seem to countenance the suspicion of some writers that the attempt to assassinate Edward at Acre was in reality planned by the partisans of the house of Montfort.

[1274-1287 A.D.]

was replaced by his attendants; but his fall had rendered him incapable of exertion, and he demanded quarter. The king's passion induced him for a time to belabour a suppliant enemy; at length, disclaiming to receive his sword, he compelled him to surrender to one of the foot champions. The English gained the prize after a most dangerous and sanguinary contest.<sup>i</sup>

Edward now (1274) turned his thoughts towards England, and sent orders to prepare for his coronation. If these orders were obeyed, the coronation feast must have been a sublime specimen of a well-loaded table: for 380 head of cattle, 430 sheep, 450 pigs, 18 wild boars, 278 fitches of bacon, and 19,660 capons and fowls were ordered by the king for this solemn occasion. As he travelled through France, Edward stopped at the pleasant town of Montreuil, to settle some differences which had long existed between the English and Flemings, and which had seriously committed the commercial interests of both countries. On the 2d of August, 1274, after an absence of more than four years, he landed at Dover, and on the 19th of the same month, "after the feast of the Assumption," he was crowned, together with his high-minded wife, in Westminster abbey. The nation was proud of the valour and fame of their king, who was now in the prime of mature manhood, being in his thirty-sixth year; and the king had good reason to be proud of the affection, loyalty, and prosperity of the nation.

## EDWARD AND THE JEWS: HIS CONSTITUTIONAL REFORMS

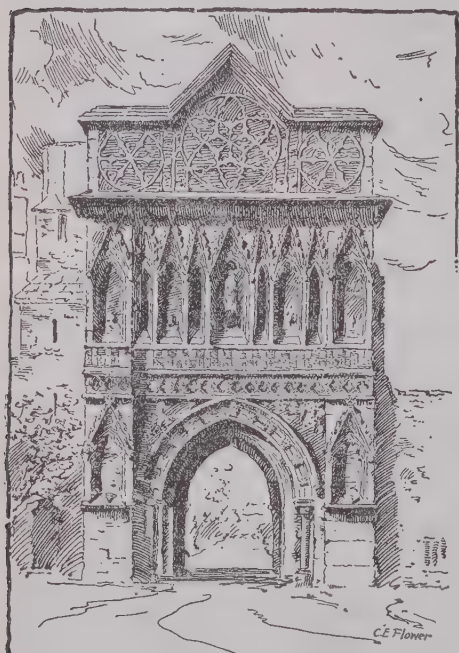
The government, however, was poor and embarrassed; and, in spite of all pretexts, this circumstance seems to have been the real whetstone of the animosity which Edward showed immediately after his accession to one class of his subjects—the unhappy Jews. The rest of the nation were now tolerably well protected from arbitrary spoliation by the Great Charter and the power of parliament; but the miserable Israelites, considered unworthy of a participation in the laws and rights of a Christian people, were left naked to oppression, no hand or tongue being raised in their defence, and the mass of the people rejoicing in their ruin. As a zealous crusader, Edward detested all unbelievers, and his religious antipathies went hand-in-hand with his rapacity, and probably justified its excesses in his own eyes. The coin had been clipped and adulterated for many years, and the king chose to consider the Jews the sole or chief authors of this crime. To bring a Jew before a Christian tribunal was almost the same thing as to sign his death-warrant. Two hundred and eighty of both sexes were hanged in London alone, and many victims also suffered in every other town where they resided.

As it was so common, clipped money might be found upon every person in the kingdom; but once discovered in the possession of an Israelite, it was taken as an irrefragable proof of guilt. The houses and the whole property of every Jew that suffered went to the crown, which thus had an interest in multiplying the number of convictions. Even before these judicial proceedings, the king prohibited the Jews from taking interest for money lent, from building synagogues, and buying lands or any free tenements. He put a capitation or poll tax upon them; he set a distinctive and odious badge upon their dress, that they might be known from all others—a Turkish custom, which in its time has been the cause of infinite suffering. Thirteen years later, when Edward was engaged in expensive foreign wars, and the parliament, in ill humour thereat, stinted his supplies, he ordered the seizure of every Jew in England; and on an appointed day, men, women, and children—

every living creature in whose veins the ancient blood of the tribes was known or supposed to flow—were brutally arrested and cast into loathsome dungeons. There seems to have been no parity of justice on this occasion, and the Jews purchased their release by a direct payment of the sum of £12,000 to the king. Edward might have continued to make good use of them from time to time in this manner, as most of his predecessors had done; but his fanaticism overcame his avidity for money, or, probably, he wanted a large sum at once, for he was then in the midst of his scheme for the subjugation of Scotland, and had just married two of his daughters.

It was in the year 1290, soon after the sitting of a parliament at Westminster, that his proclamation went forth commanding all the Jews, under the penalty

of death, to quit the kingdom forever, within the space of two months. Their total number was considerable, for, though long robbed and persecuted in England, they had, notwithstanding, increased and multiplied, and their condition in the other countries of Christendom being still worse than here, the stream of emigration had set pretty constantly from the opposite side of the Channel. Sixteen thousand five hundred and eleven individuals received the king's pass, with the gracious permission to carry with them as much of their ready money as would pay the immediate expenses of their voyage. Houses, lands, merchandise, treasures, debts owing to them, with their bonds, their tallies and obligations, were all seized by the king. The mariners of London, and the inhabitants of the Cinque Ports generally, who were as bigoted as the king, and thought it no sin to be as rapacious towards the accursed Jews, robbed many of them of the small pittance left them, and drowned not a few during



ST. ÆTHELBERHT'S GATE, NORWICH  
(About 1275. Entrancé to Cathedral close)

their passage. Some few mariners were convicted and suffered capital punishment; for the king, to use the keen sarcasm of Hume, was determined to be the sole plunderer in his dominions.

Contemporaneously with these shameful proceedings against the Jews, Edward enacted many just and wise laws for his Christian subjects.<sup>1</sup> The nature of his reforms shows the extent of the evil that had existed. In 1299 all the judges of the land were indicted for bribery, and only two of the number were

<sup>1</sup> At the parliament which met in May, 1275, under the presidency of the lord-chancellor Burnel, who had early distinguished himself not only in the civil and canon law, but in the common law of England, was passed the Statute of Westminster the First, deserving, says Lord Campbell, the name of a code rather than an act of parliament. "From this chiefly Edward I has obtained the name of the 'English Justinian,' absurdly enough, as the Roman emperor merely caused a compilation to be made of existing laws; whereas the object now



[1277 A.D.]

acquitted; the chief justice of the court of king's bench was convicted of instigating his servants to commit murder, and of protecting them against the law after the offence; the chief baron of the exchequer was imprisoned and heavily fined, and so was Sir Ralph de Hengham, the grand justiciar. But perhaps, in some of these cases, we shall not greatly err if we deduct from the delinquency of the accused, and allow something for the arbitrary will of the accuser. It is known that the king was in great want of money, when, as the consequence of their condemnation, he exacted about 80,000 marks from the judges. In recovering, or attempting to recover, such parts of the royal domain as had been encroached upon, and in examining the titles by which some of the great barons held their estates, he roused a spirit which might have proved fatal to him had he not prudently stopped in time.

When his commissioners asked Earl Warrenne to show his titles, the earl drew his sword, and said: "By this instrument do I hold my lands, and by the same I intend to defend them! Our ancestors, coming into this realm with William the Bastard, acquired their possessions by their good swords." Such title-deeds were not to be disputed; but there were other cases where men wore less powerful swords, and where written deeds and grants from the crown had been lost or destroyed during the convulsions of the country; and Edward seized some manors and estates, and made their owners redeem them by large sums of money. There was much bad faith in these proceedings, but, as the king chose his victims with much prudence, no insurrection was excited.

## THE CONQUEST OF WALES (1277 A.D.)

We must now retrace our steps, to take a regular view of this king's great operations in war. Edward was, to the full, as ambitious and fond of conquest as any prince of the Norman or Plantagenet line: but, instead of expending his power in foreign wars, he husbanded it for the grand plan of reducing the whole of the island of Great Britain under his immediate and undivided sway. He employed the claim of feudal superiority with final success against Wales; and though, with regard to Scotland, it eventually failed, the ruin of his scheme there did not happen until after his death, and he felt, for a time, the proud certainty of having defeated every opponent. If the acknowledgment of the paramount authority of the English kings, extracted from unsuccessful princes, justified a forcible seizure of territory against the wishes of the people, Edward may be acknowledged to have had that right over Wales. We have repeated instances of a seeming submission, when the Welsh princes purchased peace by engaging to pay certain tributes, and to recognise the suzerainty of the English throne.

The nature of Edward's right is scarcely deserving of a further examination: had no such claims existed he would have invented others; for he was determined on the conquest of the country, and internal dissensions and other circumstances favoured the enterprise. The expediency of the measure, and the advantages that have resulted from it, ought not to make us indifferent to the fate of a brave people who were fighting for their independence. Since the beginning of the reign of Henry II civilisation had advanced in England,

was to correct abuses, to supply defects, and to remodel the administration. Edward deserves infinite praise for the sanction he gave to the undertaking; and, from the observations he had made in France, Sicily, and the East, he may, like Napoleon, have been personally useful in the consultations for the formation of the new code; but the execution must have been left to others, and the chief merit of it may safely be ascribed to Lord-Chancellor Burnel, who brought it forward in parliament."

and had, from the circumstances in which the country was placed, retrograded in Wales; but there are Welsh writers of the time who trace in that land the most interesting picture of a hospitable and generous race of men, full of the elements of poetry, and passionately fond of their wild native music. Though chiefly a pastoral people, they were not rude or clownish. "All the Welsh," says Giraldus Cambrensis,<sup>f</sup> "without any exception, from the highest to the lowest, are ready and free in speech, and have great confidence in replying, even to princes and magnates." The mass of the nation, however, notwithstanding this partial refinement, was poor and but rudely clad, as compared with their English contemporaries. Seldom has even a race of mountaineers made a longer or more gallant stand for liberty.

At the time of Edward's aggression the principality of North Wales was still almost untouched by English arms; but the conquerors had established themselves in Monmouthshire, and held a somewhat uncertain and frequently disturbed possession of a good part of South Wales. This occupation had been effected very gradually by the great barons, who had made incursions at their own expense and with their own retainers. These lords were rewarded with the lands they gained from the Welsh. As they advanced they raised chains of fortifications, building their castles sufficiently near to communicate with and support each other. In addition to these strong fortresses, many smaller castles were constructed for the purpose of keeping the natives in awe. The more advanced posts were often retaken; and the day when one of these castles was destroyed was held by the Welsh—who foresaw the consequences of this gradual advance—as a day of universal joy, on which the father, who had just lost his only son, ought to forget his misfortune.

But still the chains were drawn more and more closely around them by the persevering invaders; and, since the conquest of Ireland, extraordinary pains had been taken to secure the whole of the line through South Wales to Milford Haven, the usual place of embarkation for the sister island. In the wilderness of the Teifi, and in many of the more inaccessible moors, marshes, and mountains, the English were still defied. But the jealousies of the petty princes and the rancorous feuds of the clans defeated all their greater projects; and, at the critical moment which was to seal the fate of the whole country, Rhys ap Meredith, the prince of South Wales, was induced to join Edward and fight against Llewelyn, the ruler of the northern principality and the representative of a rival family. Llewelyn, moreover, was opposed by his own brother, David, who also rallied, with his vassals, round the standard of the English king.<sup>d</sup>

With the reign of Edward the preparations for an attack on Llewelyn began. The king's claims as liege lord stood him in good stead. This feudal superiority often appeared no more than an alliance equally eligible for both parties. It might, at other times, be represented as only a mere solemnity. Yet, when once recognised, it was capable of being so stretched, in favourable circumstances, as to become a pretext for the vexation of perpetual interference. The lord paramount might excite the discontents of the subordinate tenants against their immediate lords. Whenever the vassal of the crown proved too powerful, it was seldom difficult for the lord paramount to find a decent pretext for acquiescence till a favourable opportunity of aggression should arise. He had the great advantage of acting under those forms of law and with that tone of legitimate authority which often shelter the most cruel wrongs. The confiscation of the Plantagenet territory in France, though not so unequivocal an act of injustice as many others of the same kind, was a striking instance of the account to which this jurisdiction might be turned.

[1277-1282 A.D.]

Immediately after the recognition of Edward, a summons had been issued to Llewelyn to do homage as one of his great vassals. The duties of vassalage were indisputable, and they had been uniformly acknowledged by Llewelyn. The advantage of form and the plausibilities of legal reasoning were on the side of Edward; but much of the substantial justice of the case is kept out of view by the specious language of the state papers of his ministers. Llewelyn urged that he could not with safety repair to the court of a monarch who had violated the terms of a solemn treaty recently concluded by the mediation of the pope, and who received disaffected and rebellious Welshmen with favour and distinction. He demanded hostages by way of security, appealing to the pontiff, and even to the English primate, for the reasonableness of such a request.

In the course of the negotiations Edward gave Llewelyn a proof of very ungenerous enmity. The Welsh prince was desirous of solemnising his nuptials with Eleanor de Montfort, to whom he had been a considerable time affianced. As soon as Edward heard of the voyage of this lady from France, he despatched vessels in pursuit of her, who brought her prisoner to England, where she was detained for more than two years, in a period of peace, without any colour of justice or even pretext of law. The English parliament pronounced the doom of forfeiture against Llewelyn. Sentence of excommunication was issued against him.

The first campaign against Wales either languished or was divided between petty attacks and extensive preparations. But soon Edward summoned all his vassals to take the field. He opened roads into the inmost fastnesses of Snowdon. He repaired or rebuilt the castles of Rhuddlan and Flint, manifesting at every step the wariness of a statesman and a commander preparing for the subjugation of a gallant people. Surrounded by such formidable enemies, and touched by the hope of delivering his beloved Eleanor, the prince of North Wales acquiesced in the conditions of peace imposed by the conqueror. The whole principality was, in effect, ceded, except Anglesea, the ancient refuge of their princes and their bards, which was also, however, to revert to the liege lord in case of failure of male issue of Llewelyn. Even this remnant of dominion was ransomed by a stipulation to pay the enormous sum of £50,000—a sum which, if it was afterwards remitted, was probably not exacted only because it could not be paid. The natural consequences of all treaties of submission soon manifested themselves. Llewelyn reproached himself for the sacrifice of his country, reading no less reproof in the countenance of every faithful subject.

Meanwhile, David, his brother, was indignant at a treaty more injurious to himself and his family than to a childless prince, and recoiled probably from the too complete success of his own treason. The prophecies of ancient poets easily assumed the meaning most suitable to the excited feelings of a brave and superstitious nation. Llewelyn's grievances, if founded in fact, certainly absolved him from the observance of the slavish compact. "The brave people of Snowdon declared that, though the prince should give the king possession of it, they would never submit to strangers." "The prince," said the Welsh chiefs, "cannot in honesty resign his paternal inheritance, and accept other lands among the English, of whose customs and language he is ignorant." Edward's army penetrated into Anglesea by a bridge of boats over the Menai Strait, now crossed by one of the greatest works of useful and magnificent art. But David, at the head of his generous mountaineers, carried on a vigorous warfare against them; and Llewelyn himself defeated the English invaders, killing or drowning the greater part of them in their retreat



to the mainland. In another action the lords Audley and Clifford were slain, and the king was reduced to the necessity of seeking safety in one of his own castles. In the mean time, Llewelyn, pressed by Roger Mortimer, one of the king's lieutenants, went with a few attendants to a place near Builth, where he appears to have appointed the chiefs of the neighbourhood to meet him.

Either lukewarm and fearful, or, as the Welsh annalist intimates, deliberately perfidious, the degenerate princes deserted their gallant leader. Mortimer with a large force fell on him. Thus taken by surprise, and perhaps betrayed, Llewelyn fell, the victim seemingly rather of assassination than of war. One Adam Frankton ran him through the body unawares. As soon as his rank was discovered, his head was cut off and sent to Edward, then at Shrewsbury; by whose command it was placed on the Tower of London, encircled with a crown of willows, in base mockery of those ancient songs which were fondly believed by the Welsh to prefigure their deliverer, as adorned by this symbol of sovereignty. Thus perished the last sovereign of one of the most ancient ruling families of Europe.

The year following, Prince David was also made prisoner, tried before an English parliament at Shrewsbury, convicted by them of high treason for the defence of his country, and, after being drawn asunder by horses, was beheaded and cut into four parts; the head was exposed beside that of his brother, and the members were distributed over four of the chief towns in the kingdom—probably the earliest instance of that horrible punishment afterwards appointed for treason, of which it required all the power of reason, eloquence, and character, united in the person of Sir Samuel Romilly, five hundred years afterwards, to procure the abolition.

#### WALES AFTER THE DEATH OF LLEWELYN

The mind is often perplexed in estimating the comparative merits of both parties in such contests as that between Edward and Llewelyn; but the only principle by which a just judgment can be formed is that of invariable regard to the respective intentions of the contending parties. Edward's object was aggrandisement; whatever occasional breaches of treaty or violations of humanity the Welsh may have committed, their deliberate aim never could have reached beyond the defence of their country. The conqueror's ambition tainted all his acts, and renders his conformity to the letter of the law a fraudulent evasion of the rules of justice: their cause was in itself sacred, and entitles them to some excuse for having maintained it by those means which the barbarity of that age deemed lawful.

The massacre of the bards is an act of cruelty imputed to Edward without evidence, and inconsistent with a temper which fitted him for what stern policy required, but was not a wantonly cruel one. It is, however, one of those traditions of which the long prevalence attests the deep-rooted hatred of the conquered towards their conquerors. On the death of Llewelyn, one of the most ancient branches of the Celtic race lost its national character.'

Edward had far more patience and prudence than was common to the conquerors of his time; and he devised wise means for retaining peaceful possession of what he had gained by force. He did not move from Wales until more than a year after the death of Llewelyn, and he spent the greater part of that time in dividing the country into shires and hundreds, after the manner of England, and restoring order and tranquillity. Immediately after the

[1283-1289 A.D.]

affair of Builth, he published a proclamation, offering peace to all the inhabitants, giving them, at the same time, assurances that they should continue to enjoy all their lands, liberties, and properties as they had done before. Some of the ancient usages of the country were respected, but, generally speaking, the laws of England were introduced and enforced. He gave charters with great privileges to various trading companies in Rhuddlan, Carnarvon, Aberystwith, and other towns, with the view of encouraging trade and tempting the Welsh from their mountains, and their wild, free way of living, to a more social and submissive state.

When his wife Eleanor bore him a son in the castle of Carnarvon, he adroitly availed himself of that circumstance, by presenting the infant Edward to the people as their countryman, and telling them that he, who was born among them, should be their prince. The Welsh chiefs expected that this "prince of Wales" would have the separate government of their country; for Alfonso, an elder brother of the infant Edward, was then alive, and the acknowledged heir to the English crown. For some time they indulged in this dream of a restored independence, and professed, and probably felt, a great attachment to the young Edward: but Prince Alfonso died; the illusion was also dissipated by other circumstances, and, in the sequel, the Welsh-born prince came to be regarded by his countrymen with very different feelings from either pride or affection.

After the subjugation of Wales, Edward's ambition rested for about four years—three of which he passed almost wholly on the Continent, where he was honourably engaged as umpire to settle a fresh dispute which had arisen between the kings of France, Aragon, and the house of Anjou, respecting the island of Sicily. His ability and conduct in this matter gained him a great increase of reputation among foreign princes; but the affairs of his own kingdom fell into disorder: the English people complained that he neglected their interests to take charge of what did not concern them; and the parliament at last refused him a supply which he had asked. The king then returned in haste, and, almost immediately after, he involved himself in the affairs of Scotland, which, with a few short intervals, entirely occupied him all the rest of his reign.

#### ALEXANDER III OF SCOTLAND

Alexander III, king of Scotland, was present with his queen, and many of his nobility, at the coronation of Edward I, in 1274, and on that occasion did homage, according to custom, for his English possessions. In 1278 he performed this ceremony a second time, declaring, according to the record preserved in the Close Rolls, that he became the liege man of his lord, King Edward of England, against all people. This was substantially the same acknowledgment that Alexander II had made to Henry III in 1244. It was no admission of Edward's claim of feudal superiority over Scotland—as is conclusively proved, if there could be any doubt on the subject, by the sequel of the record, which expressly states that Edward "received it, saving his right and claim to homage for the kingdom of Scotland, when it shall please him to bring it forward."

The government of Alexander, after he took the management of affairs into his own hands, made him universally beloved by his people; and peace and plenty blessed the land in his time. But clouds and storms were soon to succeed this sunshine.

Alexander had lost his queen, Margaret of England, in 1275; but, besides a daughter Margaret, she had left him a son, named Alexander, born at Jedburgh on the 21st of January, 1264; David, a younger son, had died in his boyhood. In 1281 the princess Margaret was married to Eric, king of Norway, and the following year the prince of Scotland, now a youth of eighteen, was united to Margaret, daughter of Guy, count of Flanders. At this time the king himself, as yet only in his forty-first year, might reasonably have counted on a much longer reign; the alliances which he had formed for his children promised to enable him to transmit his sceptre to a line of descendants; and the people seemed entitled to look forward to the continuance of the present peace and prosperity of the country for many years.

By a singular succession of calamities all these fair hopes were, one after the other, rapidly extinguished. First, in the latter part of the year 1283 died the queen of Norway, leaving only an infant daughter. The death of



CASTLE OF ST. ANDREWS

(Erected about the beginning of the thirteenth century by Bishop Roger)

Queen Margaret was followed by that of her brother, the prince of Scotland, on the 28th of January, 1284. No time was lost by Alexander in taking the measures for the settlement of the succession which these events rendered necessary. On the 5th of February the parliament was assembled at Scone, when the estates of the kingdom solemnly bound themselves, failing Alexander and any children he might yet have, to acknowledge for their sovereign the Norwegian princess—"the Maiden [or Maid] of Norway," as she is called by the old writers. The following year (April 15, 1285), Alexander married Joleta, daughter of the count de Dreux. But within a year after his marriage, on the 16th of March, 1286, as Alexander was riding, on a dark night, between Kinghorn and Burntisland, his horse stumbled with him over a high cliff, and he was killed on the spot.

The loss of this excellent king would, in any circumstances, have been a heavy calamity to his country, but the blow could not have been received at a more unfortunate moment than the present. A long minority was now the least evil the kingdom had to dread. The life of an infant, in a foreign country, alone stood between the nation and all the sure confusion and miseries of a disputed succession. The first proceeding of the estates was to appoint a regency, at a meeting held at Scone on the 11th of April. But



[1286-1290 A.D.]

scarcely, it would appear, had the throne of Queen Margaret been thus set up, when it began to be undermined by plots and secret treason.

The main strength of Margaret's cause lay in there being no other certain heir to the throne if she were set aside. Had it not been for this, it is more than probable that the settlement in her favour would have been wholly disregarded after Alexander's death. Even as matters stood there was one party which had already formed the design of displacing Queen Margaret in favour of its own chief. Robert de Brus or Bruce, lord of Annandale and Cleveland, was the son of Isabella, one of the three daughters of David, earl of Huntingdon, the brother of William the Lion. He and a number of his adherents held a meeting in September, 1286, at Turnberry castle, in Ayrshire, and there bound themselves to adhere to one another on all occasions, and against all persons, saving their allegiance to the king of England, and to him who should gain the kingdom of Scotland as the rightful heir of the late king. The intention of the parties to this bond would appear to have been to obtain the crown for Bruce, by the aid of the king of England, whom, with that view, they were prepared to acknowledge as lord paramount of Scotland.

Two of the chief members of the regency, the earl of Buchan and the earl of Fife, died towards the close of the year 1288; and from this time violent divisions arose in the government. In the end of the year 1289, Eric, king of Norway, opened a negotiation with Edward on the affairs of his infant daughter and her kingdom; and at Edward's request the Scottish regency sent three of its members to take part in a solemn deliberation held at Salisbury. It was here agreed that the young queen should be immediately conveyed either to her own dominions or to England, Edward engaging in the latter case to deliver her, on demand, to the Scottish nation, provided that good order should be previously established in Scotland, so that she might reside there with safety to her person.

No mention was made in this convention of an English match for Margaret, but it appears that Edward had already obtained a dispensation from Rome for her marriage to her cousin, his eldest son. A report to that effect was very soon after spread in Scotland; whereupon the estates immediately assembled at Bridgeham, on the Tweed, and thence addressed a letter to the English king, expressing, in warm terms, their gratification. "We on our part," they concluded, "heartily consent to the alliance, not doubting that you will agree to such reasonable conditions as we shall propose to your council." They wrote at the same time to the king of Norway, pressing him to send his daughter instantly to England.

Some months after this (on the 18th of July, 1290), a treaty was concluded at the same place, by which everything in regard to the proposed marriage was finally arranged. Many stipulations were made for securing the integrity and independence of the Scottish kingdom; and all points, both of substance and of form, relating to that matter, were regulated with elaborate scrupulosity. But the event of a few weeks rendered all the painstaking and oath-taking of no effect. The Maid of Norway, having at length set sail for Britain, fell sick on her passage, and landing on one of the Orkney Islands, died there about the end of September.

#### THE DISPUTED SCOTCH SUCCESSION

The fatality which seemed to have pursued the royal family of Scotland for above a century past was certainly very remarkable. Within that period, it will be found, William the Lion and his posterity had made no fewer than

ten marriages, and yet there was not now a descendant of that king in existence.

In this failure of the line of William, the heir to the crown was to be sought for among the descendants of his younger brother, David, earl of Huntingdon. David, besides a son, who died without issue, left three daughters; the eldest, Margaret, married to Alan of Galloway; the second, Isabella, married to Robert de Bruce; the third, Ada, married to Henry de Hastings. Margaret's eldest daughter, Dervorgoil, married John de Baliol, lord of Barnard castle, by whom she had a son, John de Baliol; Robert de Bruce, earl of Carrick in right of his wife, was the son of Isabella; John de Hastings was the son of Ada. Baliol, therefore, was the grandson of the eldest daughter of David, earl of Huntingdon; Bruce and Hastings were the sons of his two younger daughters. According to the rule of descent as now established, no question about who had the right of succession could be raised in such a case; the descendant of the elder daughter, however remote, would be preferred to the descendant of the younger daughter, however near; and, indeed, even in that age, this rule seems to have been all but universally recognised. Still the point was not so distinctly settled that a debate might not be raised on it.

When the death of the queen first became known, it was certain that a state of circumstances had arisen in which everything was to be feared for the national independence from the ambition of the English king. The news, therefore, spread universal consternation throughout Scotland.

According to one account, it was now that an embassy to Edward, soliciting his advice and mediation, was sent by the estates of Scotland. From what immediately followed, it does appear probable that some such application may have been made by the Scots. Upon this supposition we can most easily account for the invitation which Edward addressed to their nobility and clergy to meet him at Norham, a town on the English side of the Tweed, and the readiness with which they obeyed his summons. The conference took place on the 10th of May, 1291. Here Edward distinctly announced that he proposed to regulate the succession to the throne of Scotland as superior and lord paramount of that kingdom, and insisted upon their recognition of his title as such, before any other business should be proceeded with.

Little doubt can be entertained that many of the persons present were perfectly prepared for all this, but it took a part of the assembly by surprise; and at length one voice ventured to respond that no answer could be made to the demand that had been addressed to them while the throne was vacant. "By holy Edward!" cried the English king—"by holy Edward! whose crown I wear, I will vindicate my just rights, or perish in the attempt!" At last the meeting was adjourned to the 2d of June. Edward had already issued writs to his barons and other military tenants in the northern counties, commanding them to assemble at Norham on the 3d of the same month, with horses, arms, and all their powers.

The meeting of the 2d of June took place on a green plain called Holywell Haugh, near Upsettlington, on the north bank of the Tweed, opposite to Norham castle, and within the territory of Scotland. Among those present were no fewer than eight persons who, under various titles, laid claim to the crown. One of these was Robert de Bruce, lord of Annandale. Turning first to him, Robert Burnel, bishop of Bath and chancellor of England, demanded whether he acknowledged Edward as lord paramount of Scotland, and whether he was willing to ask and receive judgment from him in that character. Bruce, says the official record of the proceedings, definitively, expressly, publicly, and openly declared his assent. The other seven com-

[1291 A.D.]

petitors afterwards did the same. Next day, John de Baliol and another competitor, making ten in all, appeared and followed their example. "The whole form of this business," as Lord Hailes remarks, "appears to have been preconcerted."

There were probably few of the assembled nobility and clergy that were not the sworn adherents of one or other of the competitors; they were divided into the Bruce party and the Baliol party, and they were of course severally ready to follow in whatever direction their chiefs might lead them. With regard, again, to the two great claimants of the crown themselves, if either consented to submit to the arbitration of Edward, it is obvious that his rival had no alternative but to acquiesce, unless he were prepared to resign all hope and chance of success. The true explanation, however, of Baliol's absence on the first day of the meeting probably is that he sought, perhaps in concert with Edward, to throw upon his opponent the odium of taking the first step in the unpopular course of surrendering the national independence. There is reason to believe that Edward had, from the first, determined that Baliol should have the crown, and that all the anxious and protracted deliberation he affected to give to the subject was merely so much hollow formality. Of the other claimants who presented themselves, most seem to have been brought forward only to give some chance of dividing any opposition that might eventually be made to the successful candidate, or even, it may be, with the object of leaving the question of the succession to the Scottish crown still open, if any casualty should remove either of the two principal competitors before Edward's designs for the complete subjection of the country should be matured. The union of the whole island under one sceptre was evidently the grand scheme upon which he had set his heart, and which inspired and directed his whole policy. At first he hoped to accomplish his object, in so far as Scotland was concerned, by the marriage of his eldest son with the queen of that country; when the death of Margaret defeated this arrangement, he could not for the present proceed to the attainment of his end by so direct a path; but that end was still the same, and was never lost sight of for a moment.

The proceedings at Norham, on the 3d of June, were terminated by a unanimous agreement that a body of 104 commissioners should be appointed to examine the cause, and report to Edward; forty being named by Baliol, the same number by Bruce, and the remainder by Edward himself, who was, moreover, empowered to add to the commission as many more persons as he chose. On the 11th of the same month the regents of Scotland made a solemn surrender of the kingdom into the hands of the English king, and the keepers of castles made a like surrender of their trusts; in both cases, however, on the condition that Edward should make full restitution in two months from the date of his award in the cause of the succession.



EDWARD I OF ENGLAND  
(1239-1307)



On the 15th, Bruce and his son, with Baliol and many of the principal Scottish barons, swore fealty to Edward. One churchman only, the bishop of Sodor, presented himself to perform the disgraceful ceremony. The peace of the king of England, as lord paramount of Scotland, was then proclaimed, and the assembly finally adjourned to the 2d of August. Edward himself, in the mean time, made a progress through Scotland, calling upon persons of all ranks, from bishops and earls to burgesses, to sign the rolls of homage as his vassals. When the commissioners met at Berwick, on the 3d of August, twelve claimants of the crown presented themselves. Soon afterwards a thirteenth was added, in the person of King Eric of Norway. All of them, however, with the exception of Baliol, Bruce, and Hastings, withdrew their pretensions before any decision was pronounced. In fact, none of them had any ground whatever on which to come in before the posterity of David, earl of Huntingdon.

The final decision of the cause did not take place till the following year. Edward summoned a parliament, to meet at Berwick on the 15th of October, 1292. Here Baliol and Bruce were fully heard in defence of their respective claims; upon which the assembly came unanimously to the conclusion that, by the laws and usages of both kingdoms, in every heritable succession, the more remote in one degree lineally descended from the eldest sister was preferable to the nearer in degree issuing from the second sister—thus declaring, by implication, against the claim of Bruce as opposed to that of Baliol. In another meeting, on the 6th of November, Edward formally pronounced his decision—that Bruce should take nothing in the competition with Baliol.

Bruce and Hastings now demanded each a third of the kingdom, on the ground that it was a divisible inheritance; but this doctrine the assembly unanimously rejected. Finally, on the 17th of the same month, in the great hall of the castle of Berwick, Edward gave judgment that John de Baliol should have seisin of the kingdom of Scotland.<sup>1</sup> But again, at this the termination of these proceedings, as a year and a half before at the commencement, the English king solemnly protested that the judgment he had thus given should not impair his claim to the property of Scotland. On the 19th the regents of Scotland and the governors of castles were ordered to surrender their respective trusts to the new king; and the same day the great seal that had been used by the regency was broken into four parts, and the pieces deposited in the treasury of England, "in testimony, to future ages, of England's right of superiority over Scotland." The next day Baliol swore fealty to Edward at Norham. On the 30th he was solemnly crowned at Scone. Soon after he passed into England, and on the 26th of December did homage to Edward for his kingdom at Newcastle: and thus finished the first act of this extraordinary drama.

#### QUARREL WITH FRANCE

Events that unexpectedly arose now called away the English king to another scene. Edward's progress at home had not been viewed without serious alarm abroad. The subjugation of Wales and Scotland, by leaving

[<sup>1</sup> "All through the great suit," says Tout,<sup>b</sup> "Edward's conduct had been singularly just and moderate. No one nowadays would deny that his decision was based on sound law. If Edward showed a little too much eagerness in taking advantage of the helplessness of the Scots to entrap them into an acknowledgment of his supremacy, it should be remembered that he thought he was advancing no new claim, but one constantly upheld by his predecessors."]

[1292-1293 A.D.]

him master of the whole island of Great Britain, rendered him most formidable to all his continental neighbours, and to none so dangerous as to France, where there was a source of dissension ever open, and where the English had a footing that enabled them at all times to carry the war into the heart of the country. On former occasions, several of the French kings had given countenance and encouragement to both Scotch and Welsh; but now Philip the Fair thought that the best thing to do was to exert all his strength, and drive the English from what was left of their continental dominion. The moment seemed favourable; Edward was absorbed by his great project; and as for the justice of the undertaking, had not Philip as good a right to gather up the scattered fragments of France, and to make of them a united and powerful kingdom, as Edward had to seize and consolidate the ancient independent states of Great Britain?

The English sovereign, however, was too politic not to see and provide for these schemes: he had long watched Philip with a jealous eye, and while he wisely kept his own armies at home, he had courted alliances abroad, and laboured to raise barriers against Philip's ambition. In the south, by means of presents and flattering assurances, he had won over the powerful count of Savoy; in the north, he had a good understanding with the emperor, whom he afterwards subsidised; he had married his daughter Margaret to Henry, count of Bar, whose territories gave an easy access into France on the east; and, at a later period, he made an alliance with Guy, count of Flanders. Matters were in this state when a paltry broil gave rise to sanguinary hostilities.<sup>d</sup>

Some English and Norman sailors fell into a quarrel while filling their water casks near Bayonne (1292), in the course of which one of the Normans was killed. The English authorities at Bayonne refused to interfere, and the Normans in revenge set upon an English ship outward bound from Bayonne and hanged a merchant of Bayonne from the yard-arm with a dog tied to his feet. Reprisals followed; the mariners of the Cinque Ports took up the quarrel, and hanged nearly every Norman they could lay hands on. Seamen of other nations took sides; the Gascons and Hollanders allied themselves with the English, while the French and Genoese took up the quarrel of the Normans. The two nations were thus practically at war before their kings had broken the peace. A fierce sea fight, in which a fleet of two hundred Norman and French ships was defeated by a combined English and Gascon force off Saint-Mahé in Brittany in 1293, at length aroused Philip to the point of action.<sup>a</sup>

Philip, himself enraged, and borne forward to the accomplishment of his favourite project by the universal wrath of the nation, then declared his determined enmity. He pretended that he could punish Edward as duke of Aquitaine, in which character he was a vassal of the French crown. He therefore caused a summons to be issued by his judges ordering the "duke of Aquitaine" to appear at Paris after the feast of Christmas, and answer for his offences against his suzerain. Edward sent a bishop, and then his own brother Edmund, to negotiate. Edmund appears to have been a very believing, simple personage; for, crediting Philip's assertion that he wanted no acquisition of territory, but merely a striking show of satisfaction to his own injured honour, he consented to surrender Gascony for forty days, at the end of which it was to be faithfully restored to the English king. Upon this surrender, which in some cases gave Philip a military possession of the province, the summons against Edward was withdrawn, and the French king declared himself satisfied. When the forty days had elapsed, Edward demanded repossession, which, as a matter of course, was refused to him.

Philip pronounced a judgment of forfeiture because Edward had not presented himself as a vassal ought. De Nesle, the constable of France, was sent to seize some of Edward's cities and towns; and he succeeded in several instances, because the nobles declared against the English. Soon after the feast of Easter Philip again summoned Edward to plead as duke of Aquitaine before his peers of France, and, upon his non-attendance, he declared him contumacious and disseised of all his lands in France.

Edward now prepared to plead, but it was with the sword. Having formally renounced the homage of the French king, he got ready a powerful fleet and army; but he was detained for several weeks by contrary winds, and while he lay at Portsmouth the Welsh, who thought he was gone, broke out into a general insurrection, to which it seems probable that Philip was no stranger. Detained at home by this circumstance, Edward despatched a small force to Gascony, and gave commission to his ships to plunder the French coast, upon which a number of fierce sea battles were fought, the victory falling almost invariably to the English. Edward himself turned with his usual rapidity and vigour against the Welsh, who had taken many castles and towns, and driven the English across the marches with dreadful loss. It took him some months to suppress this bold struggle for independence: he carried on the war through all the severities of winter, suffering great hardships and encountering many personal dangers; but in the following spring (1295) the Welsh once more fell beneath the mighty weight of his arms and policy, and Madoc, their brave leader, surrendered to the conqueror.

When Edward rode a conqueror from the mountains of Wales, he thought that he should at last be allowed to proceed to France and punish what he considered the execrable perfidy of Philip; but the spirit of liberty was again awake in the mountains of Scotland, and he was once more compelled to forego his continental expedition. He, however, sent his brother Edmund with a small force to Guienne. Edmund died soon after landing; but the earl of Lincoln, who succeeded to his command, drove the French from most of the towns they had occupied. These successes, however, were not lasting: Charles de Valois, Philip's brother, recovered those places; and the count d'Artois, the king's uncle, taking the command of a numerous and excellent army, beat the English in several encounters, and finally expelled them from nearly all the country, with the exception of a few maritime towns.

#### THE SCOTCH REVOLT

Scarcely had Baliol been fairly seated on his vassal throne when he was made to feel all the dependence and degradation of his position. In the course of the following year he was repeatedly called upon to submit to the annoyance and intolerable indignity of appearing in the English courts to answer as a defendant in all sorts of causes. Such treatment could have had only one object, and, if it had been tamely acquiesced in, one effect—to make the menial king utterly contemptible in the eyes of his subjects. The tyranny was so unrelentingly persisted in, and carried so far, that if he had the spirit of a worm it must have roused him at last. An appeal respecting the succession to some lands in Fife was the case in which his patience gave way.<sup>d</sup>

He took no notice of the first summons to appear and plead his cause, and when he did finally attend he answered with unwonted boldness that he was king of Scotland and could make no reply without the advice of his



[1294-1296 A.D.]

people. A decree was therefore entered against him, and he was further commanded to turn over three Scottish castles to Edward until he made satisfaction for his "contempt and disobedience." Baliol prayed for and secured a suspension of the sentence, and meanwhile the French war broke out.<sup>a</sup>

The opportunity was too tempting a one not to be seized by Baliol for a strenuous effort to cast off the yoke. Hitherto the nation had lain, as it were, stunned and in despair. Its old spirit now began to awaken as a new dawn of hope appeared. The first measures, however, were cautiously taken. A parliament, which met at Scone in the latter part of the year 1294, directed that all the Englishmen maintained at the court should be dismissed; and then appointed a council without whose advice the king was restricted from performing any public act.

The suspicions of Edward were excited by these proceedings. He required that Berwick, Roxburgh, and Jedburgh should be delivered to the bishop of Carlisle, to remain in his hands during the war between England and France. With this demand the Scottish government deemed it prudent to comply, although they were at the moment negotiating an alliance with the French king. This French treaty—"the groundwork," observes Lord Hailes, "of many more, equally honourable and ruinous to Scotland"—was signed at Paris on the 23d of October, 1295. By it the king of Scots, "grievously offended at the undutiful behaviour of Edward to the king of France, his liege lord," engaged to assist Philip in his wars with his whole power and at his own charges. Towards the end of March, 1296, accordingly, a Scottish army, consisting of forty thousand foot soldiers and five hundred cavalry, invaded Cumberland, and, laying waste the country as they proceeded, marched to Carlisle and attacked that place. Here, however, they were repulsed. Another inroad, which they made into Northumberland, was not more successful. Meanwhile Edward himself, at the head of a great army, was already at the borders.

The royal army marched direct upon the town of Berwick. A strong garrison, composed of the men of life, defended the town, besides a smaller force that held the castle. The English king commenced the attack at once by sea and land: of his ships, three were burned and the rest compelled to retire; but all resistance soon gave way before the impetuous onset of the soldiery; Edward himself was the first over the dike that defended the town. In the devastation and carnage that followed no quarter was given: the inhabitants, with the garrison, were indiscriminately butchered. The massacre was continued for two days.

Berwick was taken on the 30th of March. On the 5th of April, a bold ecclesiastic, Henry, abbot of Arbroath (Aberbrothock), a messenger from the Scottish king, delivered to Edward the solemn renunciation of Baliol's allegiance and fealty. "What a piece of madness in the foolish traitor!" exclaimed Edward, when the message had been delivered; "since he will not come to us, we will go to him." A pause of a few weeks, to make the blow the surer, did not prevent this threat from being both speedily and effectually executed. Earl Warenne was first sent forward with a chosen body of troops to recover the castle of Dunbar, which the countess of March had delivered to the Scots, while her husband, by whom it was held, served in the army of Edward. The Scottish army, in full strength, advanced to its relief, when they were engaged by Warenne and completely routed, with the loss of ten thousand men. This action was fought on the 28th of April. The castle then surrendered at discretion.

In the space of about two months all the principal strongholds of the kingdom were in Edward's hand, and the conquest of the country was complete. A message now arrived from Baliol, offering submission and imploring peace. Edward, in reply, desired him to repair to the castle of Brechin, where the bishop of Durham would announce to him the terms on which his surrender would be accepted. Soon after, Baliol laid down his kingly state in a ceremonial of the last degree of baseness and humiliation. The old accounts differ as to the exact date, and also as to the scene of this penance; but it was most probably performed on the 7th of July, and, as the tradition of the neighbourhood still reports, in the churchyard of Strathcathro, in Angus. Edward was at this time at Montrose. He proceeded northward as far as Elgin—the nobility, wherever he passed, crowding in to swear fealty and to abjure the French alliance. It was on his return from this triumphant progress that he ordered the famous stone on which the Scottish kings had been wont to be crowned to be removed from the abbey of Scone and conveyed to Westminster, in testimony, says an English contemporary chronicler, of the conquest and surrender of the kingdom.

Edward then proceeded to finish his work, by settling the government of the conquered country. Here his measures were characterised by great prudence and moderation. He ordered the forfeited estates of the clergy to be restored. He even allowed most of the subordinate civil functionaries who had held office under Baliol to retain possession of their places. He left the various jurisdictions of the country in general in the same hands as before. The chief castles in the southern part of the kingdom, however, he intrusted to English captains; and he also placed some of his English subjects in command over certain of the more important districts. Finally, he appointed John de Warenne, earl of Surrey, governor, Hugh de Cressingham treasurer, and William Ormsby justiciar, to exercise the supreme authority.

#### THE REVOLT OF WILLIAM WALLACE

But although Edward had put down the rebellion of the Scots, he had not subdued their spirit of resistance. Within a few months the country was again in insurrection. The last and all preceding attempts to throw off the foreign yoke under which the kingdom groaned had been made under the direction of the government; there was no longer any native government, but a great leader of the people had now stepped forth from their own ranks. This was the renowned William Wallace, the second son of a knight of ancient family, Sir Malcolm Wallace, of Elderslie, in Renfrewshire. Wallace had all the qualities of a popular hero—a strength and stature corresponding to his daring courage; and also it cannot be doubted, from the known history of his career, as well as from his traditionary fame, many intellectual endowments of a high order—decision, military genius, the talent of command, a stirring though rude eloquence, and in every way a wonderful power of reaching the hearts of men and drawing them along with him. Above all, an enthusiastic patriotism and a fierce and unextinguishable hatred of the English dominion were passions so strong in Wallace that while he lived, be the hour as dark as it might, all felt that the cause of the national independence never could be wholly lost.

Wallace is first mentioned in the month of May, 1297. At this time he was merely the captain of a small band of marauders, most of them probably outlaws like himself, who were accustomed to infest the English quarters

[1297 A.D.]

by predatory attacks. Their numbers, however, rapidly grew as reports of their successful exploits were spread abroad. Suddenly we find the robber-chief transformed into the national champion, joined by some of the chief persons in the land, and heading an armed revolt against the government. The first person of note who joined Wallace was Sir William Douglas. He had commanded in the castle of Berwick when it was taken the preceding year by Edward, and after his surrender had been liberated upon swearing fealty to the English king. Disregarding this oath, he now armed his vassals and openly went over to Wallace. The united chiefs immediately marched upon Seone, the seat of the government. Earl Warenne was at this time absent in England, and Ormsby, the justiciar, who was acting as his lieutenant, with difficulty saved his life by flight; but much booty and many prisoners fell into the hands of the insurgents, and the English government was, in fact, by this bold and brilliant exploit, for the moment overthrown.

Many persons of note now crowded to the once more uplifted standard of freedom and independence. But no accession was more important or more gladly welcomed than that of the young Robert Bruce, the son of Robert de Bruce who had married the countess of Carrick, and the grandson of him who had been a competitor with Baliol for the crown. A few years before this Bruce's father had resigned the earldom of Carrick, which he held in right of his wife, to his son; and the latter now commanded a territory reaching from the Firth of Clyde to the Solway. The course taken by Baliol had hitherto naturally determined the conduct and position of the rival family. So long as Baliol had stood, even nominally, at the head of the patriotic cause, the Bruces were almost necessarily on the other side. In the last days of Baliol's reign the Scottish government issued an order confiscating the estates of all partisans of England, and of all neutrals—which was principally aimed at the house of Bruce; and a grant of their estate of Annandale was made to Comyn, earl of Buchan, who actually took possession of the family castle of Lochmaben. This he did not long retain; but the wrong was one which in that fierce age never could be forgiven. Allowance must be made for these personal resentments and rivalries, and the opposition into which men were thereby thrown, in passing judgment upon the conduct of many of the actors in this turbulent and bewildering drama.

Bruce, eventually the great liberator of his country and restorer of the Scottish monarchy, makes his first appearance on the scene soon after the fatal fight of Dunbar, in the unpatriotic part of a commissioner empowered by the conqueror to receive into favour the people of Carrick. He was at this time only in his twenty-second year. His heart, however, was probably already drawing him, through doubts and misgivings, to the cause which he was at a future day so gloriously to illustrate. Now that Baliol was removed, the time for Bruce to show himself seemed to have come. Edward, it would appear, was not without some suspicion of what his inclinations were. He therefore had summoned him to Carlisle, and made him renew, on the sword of Becket, his oaths of allegiance and fidelity. In the national enthusiasm, however, excited by the first success of Wallace, he could restrain himself no longer. "I trust," he said, "that the pope will absolve me from oaths extorted by force;" and so, breaking from his bonds, he joined the army of Wallace.

But, in that camp, jealousies and dissensions were already actively at work and disorganising everything. Edward was embarking for Flanders when he received intelligence of the new Scottish revolt. The military force of the kingdom to the north of the Trent was instantly called into array by



the earl of Surrey; and as soon as the men could be collected, Sir Henry Percy and Sir Robert Clifford were sent forward to meet the insurgents at the head of an army of forty thousand foot and three hundred horse. They found the Scots in nearly equal numbers, posted in a strong position in the neighbourhood of the town of Irvine, in Ayrshire. But no acknowledged leader controlled the irregular congregation of chiefs who had crowded to the standard that Wallace had raised; his authority was disowned, or but reluctantly submitted to, by many of the proud knights and barons, who never

before had obeyed a plebeian general. In this miserable state of affairs, it appeared to all who had anything to lose that the wisest plan was to make their peace with the government before it should be too late. All the chief associates of Wallace, accordingly, including Bruce, and even Sir William Douglas, the first who had joined him, laid down their arms and made submission to Edward. Only one baron, Sir Andrew Moray of Bothwell, continued to adhere to Wallace, who withdrew to the north at the head of a force that was still numerous and formidable.

No further effort seems to have been made by the English government to put down the insurrection for several months. In the mean while the army of Wallace was continually receiving accessions. By the beginning of September he had driven the English from most of the strongholds to the north of the Forth, and was engaged in besieging the castle of Dundee. While there, he received information that an English army was marching upon Stirling. Leaving the siege to be continued by the citizens of Dundee, he led his whole force towards Stirling, and succeeded, by rapid marches, in reaching the banks

of the Forth opposite to that town, before the English had arrived. He immediately drew up his army so as to be partly concealed behind the neighbouring high grounds.

The English army, commanded by the earl of Surrey, soon appeared on the other side of the river; it is said to have consisted of one thousand horsemen and fifty thousand foot. On its being perceived how Wallace was posted, it was resolved to offer him terms before risking an engagement; but he refused to enter into any negotiation. That night no movement was made. Early the following morning (the 11th of September) the English began to pass over by the bridge—a narrow wooden structure—along which, even with no impediment or chance of interruption of any kind to retard them, so numerous a force could not have been led in many hours. Wallace waited till about half the English were passed over; then, detaching a part of his forces to take possession of the extremity of the bridge, as soon as he perceived the



[1297-1298 A.D.]

communication by this means effectually cut off, he rushed down upon the portion of the enemy who had thus put themselves in his power, as they were still forming, and in a moment threw them into an inextricable confusion. Many thousands of the English were slain or driven into the water. No prisoners, indeed, seem to have been taken; and nearly all the English that had crossed the river must therefore have been destroyed. Surrey himself had not passed over; but after the fortune of the day became clearly irrecoverable, charging Twenge to occupy the castle of Stirling with what remains of the army he could collect, he mounted his horse and rode, without stopping, to Berwick. Even the portion of the army that had remained on the south side of the river seems to have been in great part dispersed. The loss of the Scots was trifling; the only man of note that fell was Sir Andrew Moray.

The great result of the victory was nothing less than the almost complete liberation of the country once more from the English dominion. The castles of Edinburgh, Dundee, Roxburgh, and Berwick all immediately surrendered; and in a short time there was not a fortress, from one end of Scotland to the other, in the possession of the English king. Wallace soon after even invaded England, and for some time maintained his army in Cumberland—a movement to which he was partly induced by a severe famine that now arose in Scotland, where unfavourable seasons had conspired with the waste of war to afflict the soil.

Thus was Scotland again lost by Edward, even more suddenly than it had been won. He was still detained in Flanders by the war in which he had engaged with the French king for the recovery of Guienne, while his conquest nearer home was thus wrested out of his hands. It appears that strenuous efforts were made by Philip to have the Scots included in the benefit of the treaty of peace, the truce preliminary to which was agreed upon in October of this year (1297). But Edward would hear of no terms for those whom he called revolted subjects and traitors.

### *The Battle of Falkirk*

Edward returned to England about the middle of March, 1298, and instantly summoned the barons, and other military tenants, to reassemble at York on the feast of Pentecost. With this immense army Edward proceeded to Roxburgh. From this point he advanced, in the beginning of June, along the east coast—a fleet with supplies for the army having been sent forward to the Firth of Forth; but for several weeks no enemy, scarcely even any inhabitants, were to be seen, and the invaders could only take a useless revenge in wasting an already deserted country.

The Scots meanwhile, under the direction of Wallace, had been collecting their strength in the interior; and many of the chief nobility, including Bruce, were now assembled again around the great national leader. Edward soon became involved in very serious difficulties; his ships were detained by contrary winds; and an alarming mutiny broke out in the camp, originating in a quarrel between the English and the Welsh soldiers, the latter of whom were at one time on the point of withdrawing and joining the Scots. No news of the ships arriving, however, the scarcity of provisions soon became so distressing that a retreat to Edinburgh was resolved upon, when information was received that the Scottish army was encamped not far off in the wood of Falkirk. "Thanks be to God!" exclaimed Edward, "who hitherto hath delivered me from every danger; they shall not need to follow me; I will forthwith go and meet them."

That night the army lay in the fields, the king himself sleeping on the ground. A kick from his horse, which stood beside him in the night, broke two of his ribs; and in the first confusion occasioned by the accident a cry arose that the king was seriously wounded or killed—that there was treason in the camp. Edward immediately, disregarding the pain he suffered, mounted his horse, and, as it was now dawn, gave orders to continue the march. Soon the whole Scotch army was descried forming, on a stony field, at the side of a small eminence in the neighbourhood of Falkirk. Wallace divided the infantry of his army, which was greatly inferior in numbers to that of the English, into four circular bodies, armed with lances, which the men protruded obliquely as they knelt with their backs against each other; the archers were placed in the intermediate spaces; the horse, of which there were only one thousand, were drawn up at some distance in the rear. Edward's cavalry were ranged in the front of his battle, in three lines.

The attack was made at the same time by the first of these, led by Bigod, earl marshal, and the earls of Hereford and Lincoln; and by the second, under the lead of the bold bishop of Durham. The shock was gallantly met by the Scottish infantry, and for some time they stood their ground firmly. The cavalry, however, whether dismayed by the immense disparity between the numbers of the enemy and their own, or, as has been conjectured, from treason on the part of their commanders, fled without striking a blow; and, thus left without support against the repeated charges of the English horse, the lancers and archers also at length gave way, and the rout became complete. The battle of Falkirk was fought on the 22d of July, 1298. It is said that fifteen thousand Scots fell on this fatal day. On the English side the loss was inconsiderable. Wallace retreated with the remains of his army to Stirling, whither he was pursued by the English; but when they arrived he was gone, and the town was found reduced to ashes. The victorious invaders now carried fire and sword through the country in all directions. The whole of Fifeshire was laid waste and given up to military execution. The city of St. Andrews, which was found deserted, was set on fire and burned to the ground. Perth was burned by the inhabitants themselves on the approach of the English. Edward, however, was speedily obliged to leave the country from the impossibility of finding the means of subsisting his troops.

#### EDWARD'S FINANCIAL MEASURES

The expensive wars of Wales, Scotland, and Guienne had caused Edward to oppress the English people with levies and taxes; in the raising of which he had not always respected the constitutional charter, while on some occasions he had recourse to artifices similar to those which had succeeded so badly with his father, Henry III. At one time he pretended that he had again taken the cross, and thus obtained the tenth of all church benefices for six years. A few years after this he seized the moneys deposited in the churches and monasteries, and kept the greater part for his own uses, promising, however, to pay it back some time or other. His financial proceedings with the church show that times were materially altered, for the main weight of taxation was thrown upon that body. After obtaining a reluctant grant from the lords and knights of the shire of a tenth on lay property, he demanded from the clergy a half of their entire incomes. Here, for the first time, he encountered a stern opposition on the part of the bishops, abbots, and common clergy; but they were bullied into compliance.



[1294-1297 A.D.]

This was in 1294. In the following year, having obtained a very liberal grant from parliament, he exacted a fourth from the churchmen, who again were obstinate, and obliged him, in the end, to be satisfied with a tenth. Besides these burdens, the church was sorely racked by the king's purveyors and commissaries, who, particularly during the more active parts of the Scotch war, continually emptied the store-houses, granaries, farm-yards, and larders, and carried off all the vehicles, horses, and other animals, for the transport of army stores, inasmuch that the poor abbots and priors complained that they had scarcely a mule left in their stables upon which to go their spiritual rounds. At last they applied to the pope for protection, and Boniface VIII granted them a bull, ordaining that the clergy should not vote away their revenues without the express permission of the holy see.

But the pope was engaged in many troubles; the bull, which applied equally to all Christian countries, was strenuously opposed in France by Philip the Fair; and in the following year, 1297, he found himself obliged to publish a second bull, which explained away and stultified the first; for it provided that whenever the safety of the kingdom required it, churchmen must pay their aids; and it left to the king and his council the right of deciding on the necessity. Before this second bull arrived, the English clergy, fancying that they were well supported by the previous document, met, and boldly refused some of Edward's demands; upon which he outlawed the whole body, both regular and secular, and seized their goods and chattels, not leaving bishop, parish priest, abbot, or monk so much as bread to eat or a bed to lie upon. As there were no Becketts in the land, these measures produced a general submission to the king's arbitrary will, even before the arrival of the explanatory bull.

It was far otherwise when the king laid his hand on the trading classes: they had borne a great deal in the way of tallages and increased export duties; but when he seized all the wool and hides that were ready for shipping, and sold them for his own profit, a universal and loud outcry was raised, notwithstanding his assurances that he would faithfully pay back the amount. The merchants assembled—the rich burghers, the landed proprietors of all classes consulted together; and their consultations were encouraged by some of the greatest of the nobles, who were not so blinded by the career of conquest and glory in which the king was leading them as to be neglectful of their more immediate interests, or indifferent to those violent inroads on the national rights.<sup>1</sup>

Towards the end of February, 1297, Edward felt the effect of these deliberations. He had collected two armies, one of which was to go to Guienne, the other into Flanders, when the earl of Hereford, the constable, and the earl of Norfolk, the marshal of England, both refused to quit the country. Turning to the marshal, the king exclaimed, "By the everlasting God, sir earl, you shall go or hang." "By the everlasting God, sir king, I will neither go nor hang!" and so saying, Norfolk withdrew with Hereford. Thirty bannerets and fifteen hundred knights immediately followed the marshal and the constable, and the king was left almost alone. An incautious step at

<sup>1</sup> Hallam doubts whether the cities and boroughs continued to sit in parliament by their representatives under Edward I. "The revolutionary character of Montfort's parliament in the 49th of Henry III would sufficiently account both for the appearance of representatives from a democracy so favourable to that bold reformer, and for the equality of power with which it was probably designed to invest them. But whether in the more peaceable times of Edward I the citizens or burgesses were recognised as essential parties to every legislative measure, may, as I have shown, be open to much doubt."—HALLAM'S *Supplementary Notes*. Note 180.

this moment might have cost him his crown or his life, but Edward was a wonderful master of his passions when necessary, and his craft and policy were fully equal to his merits as a warrior. He knew that Winchelsey, archbishop of Canterbury, and the clergy gave great weight to the present opposition, and these he detached by blandishments and promises. He knew that his brilliant exploits in war had endeared him to the unthinking multitude, and he also knew how to touch their hearts.

The measure he adopted was singularly dramatic: he stood forth before the people of London, mounted on a platform in front of Westminster hall, nobody being near him save his son Edward, the archbishop of Canterbury, and the earl of Warwick: he told the people that nobody grieved more than he did for the burdensome taxes laid upon his dear subjects, but this burden was one of absolute necessity to preserve not only his crown but their blood from the Welsh, the Scots, and the French. Then he added: "I am going to expose myself to all the dangers of war for your sakes. If I return alive, I will make you amends for the past; but if I fall, here is my dear son, place him on my throne, his gratitude will be the rewarder of your fidelity!" Here he stopped, and a few tears rolled down his iron cheek. The archbishop wept; the spectators were tenderly affected, and, after a brief pause, the air was rent with shouts of applause and loyalty. This display of enthusiasm gave the king great encouragement, and having issued writs for the protection of church property, and appointed his former opponent, the archbishop of Canterbury, chief of the council of regency under Prince Edward, he went to embark for Flanders with such troops as he had kept together.

But a few days after he was brought to a halt at Winchester, by reports of the hostile spirit of the nobles; and while in that city, a remonstrance, in the name of the archbishops, bishops, abbots, and priors, the earls, barons, and commons of England, was presented to him. After stating in broad terms that they were not bound to accompany the king to Flanders—a country where neither they nor any of their ancestors had ever done service for the kings of England—and that even if they were inclined to take a part in that expedition the poverty to which he had reduced them rendered them unable to do so, they went on to tell him that he had violated their charters and liberties; that his "evil toll" (so they called the export duty on wool) was excessive and intolerable; and that his present expedition to the Continent was ill-advised, seeing that his absence would leave the country open to the incursions of the Scots and the Welsh. The king evaded any very direct answer, and relying on the favourable disposition of the common people, he had the courage to depart in the very midst of these discontents.

#### EXPEDITION TO FLANDERS

He landed near Sluys in the end of August: his plans were concerted with his usual sagacity; but coalitions are faithless and uncertain things, and he had in Philip the Fair an opponent as crafty, and, at the least, as unscrupulous as himself. These great kings had long struggled for possession of a young lady—Philippa, daughter of Guy, count of Flanders. As early as 1294 Edward had concluded a treaty of marriage, which was to unite the fair Fleming to the prince of Wales; but it was Philip's interest to prevent any close union between England and Flanders, and he resolved that the marriage should not take place. After many secret intrigues, which failed—as both the young lady and her father were bent on the English

[1297 A.D.]

union—the French king invited Count Guy to meet him at Corbeil, that he might consult him on matters of great importance. The count, who was a frank, honest old man, went, and took his countess with him; he was no sooner in his power than Philip harshly reproached him with the English treaty—told him that no vassal of the French crown, however great, could marry any of his children without the king's license—and then sent him and his wife prisoners to the tower in the Louvre.

This arbitrary and treacherous measure excited great disgust, and the better feeling of the French peers, and the remonstrances of a papal legate, forced Philip to liberate the old count and his countess. Before letting go his hold, however, he made Guy swear he would think no more of his English alliance. The count contracted the obligation; but this was not enough for the French king, who had broken too many oaths himself to have much reliance on those of other men: he demanded that Philippa should be placed in his hands as a hostage; and when that young lady was brought to Paris—and not before—her parents were liberated. As soon as Count Guy reached his own dominions, he made an affecting appeal to the pope: the church entered with some zeal into the case; but notwithstanding repeated threats of excommunication, Philip the Fair persisted in keeping his innocent hostage, who was not more than twelve years of age. At last the old count formally renounced his allegiance, defied his suzerain, and entered heart and soul into a league with the English king.

It was in consequence of this treaty, which was sworn to in the most solemn manner, that Edward went to Flanders after preparing a formidable alliance. The other chief members of the coalition were the emperor, the duke of Austria—who had both been subsidised by Edward—and the duke of Brabant and count of Bar, who were his own sons-in-law, by their marriage with the princesses Margaret and Eleanor of England. When the hired allies got Edward's money, they seem to have considered their part of the business as done; and no member of the coalition was very faithful or strenuous, except the unhappy count Guy. But the whole expedition became a series of misadventures, some of which were sufficiently disgraceful to the English conqueror. He had scarcely landed at Sluys, when the mariners of the Cinque Ports, and those of Yarmouth and other ports—between whom there were many rancorous old jealousies—quarrelled, and then fought as if they had been national enemies ranged under two opposite flags. On the Yarmouth side, five-and-twenty ships were burned and destroyed in this wild conflict. The king's land forces were scarcely in a better state of discipline, owing, probably, to the absence of most of the great officers whom they had been accustomed to obey. The disorders they committed did not tend to produce unanimity in the country.

The rich and populous cities of Flanders were, in fact, as jealous of each other and split into almost as many factions as the little Italian republics of the Middle Ages. Philip the Fair had a strong party among them, and that active sovereign had greatly increased it, and weakened his enemies, by marching into the Low Countries at the head of sixty thousand men and gaining a great victory at Furnes, before Edward could arrive. The French occupied many of the towns; and Lille, Courtrai, Ypres, Bruges, and Damme were either taken, or given up to them soon after the landing of the English. Edward drove them out of Damme, and might have done the same at Bruges, had it not been that his English and the Flemings who were serving with them fell into strife, and fought about the division of the spoils of the town, which they had not yet taken. Soon after this he went into winter quarters



at Ghent, and there deadly feuds broke out between the townspeople and his troops: seven hundred of the latter were killed in a tumult, in which Edward's own life was endangered.

#### THE CONFIRMATION OF THE CHARTERS

Spring approached (1298), but it brought no news of the inactive members of the coalition; and as Edward's presence was much wanted at home, he eagerly listened to overtures from Philip, concluded a truce for two years, and, leaving Count Guy to shift for himself, sailed, somewhat dishonoured, for England. But his English subjects had not waited for this moment of humiliation to curb his power. As soon as he set sail for Flanders the preceding year, the constable and earl marshal, with many other nobles, in presence of the lord treasurer and of the judges, forbade the officers of the exchequer to exact payment of certain taxes which had been laid on without proper consent of parliament. The citizens of London and of the other great trading towns made common cause with the barons; and, after issuing some orders which the exchequer durst not obey, and making some fruitless attempts at deception and evasion, Edward was obliged to send over from Ghent instructions to his son and the council of regency to bend before a storm which there was no opposing; and in the month of December, from the same city of Ghent, he was fain to grant, under the great seal, another confirmation of the two charters, together with a full confirmation of the important statute called *De Tallagio non Concedendo*, declaring that henceforth no tallage or aid should be levied without assent of the peers spiritual and temporal, the knights, burgesses, and other freemen of the realm, which had been passed in a parliament held by Prince Edward in the preceding September.

For many years parliament had exercised a salutary control in such matters; but this statute, for the first time, formally invested the representatives of the nation with the sole right of raising the supplies. In full parliament, which met at York in the month of May, some six weeks after the king's return, the earl of Hereford, the constable, and the earl of Norfolk, the marshal, demanded of him that he would ratify in person, and with proper solemnities, his recent confirmation of the charters. Edward said that it could not be now, as he must hasten to chastise the Scottish rebels; but he promised to do what was asked of him on his return from the north.

It will prevent confusion to bring these transactions to one point, without regard to the strict chronological order in which they occurred. In March, 1299, Edward met his parliament again at Westminster. The bloody laurels of Falkirk were fresh on his brow: he had all the prestige of recent success; but, undaunted by his glory and might, the barons required the fulfilment of his promises. He endeavoured to gain time, and when the lords urged him, he withdrew from parliament and got out of London secretly, and as if by stealth. But these earnest men would not be evaded: they followed him; and then the proud conqueror was compelled to make excuses. At last he granted the ratification so firmly demanded; but, with singular bad faith, he took parliament by surprise, and added a clause at the end of the document (a saving of the right of the crown) which utterly destroyed the value of the concession, and went to shake the very foundations of the Great Charter itself.

Upon this the mass of the barons returned suddenly to their homes. Edward was alarmed at their hostile countenance; but, fancying he could delude the plain citizens, he ordered the sheriffs of London to call a public

[1299-1305 A.D.]

meeting, and to read the new confirmation of the charters. The citizens met in St. Paul's churchyard, and listened with anxious ears: at every clause, except the last, they gave many blessings to the king; but when that last clause was read, the London burghers cursed as loud and as fast as they had blessed before. Edward took warning: he summoned the parliament to meet again shortly after Easter, and then he struck out the detested clause, and granted all that was asked of him in the forms prescribed. Hereford, the constable, died shortly after the ratification, but his principles had taken too deep a root to be much injured by the death of any one man, however great. In the course of three years the king artfully contrived to punish, on other charges, and impoverish many of the barons who had most firmly opposed him; but this measure only convinced men more than ever of the vital necessity of restricting his power.

In 1304 Edward arbitrarily sent to raise a tallage on all the cities and boroughs of his demesne; and in the following year he despatched secret envoys to the pope, to represent that the concessions he had made had been forced from him by a conspiracy of his barons, and to ask an absolution from his oaths and the engagements he had so repeatedly and solemnly contracted with his subjects. Notwithstanding Edward's instancing the case of his father, Henry III, who was absolved of his oaths to the earl of Leicester, the answer of Clement V was rather an evasive one. Thus, but slightly encouraged to perjury on the one hand, awed by the unanimity of the barons on the other, and then once more embarrassed by a rising of the patriots in Scotland, who never left him long in tranquil enjoyment of his usurpation, the mighty Edward was compelled to respect his engagements and the will of the nation. It required, indeed, an "intrepid patriotism" to contend with and finally control such a sovereign; and England never has produced any patriots to whom she owes more gratitude than to Humphrey Bohun, earl of Hereford, and Roger Bigod, earl of Norfolk. Little did the Scottish patriots surmise that, while they were contending for their own national liberties, they were securing those of England also.

## PEACE WITH FRANCE

The vision of the splendid inheritance of Eleanor of Aquitaine still haunted Edward's imagination. With such an opponent as Philip the Fair he could scarcely hope to recover all those states which the divorced wife of Louis VII conveyed to Henry II of England, but he was resolved to get back at least the country of Guienne. Having experienced the uncertainty of foreign coalitions, and having no great army of his own to spare for continental warfare, Edward determined to obtain his end by treating diplomatically with the French king, and sacrificing his faithful ally the count of Flanders.

In this he had more in view than the recovery of Guienne; for, as the price of his own treachery to Count Guy, he expected that Philip would be equally false to his treaty with the Scots, whom he had hurried into hostilities for his own purposes. Since Edward's campaign in Flanders, the arrogance and exactions of the French had almost destroyed their party in that country; and though they made a temporary conquest of it, the burghers of Ghent, Lille, Bruges, and the other free cities gave them a signal defeat in the battle of Courtrai, which was fought in the year 1302. Philip's cousin, the count d'Artois, commanded the French on this occasion; and, after his disgraceful defeat, all the Flemish towns threw off the French yoke, and elected John of

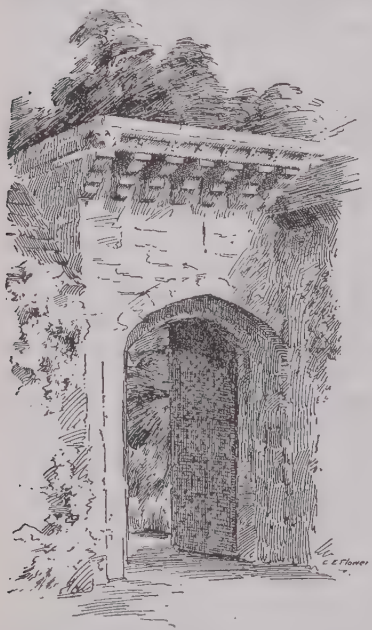
Namur to be their governor-general, for Count Guy had been once more entrapped by Philip, who kept him a close prisoner. The French king was now as anxious to recover Flanders as Edward was to keep Scotland and to get back Guienne.

It appears that the pope, who had been appealed to as mediator, first suggested, as a proper means of reconciling the two kings, that Edward, who had been for some years a widower, should marry Margaret, the sister of Philip; and that his eldest son, the prince of Wales, should be affianced to Isabella, or Isabeau, the daughter of that sovereign. This double marriage had been for some time under discussion, and had given scope to much mutual

deception. Each of the kings impudently affected a delicacy of conscience about abandoning his allies; and Edward stated (what was perfectly true) that he had pledged his soul and honour to the marriage between the prince of Wales and Philippa, the daughter of the unfortunate count of Flanders—that he, King Edward, had sworn upon the gospels to make neither peace nor truce with France unless it were conjointly with his ally, the count of Flanders. Philip the Fair, on his side, spoke of his allies, the Scots, and of the solemn obligations he had contracted with them; but each gracious king must have laughed at the other, and probably at himself, too, in making this interchange of scruples of conscience.

Edward married Margaret of France in September, 1299; and at the same time his son, who was thirteen years old, was contracted to Isabella, who was about six years old. A congress, held at Montreuil, which preceded this marriage, had settled that there should be peace between the French and English crowns; that the king of England should make satisfaction for the many French ships which his mariners had taken at the beginning of the war;

and that the king of France should place sundry towns in Gascony in the custody of the pope, to be by him held till the Guienne question should be adjusted. This treaty, however, had not been properly ratified; Philip the Fair quarrelled with the arbiter, and even instigated Sciarra Colonna to arrest and ill-treat Pope Boniface. Other circumstances had prevented the accommodation; but at last, on the 20th of May, 1303, the Treaty of Montreuil was ratified, a treaty of commerce was concluded between the two countries, and Edward recovered Guienne, for which the earl of Lincoln swore fealty and did homage in his name. In this treaty the Scots were not even mentioned. Philip, indeed, had bargained with Edward to abandon Scotland if he would abandon Flanders. The fate of Count Guy and of his innocent daughter was sad in the extreme. After keeping him four years in close prison, Philip the Fair liberated the count and sent him into Flanders to induce his own subjects to convert into a lasting peace a truce they then had with the French. The count went, and not succeeding in his mission he



HARNHAM GATE, SALISBURY  
(Entrance to Cathedral Close)



[1299-1302 A.D.]

honourably returned, as he had promised to do in that case, to Philip, who again committed him to prison. The poor old man died soon after at Compiègne. But neither the battle of Mons-en-Pévèle, nor a series of bloody engagements which followed it, could break the spirit of the free citizens of Flanders. "By St. Denis," cried Philip, "I believe it rains Flemings!"

At last he condescended to treat on moderate terms with the trading and manufacturing citizens; and about a year after the ratification of the treaty with Edward, he agreed to a truce for ten years. Robert, the eldest son of Count Guy, was then liberated, and entered on possession of Flanders; the body of the octogenarian state prisoner, which had been embalmed, was delivered up; and his younger son and many Flemish gentlemen recovered their liberty. But in this general release the fair Philippa was excepted; and she died of grief and captivity not long after, about two years before Prince Edward of Carnarvon completed his marriage with Isabella of France.

## THE SCOTCH WAR RENEWED

All this while Edward had never ceased to be occupied with his design of completing the subjugation of Scotland. The four years that followed the battle of Falkirk were productive of no important results. Wallace disappears from the scene after his great defeat. In his room, the barons appointed William Lamberton, bishop of St. Andrews, John de Soulis, John Comyn the younger, and Robert Bruce, earl of Carrick, guardians of the kingdom in the name of Baliol. This was indeed a strange union of all the great factions—Bruce acting in the name of Baliol, and associated in the same commission with Comyn, the only person who stood between him and the throne if Baliol should be set aside; for Comyn was the son of Baliol's sister Marjory, and, failing King John and his issue, the heir of right to the crown. John Baliol, who had remained a prisoner in the Tower of London since his abdication in 1296, was liberated by Edward on the intercession of Pope Boniface in 1299, and conveyed to his ancestral estate of Bailleul, in Normandy, where he lived in quiet till his death in 1314.

It was not till November, 1299, that the English king found leisure from his other affairs to set about preparations for the prosecution of the Scottish war, and the effort he then made ended in nothing; for after an army had been assembled at Berwick, in November, his barons, alleging his continued evasion of the charters, peremptorily refused to advance, and he was obliged to return home. The consequence was the capitulation of the castle of Stirling to a Scottish force that had been for some time besieging it. In the summer of 1300 Edward made an incursion into Annandale and Galloway; but it was attended with no result except the devastation of the former of these districts, and the formal and useless submission of the latter. On the 30th of October a truce with the Scots was concluded at Dumfries, to last till Whitsunday in the following year. Pope Boniface VIII now claimed Scotland as belonging of right to the Roman see, and forbade Edward to continue the war; but the English parliament as well as the English king denied the right.

The truce having expired, Edward, in the summer of 1301, again marched into Scotland. This campaign, however, was still more unproductive than the last; the Scots, as the English king advanced, laid the country waste before him, till at last, an early and severe winter coming on, he was compelled to retire. In January, 1302, by the mediation of France, he was induced to conclude another truce with the Scots, to endure till the 30th of November.

As soon as the truce had expired he prepared to renew the war. This time, however, instead of proceeding to Scotland in person, he sent thither John de Segrave, at the head of an army of twenty thousand men, mostly cavalry. The issue of this expedition was disastrous. Segrave, advancing towards Edinburgh, was suddenly attacked early in the morning of the 24th of February, 1303, in the neighbourhood of Roslin, by the Scottish forces under the command of Comyn, the guardian, and Sir Simon Fraser, and sustained a total defeat.

The termination of the dispute with France now left Edward free to turn with his whole power to the Scottish war. The Treaty of Montreuil was ratified at Paris, as above related, on the 20th of May; on the 21st of that month the English king was with his army at Roxburgh, and on the 4th of June he had reached Edinburgh, his progress having been marked at every step by fields laid waste and towns and villages set on fire. From Edinburgh he appears to have pursued his unresisted and destructive course to Perth, and thence to Aberdeen and Kinloss in Elgin (Moray). At the strong and extensive fortress of Loehendorb, built on an islet in the midst of a lake, he established his quarters for some time, while he received the homage and oaths of fealty of the northern barons. From this remote point he returned southwards in the latter part of October. Of all the places of strength to which he came, the castle of Brechin alone shut its gates against him. The garrison, however, capitulated the day after their brave commander, Sir Thomas Maule, had been slain.

Edward took up his winter quarters in Dunfermline in the beginning of December. The last remnant of the Scottish forces that kept the field now assembled in the neighbourhood of Stirling, the only place in the country that still held out. But Edward and his cavalry at once dispersed this little army. Shortly after (February, 1304) Comyn and some other noblemen made their submission to the commissioners of the English king at Strathorde, in Fifeshire. It was agreed that they should retain their lives, liberties, and lands, subject only to such fines as Edward might impose. The capitulation was to include all other persons who might choose to take advantage of it, with a few exceptions, of whom the last was the illustrious Wallace, to whom it was significantly accorded that, if he chose, he might render himself up to the will and mercy of Edward. Not long after, a parliament was assembled at St. Andrews, in which sentence of outlawry was pronounced against Wallace, Fraser, and the garrison of Stirling. All the persons excepted eventually surrendered themselves on the terms offered to them; even Fraser at length gave himself up: Wallace alone stood out.

Scotland, however, was not yet completely subdued so long as its chief place of strength, the castle of Stirling, remained unreduced. To the siege of this fortress, therefore, Edward now addressed himself. The operations commenced on the 22d of April (1304). Thirteen warlike engines were brought to be used against the walls; and the ample leaden roof of the cathedral of St. Andrews was torn off to assist in the construction of these formidable machines. Some of them threw stones of two and three hundred weight. Edward himself directed everything that was done, and was several times struck by stones and javelins thrown from the castle. After the siege had continued nearly a month, without much progress having been made, the sheriffs of York, Lincoln, and London were commanded to purchase all the bows, quarrels, and other warlike weapons that could be procured within their districts, and to send them to Stirling; and the governor of the Tower was also desired to send down immediately a supply from London.

[1304-1305 A.D.]

All the efforts of the assailants were repelled for two months longer by Sir William Oliphant and his handful of gallant associates, who did not number more than 140 soldiers. They held out till their provisions were exhausted and the castle was reduced almost to a heap of ruins. Then, on the 20th of July, they surrendered at discretion. The governor and twenty-four of his companions of rank, all except two of them who were ecclesiastics, stripped to their shirts and undergarments, were led forth from the castle, and presenting themselves before Edward on their bent knees, with their hair dishevelled and their hands joined in supplication, acknowledged their guilt with trembling and the semblance of shedding tears, and gave themselves up to his mercy. Their lives were spared, and they were sent to the Tower of London and other English prisons.

A few months after the fall of Stirling the last enemy that Edward had to dread seemed to be cut off by the capture of Wallace. It appears that Edward had anxiously sought to discover his retreat, and that, tempted by the prospect of the rewards his baseness might earn for him, Ralph de Haliburton, one of the prisoners lately taken at Stirling, had proffered his services for that purpose. It is not clear, however, that it was by Haliburton's exertions that Wallace was actually taken; all that is certainly known is that, upon being seized, he was conveyed to the castle of Dumbarton, then held under a commission from the English king by Sir John Menteith. He was brought to London, "with great numbers of men and women," says Stow,<sup>h</sup> "wondering upon him. He was lodged in the house of William Delect, a citizen of London, in Fenchurch street. On the morrow, being the eve of St. Bartholomew, he was brought on horseback to Westminster, and in the great hall at Westminster, he being placed on the south bench, crowned with laurel—for that he had said in times past that he ought to bear a crown in that hall, as it was commonly reported—and being appeached for a traitor by Sir Peter Mallorie, the king's justice, he answered that he was never traitor to the king of England; but for other things whereof he was accused, he confessed them."

Wallace was put to death as a traitor, on the 23d of August, 1305, at the usual place of execution—the Elms, in West Smithfield. He was dragged thither at the tails of horses, and there hanged on a high gallows, after which, while he yet breathed, his bowels were taken out and burned before his face. The head was afterwards placed on a pole on London Bridge; the right arm was sent to be set up at Newcastle, the left arm to Berwick, the right foot and limb to Perth, and the left to Aberdeen.

A few weeks after the execution of Wallace, ten commissioners, elected by a council of the Scottish nation, which Edward had summoned to meet at Perth, assembled in London, and there, in concert with twenty commissioners from the English parliament, proceeded to settle a plan of government for the conquered country. The whole arrangement, however, was overthrown ere it had been well established. Within six months from the death of Wallace the Scots were again up in arms, around a new champion.

### *Robert Bruce's Revolt*

This was Robert Bruce. Bruce had again made his peace with England some time before the capitulation of Comyn and his friends at Strathorde, which he was enabled the more easily to effect inasmuch as he had not been present at the battle of Falkirk, having previously shut himself up in the castle



of Ayr and refused to join the Scottish army. Edward had since sought to secure his adherence by treating him with favour and confidence. When his father, who had all along continued attached to the English interests, died, in the latter part of the year 1304, young Bruce was permitted to take possession of the whole of his estates both in England and Scotland. At the settlement of the latter kingdom, in the following year, while his great rival, Comyn, was heavily fined, Bruce was intrusted with the charge of the important fortress of Kildrummy, in Aberdeenshire, by commission from the English king.

It is never to be forgotten that, up to this time, whatever his aversion to the English domination may have been, there had been repelling circumstances of the strongest nature to prevent Bruce from taking part entirely with the patriotic party, who, although they were contending against England, acted in the name and chiefly under the conduct of the enemies of his house and person—of the family which he looked upon as having come between him and his splendid birthright. Wallace might fight for Baliol; Bruce scarcely could. And as little, after Baliol might be considered to be set aside, should he ally himself with Comyn, the near connection of Baliol and the inheritor of his pretensions. Bruce, indeed, if he still retained a hope of seating himself on the disputed throne, must now have looked upon Comyn as the man of all others of whom it was most necessary for him to clear his path; and the same also no doubt were the feelings of Comyn in regard to Bruce. It is probable that the favour of Edward was courted by each with the object of depressing or destroying his rival.

The circumstances, however, that led to the explosion of the inflammable elements which only required to be brought together to produce such a catastrophe, are involved in much uncertainty. It appears that in June, 1305, after his last submission to Edward, Bruce had entered into a secret league with William Lamberton, bishop of St. Andrews, by which the parties mutually bound themselves to stand by each other against all persons whatsoever. It is supposed that Comyn had obtained a knowledge of this agreement, and that thereupon a conference on the subject of their pretensions took place between him and Bruce, when Bruce is alleged to have proposed either that he should have the crown and Comyn his estates, or that he should have Comyn's estates and Comyn the crown. It was agreed that Bruce's title to the crown should be supported by both. With whatever views Comyn may have entered into this negotiation, he eventually (so proceeds the story) communicated all that had taken place to Edward. Bruce, then in England, received the first intimation of his danger from Edward's son-in-law, the earl of Gloucester. Early the next morning Bruce set out for Scotland.

On his way he met a person on foot, whom he found to be the bearer of letters from Comyn to Edward, urging his death or immediate imprisonment. He slew this man, and with the letters in his possession pressed forward to the castle of Lochmaben. The adjuncts of this story, it must be confessed, are more like fiction than fact. It is certain, however, that on the 10th of February, 1306, Bruce and Comyn met alone in the convent of the Minorites at Dumfries; and that there, a passionate altercation having arisen between them, Bruce drew his dagger and stabbed Comyn as they stood together beside the high altar. Hurrying from the sanctuary, he called "To horse!" and when his attendant, seeing him pale and violently agitated, inquired the cause—"I doubt," he replied, "I have slain Comyn." "You doubt?" exclaimed Roger Kirkpatrick; "I'll make sure." And with these words he rushed into the church and gave the wounded man his death-stroke.

[1306 A.D.]

Whatever might have been Bruce's previous plans, there was no room for doubt or hesitation now. He called his friends around him—they were few in number; but, desperate as the hazard looked, there were some gallant spirits that did not shrink from setting their lives upon another cast for the freedom of their country. The bishops of St. Andrews and Glasgow, the abbot of Scone, Bruce's four brothers, Edward, Nigel, Thomas, and Alexander, his nephew Thomas Randolph, his brother-in-law Christopher Seton, and some ten or twelve others, mostly young men, gathered at the summons. They met at Glasgow, and thence rode to Scone, where Bruce was solemnly crowned on the 27th of March.

## EDWARD'S LAST INVASION OF SCOTLAND

Edward was at Winchester when the news of this revolution was brought to him. He immediately sent forward the earl of Pembroke, at the head of a small army, to check the insurgents; and, advanced in years as he now was, proceeded to make ready to follow in person. In preparation for the expedition, proclamation was made that the prince of Wales would be knighted on the feast of Pentecost. On the eve of the appointed day (the 22d of May), 270 noble youths assembled in the gardens of the Temple, in which the trees were cut down that they might pitch their tents; and there they watched their arms all night, according to the usage of chivalry. On the morrow Prince Edward was knighted by his father, and then conferred that honour on his companions. A magnificent feast followed, at which two swans, covered with nets of gold, being set on the table by the minstrels, the king rose and made a solemn vow to God and to the swans that he would avenge the death of Cornyn, and punish the perfidy of the Scottish rebels; and then, addressing his son and the rest of the company, he conjured them, in the event of his death, to keep his body unburied until his successor should have accomplished this vow. The next morning the prince with his companions departed for the borders; Edward himself followed by slow journeys, being able to travel only in a litter.

Meanwhile, Bruce had acquired such strength that in several parts of the country the officers of Edward had fled in terror. He now marched upon Perth, where the earl of Pembroke lay. That same evening (June 19th) the English fell by surprise upon the Scots: it was rather a rout than a battle; Bruce himself was in the greatest danger, having been three times unhorsed; Randolph and others of his friends were taken; and he with difficulty made good his retreat into the fastnesses of Athol, with about five hundred followers—the broken and dispirited remnant of his force. For many months after this he and his friends were houseless fugitives; a price was set upon their heads: to make their difficulties and sufferings the greater, they were joined after some time by a party of their wives and daughters; and as they penetrated further and further into the depths of the Highlands, to avoid the English troops, their miseries became daily more pressing. At last Bruce's queen and the other ladies were conducted by his young brother Nigel to the castle of Kildrummy; and Bruce himself found means to pass over to the little isle of Rathlin on the coast of Ireland.

While the Scottish king lay concealed here, ruin fell upon almost all the connections and adherents he had left behind. The bishops of St. Andrews and Glasgow and the abbot of Scone had fallen into the hands of the English:

they were taken clad in armour, and were immediately sent, so attired, and in fetters, to England, and there consigned to different prisons. Bruce's queen and his daughter Marjory, having taken refuge in the sanctuary of St. Duthac, at Tain, in Ross, were seized there by the earl of Ross. The knights who were with them were put to death, and they themselves were sent to England, where they endured an imprisonment of eight years. The youthful Nigel Bruce was compelled to surrender the castle of Kildrummy, and, being sent in irons to Berwick, was there hanged and afterwards beheaded, along with divers other knights and gallant men. Christopher Seton suffered a similar death at Dumfries, the earl of Athol and Sir Simon Fraser in London, and many others there and elsewhere.

Bruce, however, had not been idle in his winter retreat; and early in the spring of 1307 he passed over from Rathlin to the isle of Arran, with a company of about three hundred men, embarked in thirty-three galleys. Before venturing to the opposite coast, he despatched one of his followers to ascertain what were the dispositions of the people. When the Scots approached the landing-place Bruce's emissary stood on the shore. He told them that the English were in complete possession of Carrick; that Lord Percy, with a numerous garrison, held the castle of Turnberry; and that there was no hope of a rising in favour of Bruce. Bruce hesitated what to do; but his brother Edward boldly declared for pursuing their enterprise. They immediately attacked a body of the English, and succeeded in putting most of them to the sword. Percy did not dare, in his ignorance of the numbers of the enemy, to come forth from the castle.

After this exploit Bruce sought shelter in the mountainous parts of the country. But the blow he had struck sufficed to rekindle the war, and it soon raged in different quarters. In the beginning of February, Bruce's brothers, Thomas and Alexander, with a band of eleven hundred adventurers from Ireland, were routed in Galloway by Duncan MacDowal, a chief of that region, who immediately carried the two brothers, who had fallen into his hands severely wounded, to the English king at Carlisle. Edward ordered both to instant execution. Some weeks after this, Douglas castle, which was held by Lord Clifford, was gallantly surprised by its former owner, Sir James Douglas, one of Bruce's most distinguished followers. It was some time, however, before Bruce was strong enough to show himself openly in the field; and he was frequently again in great personal danger as he skulked from one hiding-place to another in the wilds of Galloway. But at length he ventured to encounter the earl of Pembroke at Loudoun Hill, when, notwithstanding a great inferiority of numbers, he obtained a complete victory. This action was fought on the 10th of May, 1307. Three days after, he attacked another English force under the command of the earl of Gloucester; and this, too, he succeeded in routing with great slaughter.

King Edward all this while had advanced no further than to Carlisle, having been detained all the winter and spring at Lanercost by a serious illness. He had directed all the late operations of the war from his sick-bed; but now, incensed at the continued progress of the insurrection, he offered up the litter on which he had thus far been carried in the cathedral church of Carlisle, and again mounting on horseback gave orders to proceed towards the borders. It was the effort of a dying man. In four days he advanced about six miles, when, having reached the village of Burgh-upon-Sands, he there stopped once more for the night; and on the morning of the next day, the 7th of July, expired, in the sixty-ninth year of his age and thirty-fifth



[1307 A.D.]

of his reign. His last breath was spent in enjoining upon those who should succeed him the prosecution of the great design of his life—the complete subjugation of Scotland.<sup>d</sup>

#### PARLIAMENTARY GROWTH DURING THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

In a constitutional point of view, as well as in many others, the thirteenth century may be deemed the most important of all periods in English history. It is the time during which our nation, our laws, our language, finally assimilated whatever was to be assimilated of the foreign elements brought in by the Norman Conquest, and finally threw off whatever was to be thrown off. At the beginning of the period we saw the English nation debating between an Angevin and a French king. At the end of it England, as England, is a great European power, waging war on the Continent for the conquest of France. It is during this time that most of the things which go to make up the national life put on their later form. Above all things, this was the case with the great council of the English nation. During this period the name of Parliament became finally established. The name is a translation of an Old-English phrase. The Conqueror is said in the *English Chronicle* to have had “very deep speech with his witan.” This deep speech, in Latin *colloquium*, in French *parlement*, was the distinguishing feature of a meeting between king and people; in the end it gave its name to the assembly itself.

The constitution of the assembly, as defined in the Great Charter, did not absolutely imply representation, but it showed that the full establishment of representation could not be long delayed. The work of this period was to call up, alongside of the gathering of prelates, earls, and other great men specially summoned, into which the ancient witenagemot had shrunk up, another assembly directly representing all other classes of the nation which enjoyed political rights. This assembly, chosen by various local bodies, *communitates* or *universitates*, having a *quasi* corporate being, came gradually to bear the name of the Commons. The knights of the shire, the barons, citizens, and burgesses of the towns were severally chosen by the *communa* or *communitas* of that part of the people which they represented. We thus get the two Houses of Lords and Commons, of which we have seen foreshadowings getting more and more clear from the days of the Conqueror onwards. But it was only gradually fixed that the members of the national council should sit in two bodies, and not in one or in more than two. The notion of local representation, by which shires and boroughs chose representatives of their own communities, had to some extent to strive with another doctrine—that of the representation of “estates” or classes of men. The thirteenth century was the age when the national assemblies, not only of England but of most other European countries, were putting on their definite shape; and in most of them the system of estates prevailed. These in most countries were three: clergy, nobles, and commons. By these last were commonly meant only the communities of the chartered towns, while the *noblesse* of foreign countries answered to the lesser barons and knights, who in England were reckoned among the commons.

The English system thus went far to take in the whole free population, while the estates of other countries, the commons no less than the clergy and nobles, must be looked on as privileged bodies. In England there were in truth no estates; there were no nobility in the foreign sense. Such a nobility

was inconsistent with the institution of peerage, which gradually grew out of the practice of personal summons. The English peerage is strictly official. The great fact is that, while at the beginning of the thirteenth century the name and the constitution of the national assembly were still unsettled, at the beginning of the fourteenth century there was a regular parliament of lords and commons. The chief point which still remained unsettled was the position of the estate of the clergy.

#### ASSEMBLIES UNDER HENRY III

This seems to be the general result of the constitutional growth of the thirteenth century. Leaving the minuter details, we may here mark some of the chief steps in the progress. During the reign of Henry III assemblies were constantly held, and their constitution is often vaguely described. But in a great many cases phrases are used which, however vague, imply a popular element. We read of knights, of tenants-in-chief, of freemen, sometimes even of freemen and villeins, sometimes, more vaguely still, of *universi*, *universitas Angliæ*, and the like. In some cases we are able better to interpret these vague phrases. For instance, in 1224 each shire sends four knights chosen by the *milites et probi homines*. Whether these knights were or were not to vote along with the magnates, they were at all events to transact business with them. We must always remember that in these times formal voting in the modern sense is hardly to be looked for. In 1254 we have a distinct case of two knights summoned from each shire by royal writ. In the Oxford parliament of 1258 four knights are ordered to be chosen in each shire, who are to report to another parliament within the same year. At that parliament they seem to appear by the title of *Communitas Bachelarie Angliæ*.

It may be doubted whether this is strictly a case of the knights acting as part of the parliament. Still, every instance of the kind must have helped to strengthen the growing doctrine of representation. From this time the attendance of elected knights seems to be fully established, and along with the knights we find in many cases distinct representatives of the clergy. It is in Earl Simon's parliament of 1265 that we first find distinct representatives of the boroughs. Each county sends two knights, each city or borough two citizens or burgesses, and the Cinque Ports four each. But this same parliament shows how fluctuating the practice of summons still was. The earl, strong among the clergy, strong among the people at large, was much less strong among the great men of the realm. Besides summoning the citizens for the first time, he summoned a crowd of churchmen, regular and secular, greater than appeared in any other parliament. But he summoned only five earls, including himself, those, namely, whom he could trust. We should call such a body a packed parliament; but for a long time every parliament was a packed parliament. That is to say, some barons, some abbots were always personally summoned, some towns were always called on to send representatives; but the barons, the abbots, and the represented towns were by no means the same in every parliament. This kind of irregularity is always found till institutions have finally stiffened into some particular shape. Our whole law and constitution rests far more on precedent than on formal enactments, and in unsettled times precedents are slow in establishing themselves.

[1236-1307 A.D.]

## PARLIAMENTS OF EDWARD I

The parliament of 1265 was the model parliament—the assembly whose pattern, in its essential features, set the standard which was in the end followed, and which has lasted till our own time. But the pattern which it set did not become the invariable rule till the great parliament of 1295. In the earlier parliaments of Edward I the knights and citizens are often mentioned; but, on the other hand, we meet also with the same vague descriptions as in earlier times. But in 1295 Edward definitely adopted the model which Simon has set him, and the summoning of knights, citizens, and burgesses, though with great irregularity as to the places from which representatives were summoned, has ever since been the rule. It was thus under Edward I that parliament finally put on the essentials of its present form. But we must still allow for irregularities in practice. It does not follow that every enactment was always passed with the consent of all the classes of which the parliament was made up. A doctrine had come in that the king was the legislator, that the votes of the parliament, or of any part of it, were petitions which he could accept or reject, or, again, that he might legislate on a petition from one house or branch of the assembly apart from the others. The national council had now won back its ancient constitution as an assembly of the freemen of the realm, either personally or by representation. But it was only step by step that it won back the full powers of the ancient witenagemot. There are some, indeed, which it still shrinks from exercising directly, some which it shrinks from exercising at all.

## LEGISLATION UNDER HENRY III AND EDWARD I

The reign of Henry III was a reign of constant parliamentary action, but it was not a time rich in legislation in the strictest sense. The most direct case of change in the law during Henry's reign was the abolition of the ordeal at its beginning. This led incidentally to further changes in judicial procedure, and it is one of the chief landmarks in the development of the jury system. But it is in itself not so much independent legislation as the application to England of a decree of a general council of the church. In short, the parliaments of Henry III are less famous for changing the law than for refusing to change it. The famous saying *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari* dates from the council of Merton in 1236, when the barons refused to agree to the proposal of the prelates for assimilating the law of England to the civil and canon law in the matter of children born before wedlock. By the former systems of jurisprudence, the subsequent marriage of their parents admitted them to the rights of legitimate birth. But the barons chose to maintain the harsher rule of the common law of England.

But if the reign of Henry III was not a time rich in legislation, it forms an important stage in the growth of our parliamentary life. The chief work of that reign was that the first steps were taken towards the practical establishment of the doctrine set forth in the omitted clauses of the Great Charter, the doctrine, in modern phrase, that the power of the purse belongs to parliament. In Henry's day England and her parliament had to wage a never-ending strife against her two enemies, king and pope. The main duty of the nation was to withstand the extortions of both alike. The king was always asking for money; the conditions of a grant commonly were that the charters



should be again confirmed and be better observed. And gradually another demand arises, that the great officers of state shall be appointed, if not by parliament, at least with the assent of parliament. But demands like these, demands for the removal of aliens and the like, are all demands for the reform of abuses and the execution of the old laws; new laws are never asked for. The Oxford Provisions of 1258 show the ideas of reform which were then entertained; it is not legislation, it is reform of bad administration, even at the cost of transferring the king's authority to other hands, which is asked for. Simon himself, the greatest of constitutional reformers, was not a legislator. His parliament is famous, not for anything that it did, but for what it was. Nor after Simon's fall do we meet with much legislation strictly so called. The ordinances of Kenilworth and Marlborough are ordinances for the settlement of the kingdom, ordinances for the better observance of the charter and of the statutes of 1259. They are not legislation in the strictest sense, the enactment of absolutely new laws.

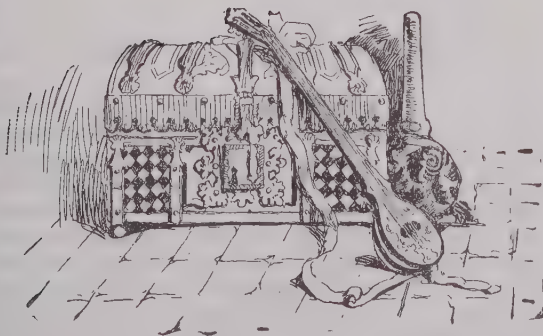
On the other hand, the reign of Edward I, like the reign of Henry II, is emphatically a time of legislation strictly so called, as well as of constitutional progress. At no time were so many memorable statutes passed. Edward's first great act, the first Statute of Westminster, in 1275, has been described as "almost a code by itself." But it was followed almost yearly by enactment upon enactment. The statute *de religiosis* in 1279 forbade the alienation of lands in mortmain without the consent of the superior lord. Ten years later, after a mass of legislation in intermediate years, came the statute *quia emptores*, which forbade subinfeudation. The holder of land could no longer grant it to be held of himself; he could alienate it only so as to be held of the higher lord by the tenure by which he held it himself. Other statutes regulated the local administration, the range of the ecclesiastical courts, almost every detail of English law. At last, in 1297, the famous *Confirmatio Cartarum* was wrung from the king; the power of arbitrary taxation was surrendered; no tax is any longer to be levied by the king without parliamentary sanction. That is to say, those clauses of the Great Charter which were left out in the confirmations under Henry III were now restored and put in force. As in all other things in these ages, we must allow for what seems to us amazing irregularity of practice. It does not follow that, because a certain course was ordained by law, therefore the law was always carried out. But the principle was established, and it could always be appealed to in case of any breach of the law. By the end of Edward's reign, a national assembly, composed of much the same elements of which it is composed still, was acknowledged to possess what is practically the greatest of parliamentary powers.

#### PARLIAMENTARY POWER OF TAXATION

The extreme legislative activity of this reign is one of many signs that the immediate effects of the Norman Conquest had now quite passed away. A thoroughly united nation, which had forgotten the foreign origin of certain classes of the nation, could bear to have new laws enacted, to have old institutions put into new forms. But the particular form which the great constitutional triumph of this reign took looks both forward and backward. It looks forward, as showing that we have reached what is really modern history. The parliamentary power of the purse is the ruling principle of all later constitutional struggles. But it also looks backward. An ancient witenagemot

[1307 A.D.]

possessed the power of the purse, like all other powers. But in those days the power of the purse was a power of secondary importance. In early times taxation never holds the same prominent place in politics which it does afterwards. But the rule of a series of kings in whose eyes kingship was rather a possession than an office, in whose eyes the kingdom was an estate out of which they had to squeeze the greatest possible income, had made it the most needful thing of all to check the king's power of taking his subjects' money. From this time each parliamentary struggle takes the form of a bargain. The king will redress such and such a grievance, if he receives such and such a grant. By constantly pressing this new power, parliament, and above all that house of parliament in which the power of the purse came to be specially lodged, has gradually won back the powers of the older assemblies. It no longer in form makes war and peace, or elects and deposes kings. It does not even in form elect or depose their ministers. But the body which can grant or refuse the means of carrying on the machinery of government has gradually come to have, in an indirect way, the powers of government once more in its own hands.<sup>e</sup>





## CHAPTER XII

### EDWARD II AND EDWARD III

[1307-1377 A.D.]

#### EDWARD II AND PIERS GAVESTON

EDWARD of Carnarvon was twenty-three years old when his father died. His elder brother, Alfonso, died the year after Edward was born. His mother, Eleanor of Castile, died when this, her only surviving son, was seven years old. That excellent mother would probably have guided his course better than his stern father. The crosses which were erected on the road by which her funeral passed from Grantham to Westminster preserved her memory for generations amongst the English, and called forth many a prayer for the repose of her soul. Edward probably forgot that memory in the wild excesses of his youth. Under the year 1300, Fabyan,<sup>c</sup> the chronicler, writes: "This year, the king, for complaint that was brought unto him by Master Walter Langton, bishop of Chester, of Sir Edward, his eldest son, for that he, with Piers of Gaveston and other insolent persons, had broken the park of the said bishop, and riotously destroyed the game within it, he therefore imprisoned the said Sir Edward, his son, with his accomplices." On a subsequent occasion, when the prince was in his twenty-first year, he had a quarrel with the same bishop; and the king then forbade him entering his presence, and issued an order to the exchequer that sustenance should be denied to him and his followers.

There are many letters of the young Edward, which, it is said, "evinced his readiness of disposition to assist those who stood in need of his interference and bounty." This kindliness of nature is not incompatible with his



[1307-1310 A.D.]

impulsive character—a combination of a weak understanding with a passionate will. He was not wanting in courage; for at seventeen he was leading a battalion against the Scots on the banks of the Irvine. In 1303 he was again with his father in Scotland. In 1306 he preceded his father in the expedition against Bruce; and he then marked his course by such unsparing devastation that the king, it is asserted, upbraided him with his cruelty. He had not the wisdom of his father to know that leniency is far more effective than terror, under many circumstances. At this crisis the evil tendencies of the young Edward were manifesting themselves in the most offensive manner; for in February, 1307, at a parliament held at Lanercost, an order was issued that Piers Gaveston should be banished forever from the kingdom, as a corruptor of the prince of Wales. In five months the prince had the power, as king, of revoking the sentence of his sagacious father.

On the 8th of July the nobles and others assembled at Carlisle recognised Edward as king, and there did homage. The death of Edward I was unknown in London for more than a fortnight. The young king received homage from some Scottish nobles at Dumfries, and then led his army northward. But he suddenly halted at Cunnock, in Ayrshire. He had recalled Gaveston, who joined him in Scotland. The king departed for London, leaving Aymer de Valence guardian and lieutenant. Before the ensuing Christmas, the ministers of his father were deprived of their employments. Gaveston was loaded with wealth and honour; was created earl of Cornwall; was married to Margaret, the king's niece; and was appointed regent of the kingdom, on the departure of Edward for France to marry Isabella, the daughter of Philip the Fair, the French king. The marriage took place at Bologne; and on the 24th of February, 1308, Edward was crowned at Westminster. All the old claims to precedence at the coronation of the kings of England were disregarded on this occasion; and the place of greatest honour—to carry the crown and walk before the king in procession—was given to Gaveston. In three days the offended nobles petitioned for the banishment of the favourite. The king referred the matter to a parliament to be held after Easter; and this tribunal would hear of no compromise. Gaveston was sentenced to banishment, and was compelled to swear that he would never return.

In another month it was learned that the infatuated king had appointed him to the government of Ireland. The favourite appears to have conducted himself in this office with courage and ability. There can be no doubt that this Gascon had many chivalric accomplishments. At a tournament he unhorsed the four great English earls who were his bitterest enemies. He was tasteful amidst his prodigal magnificence. The king at length persuaded a party of the nobles to consent to Gaveston's recall; and the pope gave the favourite a dispensation from his oath to remain abroad. Then the court became a scene of perpetual banqueting. Gaveston was supreme; but the great barons looked on in sullen discontent and suppressed hatred. The day of vengeance would come, when Thomas of Lancaster would exact a terrible penalty for the nickname of "the old hog," which the upstart had bestowed upon him; when the earl of Pembroke would remember that he had been called "Joseph the Jew"; and when the earl of Warwick, "the black dog of the wood," would make the sarcastic favourite "feel his teeth."

On the 16th of March (1310) the barons came in arms to a parliament at Westminster; and they enforced the appointment of a committee, under the name of ordainers, to provide for the better regulation of the king's household, and to remedy the grievances of the nation. The moving principle of this strong measure was a hatred of Gaveston. The ordainers sat in the

capital. Edward went to Scotland, but met no enemy, for Bruce had retired beyond the Forth. The English king wintered at Berwick, and the next spring confided the conduct of the Scottish war to his favourite, who conducted himself with courage and prudence. Edward returned to London to meet the ordainers, leaving Gaveston at the castle of Bamborough. In the articles of reform which were presented to the king, it was proposed that all grants which had been made by Edward, since he had issued the commission, should be revoked; that all future grants made without the consent of the baronage should be invalid; that purveyance, except what was ancient and lawful, should be punished as robbery; that new taxes should be abolished; that the great officers of the crown should be chosen by the advice and assent of parliament; and that parliaments should be held once in each year, and oftener, if needful.

Then came a clause decreeing the banishment of Gaveston, for having given bad advice to the king, embezzled the public money, obtained blank charters with the royal seal affixed to them, formed a confederacy of men sworn to live and die with him, and estranged the affections of the king from his subjects. In vain the king struggled with the inexorable ordainers. In vain he protested that he would not consent to what was injurious to the just rights of the crown. Gaveston was exiled, and went to Flanders. In 1312 he was again in England; and the king published a proclamation, stating that the exiled man was a true and loyal subject, and returned in obedience to the royal command. Thomas of Lancaster, the grandson of Henry III, was appointed leader of an association of barons who were ready to resort to force. They assembled a large body of knights at a tournament, and then marched to York, where the king had been joined by Gaveston. Onward they followed the flight of their sovereign to Newcastle, and thence to Scarborough, where Gaveston remained in the castle, whilst the king returned to York. The earls of Surrey and Pembroke besieged the castle; and Gaveston surrendered to the earl of Pembroke, under a pledge of safety for himself, which had been given to the king. From Scarborough he was conducted by Pembroke to Dedlington in Oxfordshire, the earl leaving him in the custody of his servants. Before the morning dawned the unfortunate favourite was awakened, and commanded to dress himself. At the gate of Dedlington he found himself in the presence of "the black dog of the wood"—the terrible earl of Warwick. He was placed on a mule, and, surrounded by a numerous force, was carried prisoner to Warwick. As he entered the walls of Guy's lofty tower he found himself in the presence of those haughty barons whom he had despised and insulted. His skill in the tournament, his courage in battle, his magnificent apparel, his jewelled rings, his high-sounding titles, his reliance upon the kingly power—all were worthless in this terrible moment. He stood before his enemies, and they sentenced him to die. Out of that grim fortress was Gaveston led to execution. There was a march of a short distance before the cavalcade reached Blacklow Hill, a little knoll on the road near Guy's Cliff, where the judicial murder was accomplished.

#### BRUCE IN SCOTLAND

During the five years that the peace of England was disturbed by the wretched contest between the king and his barons, which ended in the first signal tragedy of this tragic reign, Robert Bruce was establishing his power in Scotland with a firmness and wisdom that was scarcely to be looked for

[1312 A.D.]

after the rash murder in the church at Dumfries.<sup>1</sup> But he had endured great adversity. Danger and suffering had taught him prudence and moderation. He had wandered in the Highlands with a few followers, subsisting upon the chance products of the chase. He had traversed the great lakes in leaky boats, sheltering from the storm in the fisher's hovel, and deriving lessons of patience and perseverance from noting the efforts of a spider to fix the first thread on which its web was to be woven. He had been hunted by blood-hounds; he had waded in rapid streams to elude their scent; he had defied his enemies single-handed in the mountain-pass and in the river-ford. The fugitive was now an acknowledged sovereign. In 1309 he was recognised as king by the most influential body of Scotland—the clergy—at a general ecclesiastical council held at Dundee. In that year a truce was concluded between England and Scotland, which endured till August, 1310. The renewed war was for some time a succession of contests on the borders, in which exemption from plunder was purchased by the English lords warden by money payment.

In 1312 Bruce besieged [and captured] Perth, which was in the hands of King Edward's officers. One after another the strong places of Scotland were taken by Bruce. He then, encouraged no doubt by the fearful dissensions of England, crossed the Tweed, in 1312, with a large force; burned the towns of Hexham and Corbridge and part of the city of Durham, and penetrated as far as Chester. The terrible calamities of war were brought home to the wretched people of both countries. Whilst Bruce was ravaging Northumberland, some English leader or other was wasting Scotland. Famine always followed these devastations. The corn was trodden down in the fields or burned in the barns. The cottage and the grange in flames marked the progress of a fierce soldiery; and when a town was taken, plunder and massacre went hand in hand. To the Scots these invasions were easier than to the English, from the habits of the people. The forces of Edward came on in shining armour; the knights mounted on their heavy war-horses, and the archers and spearmen marching slowly under their cumbrous panoply.

Froissart has graphically described the mode in which the countrymen of Bruce carried on their warfare: "These Scottish men are right hardy, and sore travelling in harness and in wars; for when they will enter into England, within a day and a night, they will drive their whole host twenty-four miles, for they are all a-horseback, without it be the traundells and lagggers of the host, who follow after a-foot. The knights and squires are well horsed, and the common people and others, on little hacks and geldings; and they carry with them no carts, nor chariots, for the diversities of the mountains they must pass through in the country of Northumberland. They take with them no purveyance of bread or wine; for their usage and soberness is such, in time of war, that they will pass in the journey a great long time, with flesh half-sodden, without bread, and drink of the river water, without wine; and they neither care for pots nor pans, for they seethe beasts in their own skins. They are ever sure to find plenty of beasts in the country that they will pass through. Therefore they carry with them none other purveyance, but on their horse; between the saddle and the panel they truss a broad plate of metal, and behind the saddle they will have a little sack full of oatmeal, to the intent that when they have eaten of the sodden flesh, then they lay this plate on the fire and temper a little of the oatmeal; and when the plate is hot, they cast off the thin paste thereon, and so make a little cake in manner

[<sup>1</sup> For fuller accounts of Bruce and his followers see the history of Scotland in a later volume.]



of a cracknel or biscuit, and that they eat to comfort withal their stomachs. Wherefore it is no great marvel, though they make greater journeys than other people do."

The details of the sieges of the Scotch castles which the English had garrisoned have much of the interest of romance. "Subtlety and stratagem," to use the expression of Barbour the chronicler, often preceded the onslaught and the capture. So Roxburgh castle was taken, and so Edinburgh. Linlithgow was won through the "subtlety and stratagem" of a peasant named Bennock, "a stout carle and a stour," who had been accustomed to supply the garrison with forage. He concealed soldiers under the hay with which his wagon appeared to be loaded; passed the drawbridge, and, the gates being opened, placed his wagon so that they could not be closed. The concealed men attacked the garrison, and another band who had been in ambush rushed in and completed the work. But these successes were only preliminary to the great blow which was struck for the independence of Scotland.

The king and the nobles of England were at last roused from their intestine quarrels to look at the danger which was gathering around them. It was no longer a war for the conquest of the country which had almost universally acknowledged Bruce as king; it was not a contest for mere feudal superiority. England was in danger. Her towns were burned; her fertile lands were devastated; her people were reduced to the most abject misery, wherever the Scot came with his little hackney and his bag of oatmeal. At a parliament held on the 15th of October, 1313, King Edward and his barons were in some degree reconciled; and it was "with one accord assented and agreed that no one, of what state or condition soever he be, in time to come, be appealed or challenged by reason of the taking, detaining, or death of Piers de Gaveston." At the same time an amnesty was granted to the adherents of Gaveston; and the property which was found in his possession was given up to the king.

#### THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN (1314 A.D.)

Edward Bruce, the brother of King Robert, had been besieging Stirling, and the English governor, Philip de Mowbray, agreed to surrender the castle if not relieved by the 24th of June, the feast of St. John the Baptist. King Edward summoned the military tenants of the English crown to meet him at Berwick on the 11th of June, and levies of foot soldiers were made in the northern counties and in Wales. Those from Wales and the Welsh marches were required by the king because he wanted men able to drive an enemy from forest and mountain, and from marshy places, of difficult access to horsemen. On the 16th of June, only a week before the day fixed for the surrender of Stirling, Edward marched from Berwick at the head of a great army. The numbers of that army were greatly exaggerated by the old chroniclers, Fordun estimating it at 340,000 horse, and as many foot. Later historians are more reasonable, and are contented with 100,000, of which 40,000 were cavalry. This vast force arrived in the neighbourhood of Stirling on the Eve of St. John. The country through which they marched would afford insufficient support and accommodation for such a multitude; and they were accompanied with a vast train of provision-wagons, and of carriages and horses laden with tents and pavilions.

Bruce was encamped in an extensive forest lying between Falkirk and Stirling, known as the Torwood; and here, on the 22d of June, it was learned

1314 A.D.]<sup>a</sup>

that the English force had reached Edinburgh on the 21st. The Scottish army therefore moved into the neighbourhood of Stirling. Bruce knew that, the first object being the relief of that castle, according to the treaty, he might, therefore, take up a position without uncertainty as to the movements of his enemy. The extreme left of his army rested upon elevated ground above St. Ninians, and extended through an undulating tract of country called the New Park, the right resting on a stream called the Bannock. The centre was partially defended by a morass, part of which still remains. On the left, on a line which the English would have to cross, Bruce caused pits to be dug, in which were inserted pointed stakes, covered slightly over with turf and rushes. He had need of every precaution for strengthening his position, for his force was greatly inferior to that of the English. It chiefly consisted of infantry. His determination was to fight on foot, and to meet the charges of the cavalry with his battle-axes and spears. A few horsemen were with him. On the night of St. John the advanced guard of the English cavalry approached Stirling, with the intention of attacking the Scots in the rear. Bruce's army had fasted, from a religious principle. "Thar dynit none of them that day," says the rhyming chronicler. A partial engagement took place, in which King Robert exposed himself as became the daring knight rather than the cautious general. His leaders, however they were rejoiced to see him cleave the skull of Henry de Bohun in single combat, remonstrated with him on his temerity. He only held up the broken shaft of his battle-axe, and expressed his regret for the loss of his good weapon.

At daybreak of the 24th of June the great host of the English was in view, with bright shields and burnished helmets, embroidered banners and gaudy surcoats, glittering in the morning sun. The Scotch host heard mass, and the abbot of Inchaffray preceded them with a crucifix as they formed on the field of battle. When they knelt again in prayer, some of the English said, "They beg for mercy." "Deceive not yourselves," said one who knew the people, "it is God only they supplicate, and not you." On came the English archers and infantry, and the conflict was long and desperate. Bruce had a reserve which attacked his enemy in flank. The English knights came on, with the earl of Gloucester, the nephew of the king, at their head. He fell covered with wounds. The horses stumbled in the pits which Bruce had dug. There was confusion in the ranks; and the few Scottish horse which were in the field were led by Sir Robert Keith to a victorious struggle. All the camp-followers of Bruce's army had been stationed apart, behind a small hill, still known by the name of Gillieshill (the servants' hill). There were soldiers, no doubt, mixed with them, for they suddenly abandoned the baggage, and came down the hill in a body of fifteen thousand men, armed with pikes and oxen-goads, with rude pieces of cloth fixed on tent-poles in the place of heraldic banners. The English squadrons, at the appearance of this new and strange army, began to waver. Bruce charged the main body. Then ensued a general rout. King Edward refused to fly, till the earl of Pembroke seized his bridle-rein and hurried him from the field.

The king rode to Stirling with the intention of throwing himself into the castle; but the governor, as the battle was lost, knew that he was bound in all honour to deliver up the castle according to his obligation, and Edward sought other refuge. The band of horsemen fled on, and never stopped till they reached Dunbar. The spoil which remained to the victors was enormous. Fordun describes the herds of cattle, the droves of sheep and hogs, the loads of corn with portable mills, the casks of wine, the military engines—trebuchets and mangonels. The slaughter of the English exceeded ten thousand. The

Scots lost about four thousand.<sup>1</sup> Numbers of English and Welsh fugitives were scattered over the country—the knights detained for ransom; the humble footmen put to death by the Scottish peasantry. Stirling was surrendered the day after the battle. In exchange for some of his English prisoners, Bruce obtained the release of his wife, sister, and daughter, of the bishop of Glasgow and the earl of Mar. Thus complete was the great victory that made Scotland a nation; which enabled her, gradually approaching to an amalgamation with England in laws and institutions, in customs and literature, long to preserve a distinctive character; and which, when she names the “Bruce of Bannockburn,” wakes up many other sacred memories of struggles for freedom, civil and religious, without which memories, long cherished and never wholly relinquished, no people, however prosperous, ever escaped the yoke of foreign or domestic tyranny.

Fabyan<sup>c</sup> records that, after many days, there was a song sung by the minstrels of Scotland which said:

Maidens of England, sore may ye mourn,  
For your lemans ye have lost at Bannockbourn.

The maidens, and all the people of England, had many other losses to deplore through these Scotch wars. In 1314 there was a deficient harvest. The price of corn became enormous, and the parliament, with the ignorance of economical laws, which was not in any degree confined to those times, fixed a maximum on the price of provisions. The next season was more disastrous. There was a murrain amongst the cattle and a general pestilence amongst the starving people. The brewing of beer from grain was suspended. The nobles expelled from their castles the hungry retainers for whom they could find no food, and the country necessarily swarmed with plunderers. The “ordinances” which had been agreed to before the fall of Gaveston were resisted by the king, whilst their enforcement was demanded by the barons.

In this horrible condition of famine, pestilence, and anarchy was the unhappy kingdom, when the Scots came, again and again, to plunder and destroy. There was no public spirit in the people or their leaders to resist. A war was going on in Ireland between the English and the Scots. Edward Bruce had landed at Carrickfergus in 1315, to drive the English settlers from the island, in concert with the native chiefs. After various conflicts he was crowned king of Ireland in 1316, and he reigned some time in Ulster. The Welsh were again in insurrection, and formed an alliance with Edward Bruce. Robert, the king of Scotland, had gone over to Ireland to aid his brother. During his absence the war in Scotland had been renewed by the English. But Robert Bruce returned to the land of his triumphs in 1318, and he succeeded in capturing Berwick [as described in detail in the history of Scotland]. The Scots, marching into Yorkshire, burned many towns, and had nearly taken Edward prisoner on one occasion, and his queen on another. An attempt was made to retake Berwick, but it was unsuccessful. At length, in 1320, a truce for two years was concluded “between Edward, king of England, and Sir Robert de Brus, for himself and his adherents.” The Irish invasion had been previously terminated, in 1318, by the death of Edward Bruce, who was defeated in a battle near Dundalk, and fell on the field with

<sup>1</sup> Scotch historians greatly exaggerate these numbers, as if the importance of the victory depended upon the amount of bloodshed. [This account of the battle of Bannockburn is considerably supplemented by the description to be found in a later volume under the history of Scotland.]



[1320-1321 A.D.]

two thousand of his countrymen. But no success and no truce could put an end to the intestine troubles of England. Another favourite had arisen, and another war with the barons was impending.

## THE DESPENSERS

Many of the important facts in the history of England are written in its statutes. In three acts of parliament of the 15th of Edward II we find the distinct traces of a revolution and of a counter-revolution. In the first of these statutes, that decreeing "the exile of Hugh le Despenser, father and son," we learn that at a parliament held at York in the twelfth year of Edward, Sir Hugh, the son, was named chamberlain of the king. This young man was of high family. His grandfather was killed on the side of the barons at Evesham. His father had served in the wars of Edward I, both in France and Scotland. Edward II was lavish in his bounties to his chamberlain. He united him in marriage with a daughter of that earl of Gloucester who was killed at Bannockburn, by which marriage he became possessed of the greater portion of Glamorganshire. His material wealth, according to a parliamentary document, was enormous. He had flocks of ten thousand sheep; herds of a thousand oxen and cows; hundreds of pigs; arms and armour for two hundred men. The possessions of the father were more than double those of his son. The young Despenser soon became embroiled with his neighbours, the lords of the marches, who, assembling in arms, attacked his castles and destroyed or carried off his property.

The earl of Hereford, the king's brother-in-law, one of the peers appointed to enforce the "ordinances," encouraged this violence; and the earl of Lancaster, the cousin of the king, joined with him and the lords of the marches and other barons and knights in an indenture binding them in a common cause against the power and influence of the Despensers. They marched to London, and on their way plundered the manors of the elder Despenser, as they had those of his son. From St. Albans they sent a message to the king, demanding the banishment of these objects of their hatred; which demand Edward refused with indignation. The confederates advanced to London, where the parliament was sitting; and then was passed the statute of exile of Hugh le Despenser, father and son, "to the honour of God and holy church and of our lord the king, and for the profit of him and his realm, and for maintaining peace and quiet among his people." The offences with which the Despensers were charged are then minutely set forth:

They had accroached to themselves royal power over the king and his ministers; they desired to lead the king to act with violence against his will; they kept the king from showing himself to his people, or giving audience to his great men, except at their will and humour; they removed good and sufficient ministers, and appointed false and evil ministers and unlearned justices; they excited to civil war; they caused the king to impose unreasonable fines; they permitted no bishop or abbot, newly created, to approach the king till they had paid fines to Sir Hugh, the son. Upon these various grounds, the peers of the realm awarded that Hugh, the father, and Hugh, the son, be disinherited forever, and utterly exiled out of the realm, as enemies of the king and his people.

In this parliament, which was held at Westminster in three weeks after midsummer in 1321, indemnity was granted against all men, of whatsoever state or condition, who had done what might be noted for trespasses and

against the king's peace "in pursuing and destroying Hugh le Despenser, the son, and Hugh le Despenser, the father." In a parliament held at York three weeks after Easter, in 1322, this statute of indemnity was repealed, it being shown that it was "sinfully and wrongfully made and granted," and that the assent "of the prelates, earls, barons, knights of shires, and commonalty," assembled in 1321, "was given for dread of the great force which the earl of Hereford and the other great confederates suddenly brought to the parliament of Westminster, with horse and arms, in affray and abasement of all the people." In the same parliament of York the exile of the Despensers was annulled. This was a mighty change to be wrought in eight months.

During that short period there had been a counter-revolution. In October of 1321 King Edward took up arms, ostensibly to revenge an affront offered to his queen; and after capturing Leeds castle, in Kent—to which his queen had been denied admission—led his forces northward. It was alleged that, before the truce of 1319, the earl of Lancaster had been in traitorous correspondence with the Scots, and that through his complicity with Robert Bruce, Berwick had not been recovered by the English. The truce of two years was now about to expire. The Despensers had returned to England, and Lancaster now kept no terms in his opposition to the government of Edward. There can be no doubt that at this period he and the earl of Hereford were in alliance with Bruce. The Scots army was to enter England, to aid the earls and their confederates in their quarrel, but on no account to lay claim to any conquest; and the earls were to use their endeavours that Bruce should enjoy his kingdom in peace. As Edward advanced, Lancaster retired into Yorkshire. At Boroughbridge he was encountered by a strong force, under the governors of York and Carlisle, and here Hereford was killed. Lancaster expected the arrival of his allies from Scotland, but no army came. He was taken prisoner, and was conducted to his own castle of Pontefract, at whose gates he had stood when Edward passed by in returning from the siege of Berwick, and jeered his king with bitter scorn. To that castle Edward now came a triumphant lord; and in his own hall was Lancaster, who at Warwick had adjudged Gaveston to die, arraigned as a traitor. On a gray pony, without a bridle, he was led to execution, and kneeling down on an eminence outside the town his head was struck off. Eighteen others of the confederates were executed in London and other places. Thus it was that the parliament of York, in 1322, passed the statute which we have mentioned.

But they did more than this. They revoked all the "ordinances" which had been made ten years before, it being found that "by the matters so ordained the royal power of our lord the king was restrained on divers things, contrary to what it ought to be." But not only were these "ordinances" repealed, but all provisions "made by subjects against the royal power of the ancestors of our lord the king" were to cease and lose their effect forever. Edward II was now in the plenary possession of sovereign power. He had an obsequious parliament. The great barons who interfered with his will were removed. Hugh le Despenser, the son, might reign supreme in the palace, as he had reigned before. Edward would himself wipe out the disgrace of Bannockburn, and win back Scotland to his crown. He addressed a letter to the pope, stating that having put down the earl of Lancaster, he was engaged in preparing to invade Scotland, desiring no peace between the two kingdoms.

The Scots, anticipating the coming war, entered England and penetrated to Lancashire. They then returned without molestation, laden with immense booty, and driving their wagons bearing the spoil of gold and plate, of fur-

[1322-1324 A.D.]

niture and church ornaments, as securely as if they were on a peaceful journey. The king of England was collecting a great army—a machine too cumbrous for effective use. He marched into Scotland with an ill supply of bread for his men and of provender for his horses; for England was still suffering the miseries of scarcity. As the great host of Edward marched on to the Forth, he found a desert. The stores of corn, the herds of the Lothians, had all been removed northward. The houses were deserted. The English fleet, which had been prepared to co-operate with the invading army, was detained by contrary winds. Famine and sickness were doing the work which Bruce waited to complete. King Edward hastily marched back to the border; and King Robert came forth from his encampment at Culross. Douglas began to harass the English in their rear; and Edward, appointing guardians of the marches, retreated to a strong position near Byland abbey, in Yorkshire. The greater part of his army was disbanded. Edward felt himself secure. But a body of Scottish knights suddenly appeared before the abbey and obtained a victory; the king of England fled precipitately to York. The war of twenty-three years with Scotland was at an end. On the 30th of May, 1323, a truce between the two kingdoms was concluded for thirteen years.

## THE KNIGHTS TEMPLARS

It was during the revolutionary period of which we have been treating that the great military order of the Templars was dissolved, after having attained the highest authority and influence in Europe during nearly two hundred years. One of the charges against the Despensers was that they prevented justice being done touching the lands of the Templars. When Philip the Fair, king of France, in 1307, suddenly took possession of the palace of the Temple in Paris, and threw the grand master and all his knights into prison, the main object of this despotic act was to obtain possession of the enormous properties of the order throughout France. In England, although the order was suppressed, no cruelties were exercised upon the members of the brotherhood, which had numbered some of the most illustrious of the nobles amongst its knights. In 1308, under sealed directions sent to all the sheriffs in England and Ireland, about two hundred and fifty knights were arrested, and all their property was attached. Before a tribunal of prelates and envoys of the pope, forty-seven of these knights boldly maintained their innocence. The use of torture was urged upon the king, in a letter from the holy pontiff; and the archbishop of York, having ascertained that torture was unknown in England, and that there was no machine for torture in the kingdom, inquired if he should send abroad for such an instrument. None, as it appears, were put upon the rack or burned. They were imprisoned, and had a daily pittance allowed for their support.

Meanwhile, the Hospitallers, or knights of St. John, who had maintained their influence in the East, and continued to make a show of defending Christendom against the Mohammedans, kept their large possessions without molestation, and in their great priory of St. John, in Clerkenwell, maintained as much state as the Templars on the bank of the Thames. At last came the grand question of the revenues of the Templars. After sixteen years, during which the king and his favourites and his nobles partook of the spoil, a statute was passed, in 1324, which recited that, the order of the Templars having been dissolved, the lands and tenements in demesne were seized into the hands of the king and of divers other lords of the fees of them; but that



now, as the order of the brethren of St. John of Jerusalem was provided, instituted, and canonised, for the defence of Christians, the lands and all appurtenances should go to that order, to be employed, as the Templars were bound to employ them, in relieving the poor, in hospitalities, in celebrating divine service, and in defence of the Holy Land. England escaped the guilt of France, in abolishing this powerful body without bloodshed. The knights of St. John held their wealth in England till, two centuries later, their order was suppressed by one before whom lord priors melted away in the common ruin of monastic institutions. In the reign of Edward III the students of law took possession of the great house of the Templars in London; and their preceptories, in the rural districts, fell into decay, or became the homesteads and barns of the descendants of the Saxon villeins whom the proud Norman knights had despised and trampled upon.

#### ROGER MORTIMER AND QUEEN ISABELLA

One of the principal supporters of the earl of Lancaster, who was beheaded at Pontefract in 1322, was Roger Mortimer, lord of Wigmore. He was spared the extreme penalties of treason, but was confined in the Tower of London. In 1323 he escaped, and proceeded to France. Isabella, the queen of Edward II, was sister to Charles IV of France; and to reconcile some differences between Edward and Charles in the affairs of Gascony, Isabella was deputed to the court of her brother, with power to conclude a treaty. This she accomplished, upon terms not very advantageous to her husband, in May, 1325. In September of the same year the king of England was induced to transfer his foreign possessions of Gascony and Ponthieu to his son Edward, then thirteen years of age; who went to Paris, and there did homage for them to the feudal lord, Charles IV. At Paris, Roger Mortimer joined the queen, and became the chief officer of her household.

The return of Isabella and her son to England, as soon as the homage was performed, was expected by Edward. But they came not. After the lapse of more than five centuries, the private remonstrances of the husband and father are still preserved, in several letters in the French language, which are exceedingly curious. The archbishop of Canterbury had written to Isabella to exhort her to return, to which she had replied that Sir Hugh le Despenser was her enemy, and that she could not come because her life would be in danger. On the 1st of December, 1325, the king thus writes to the queen:

DAME:

Oftentimes we have commanded you, as well before the homage as since, to return to us with all haste, without any excuses. Now, you have sent us word, by the honourable father, the bishop of Winchester, that you will not come, on account of the danger and doubt of Hugh le Despenser; at which we greatly marvel: the more so, that you bore yourself so amicably towards him, and he towards you, in our presence, and even at your departure you gave him especial promises, signs, and proofs of certain friendship; and afterwards sent him very especial letters, which he has shown to us.

The husband then goes on to say that no evil or disgrace has ever befallen her, except when "we have spoken to you, as we ought, words of chastisement in secret, without any other severity." To his son he writes, under date of the 2d of December:

MOST DEAR SON:

Remember in your youth and tender age what we charged and commanded you, when you left us at Dover, and what you said to us in answer, with which we were greatly pleased;

[1325-1326 A.D.]

and do not trespass or contravene what we then charged you in any point, on no account. And since your homage has been received, go to our most dear brother, the king of France, your uncle, and take your leave of him; and then come away to us in the company of our most dear companion, the queen, your mother, if she come so soon. And if she does not come, come you, in all haste without longer stay; for we have a very great desire to see you and speak with you. And hereof fail not by any means, neither for mother, nor for any other person, as you regard our blessing.

But still the wife came not, nor the son. On the 1st of March, 1326, the king again writes to the young Edward, commanding him to contract no marriage without his father's consent; defending Hugh le Despenser as his dear and loyal servant; bitterly adverting to the alliance of Queen Isabella with Roger Mortimer, a false traitor, and the king's mortal enemy; and ordering his son immediately to return. In a letter to the king of France, of the same date, Edward says that he truly perceives, as all men may perceive, that the queen does not love him as she ought to love her lord.

## RETURN OF ISABELLA AND PRINCE EDWARD

These domestic differences were soon brought to a public issue. The king of France invaded Gascony, and Edward declared war against him. William, count of Hainault, received Isabella at his court, for the pope had exhorted Charles to dismiss her from Paris. The young Edward was contracted in marriage with Philippa, the daughter of the count. A force of two thousand men, under the command of John of Hainault, was placed at the disposal of Isabella; and on the 24th of September, the wife and the son of Edward did return to England, landing at Orwell in Suffolk, not as suppliants but as complainants, in arms for the redress of injuries. Isabella came surrounded by nobles who had been banished or fled when the insurrection of Lancaster failed. Powerful lords—including the brothers of the king, the earls of Kent and Suffolk, his cousin the earl of Richmond, and several bishops—joined Isabella. A proclamation was issued, stating that the queen, the prince, and the earl of Kent had come to free the nation from the tyranny of Hugh le Despenser.<sup>b</sup>

At the queen's approach towards the capital, Edward, as a last resource, threw himself on the loyalty and pity of the citizens. Their answer was cold but intelligible. The privileges of the city would not, they observed, permit them to follow the king into the field, but they would shut the gates against the foreigners, and would on all occasions pay due respect to their sovereign, his queen, and his son. Edward immediately departed with the two Despensers, the chancellor Baldock, and a slender retinue; and soon after his departure the populace rose; murdered Walter Stapleton, the bishop of Exeter, took forcible possession of the Tower, and liberated the prisoners. The fugitive monarch hastened to the marches of Wales, where lay the estates of his favourite. Bristol was given to the custody of the elder Despenser, earl of Winchester, and at Caerphilly an attempt was made to raise the men of Glamorgan. But the Welshmen were equally indifferent to the distress of their lord and of their sovereign; and Edward with his favourite took ship for Lundy, a small isle in the mouth of the Bristol Channel, which had been previously fortified and plentifully stored with provisions.

The queen was not slow to pursue her fugitive consort. As she passed through Oxford, she commanded Orlton [bishop of Hereford] to preach before the university. The bishop selected for his text that passage in

Genesis, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. She shall bruise thy head." These words he applied to Isabella and the Despensers; but many thought that they discovered in the sermon dark and prophetic allusions to the fate which afterwards befel the unfortunate Edward. From Oxford she hastened to Bristol; and the elder Despenser, unable to master the disaffection of the burghers, surrendered

the town and castle on the third day. His gray hairs (he had passed his ninetieth year) were not respected by his enemies; and he was accused before Sir William Trussel, one of the exiles raised by Isabella to the office of judge, of having assumed an undue influence over the king, exercised the royal power, widened the breach between the sovereign and the people, and advised the execution of the earl of Lancaster. In these tumultuous times the liberty of defence was seldom allowed to a political prisoner, but the notoriety of the facts charged in the indictment was assumed as a justification of the sentence which immediately followed. The earl was drawn from the court to the place of execution, where his enemies glutted their revenge with the sight of his sufferings. He was disembowelled alive; his body was afterwards hung on a gibbet for four days, and then cut into pieces and thrown to the dogs.

At Bristol it was ascertained that Edward had put to sea; and a proclamation was immediately made through the town, summoning him to return and resume the government. This farce was preparatory to an important decision of the prelates and barons in the queen's interest. Assuming the powers of parliament, they resolved that by the king's absence the realm had been left without a ruler; and therefore appointed the "duke of Aquitaine" guardian of the kingdom in the name and by the right of his father. Edward's evil fortune pursued him by sea as well as land. He was unable to reach the isle of



JOHN OF ELTHAM  
(Son of Edward II)

Lundy; and after contending for some days with a strong westerly wind, he landed at Swansea, retired to Neath, and sought to elude the search of his enemies by concealing himself in different places between that monastery and the castle of Caerphilly, held by his partisan, John de Felton.

At length, Henry, earl of Leicester, who had lately taken the title of his attainted brother, the earl of Lancaster, corrupted the fidelity of the natives, and got possession of the younger Despenser and Baldock, who were secreted in the woods near the castle of Lantressan. Edward, it is said, immediately came forward, and voluntarily surrendered to his cousin, by whom he was sent to the strong fortress of Kenilworth. His fate was postponed to answer the purposes of his wife; the other captives were sacrificed without mercy to the resentment of their enemies. Baldock, as a clergyman, was confined



[1326-1327 A.D.]

first in the prison of the bishop of Hereford, and afterwards in that of Newgate, where he sank under the rigours of his captivity; Despensers was arraigned at Hereford before the same judge whose hands were still reeking with the blood of his father. The offences laid to his charge form the best proof of his innocence. According to Trussel, he had been the cause of every calamity which had befallen the kingdom since his return from banishment, of the failure of the king's expedition into Scotland, and of the success of the Scottish incursions into England. He had not only prosecuted the earl of Lancaster and his adherents to death, but when God had demonstrated the virtue of that nobleman by the supernatural cures wrought at his tomb, he had placed guards to prevent the afflux of the people, and to suppress the knowledge of the miracles; he had constantly fomented the dissension between Edward and his consort; had hired assassins to murder the queen and the prince when they were in France; and at their return had conveyed away the king and the royal treasures against the provisions of the Great Charter.

"Therefore," continues this upright judge, "do all the good men of this realm, lesser and greater, poor and rich, award with common assent that you, Hugh Spenser, as a robber, traitor, and outlaw, be drawn, hanged, disembowelled, beheaded, and quartered. Away then, traitor; go, receive the reward of your tyranny, wicked and attainted traitor!" He was drawn in a black gown with the arms of his family reversed, and a wreath of nettles on his head, and was hanged on a gallows fifty feet high, amidst the acclamations and scoffs of the populace. A few yards below him suffered Simon de Reading, a faithful servant, who had always adhered to the fortunes of his master. Besides these the earl of Arundel and two other gentlemen were beheaded. They had remained neutral during the invasion, but were accused of having consented to the death of the earl of Lancaster. In the opinion of the public, their chief crime was the contiguity of their possessions to those of the queen's favourite, to whom they were granted.

#### DEPOSITION OF THE KING

From Hereford Isabella with Mortimer and her son proceeded by slow journeys to meet the parliament at Westminster. The session was opened by a long speech from that crafty politician, the bishop of Hereford. The removal of the Despensers from the person of the king, the only ostensible object of the party, had now been effected, and it was natural to ask why Edward, in whose name the parliament had been summoned,<sup>1</sup> was not restored to the exercise of the royal authority. To obviate this difficulty, the bishop painted in strong colours the vindictive disposition which it suited him to ascribe to the captive monarch, and solemnly declared that to liberate him now would be to expose to certain death the princess, who by her wisdom and courage had so lately freed the realm from the tyranny of the royal favourites.

He therefore requested them to retire, and to return the next day, prepared to answer this important question—whether it were better that the father should retain the crown, or that the son should reign in the place of his father. At the appointed hour the hall was filled with the most riotous of the citizens of London, whose shouts and menaces were heard in the room

<sup>1</sup> The first writs had been tested by the prince as guardian of the realm; but this supposed Edward to be absent, and other writs, proroguing the meeting of parliament, were issued *teste rege*, though he was in reality a prisoner.

occupied by the parliament. Not a voice was raised in the king's favour. His greatest friends thought it a proof of courage to remain silent. The young Edward was declared king by acclamation, and presented in that capacity to the approbation of the populace. The temporal peers with many of the prelates publicly swore fealty to the new sovereign; the archbishop of York, and the bishops of London, Rochester, and Carlisle, though summoned by the justiciaries, had the resolution to refuse.

These irregular proceedings had probably been pursued to extort from the members an assent, from which they could not afterwards recede. Though the prince was declared king, his father had neither resigned nor been deposed.

To remedy the defect, a bill of six articles was exhibited against Edward by Stratford, bishop of Winchester, charging him with indolence, incapacity, the loss of the crown of Scotland, the violation of the coronation oath, oppression of the church, and cruelty to the barons. In the presence of the young prince seated on the throne, these charges were read and approved; and it was resolved that the reign of Edward of Carnarvon had ceased, and that the sceptre should be intrusted to the hands of his son, Edward of Windsor.

When this resolution was reported to the queen, she acted a part which could deceive no one. With the most violent expressions of grief, she lamented the misfortune of her husband, declared that the parliament had exceeded its legitimate powers,

and exhorted her son to refuse a crown which belonged to his father. To silence her pretended scruples, a deputation was appointed consisting of prelates, earls, barons, knights, citizens, and burgesses. They were instructed to proceed to Kenilworth, to give notice to Edward of the election of his son, to procure from him a voluntary resignation of the crown, and, if he refused, to give him back their homage, and to act as circumstances might suggest.

The bishops of Winchester and Lincoln, a secret and an open enemy, were the first who arrived. They employed arguments, and promises, and threats to obtain the consent of the unfortunate king; spoke of the greatness of mind he would display, and of the reward he would deserve, by renouncing the crown to restore peace to his people; promised him in the event of his compliance the enjoyment of a princely revenue and establishment; and



BERKELEY CASTLE

(An ancient baronial castle, still occupied as a dwelling. Edward II was murdered here in 1327)

[1327 A.D.]

threatened, if he refused, not only to depose him, but to pass by his son and choose a sovereign from another family. When they had sufficiently worked on his hopes and fears, they led him, dressed in a plain black gown, into the room in which the deputation had been arranged to receive him. At the sight of Orlton, his mortal enemy, who advanced to address him, he started back, and sank to the ground, but in a short time recovered sufficiently to attend to the speech of that prelate.

His answer has been differently reported by his friends and opponents. According to the former, he replied that no act of his could be deemed free, as long as he remained a prisoner; but that he should endeavour to bear patiently whatever might happen. By the latter we are told that he expressed his sorrow for having given such provocation to his people; submitted to what he could not avert; and thanked the parliament for having continued the crown in his family. Sir William Trussel immediately addressed him in these words: "I, William Trussel, proctor of the earls, barons, and others, having for this full and sufficient power, do render and give back to you Edward, once king of England, the homage and fealty of the persons named in my procuracy; and acquit and discharge them thereof, in the best manner that law and custom will give. And I now make protestation in their name that they will no longer be in your fealty or allegiance, nor claim to hold anything of you as king, but will account you hereafter as a private person, without any manner of royal dignity." The distressing ceremony was closed by the act of Sir Thomas Blount, the steward of the household, who, as was always done at the king's death, broke his staff of office, and declared that all persons engaged in the royal service were discharged.

In three days the deputation returned from Kenilworth, and the next morning the accession of the new sovereign, who was in his fourteenth year, was proclaimed by the heralds in the following unusual form: "Whereas Sir Edward, late king of England, of his own good will, and with the common advice and assent of the prelates, earls, barons, and other nobles, and all the commonalty of the realm, has put himself out of the government of the realm, and has granted and willed that the government of the said realm should come to Sir Edward, his eldest son and heir, and that he should govern the kingdom, and should be crowned king, on which account all the lords have done him homage; we cry and publish the peace of our said lord Sir Edward the son, and on his part strictly command and enjoin, under pain and peril of disherison, and loss of life and member, that no one break the peace of our said lord the king; for he is, and will be, ready to do justice to all and each of the said kingdom, both to the little and the great, in all things, and against all men. And if anyone have a claim against another, let him proceed by way of action, and not by violence or force." The same assertion, that the late king had resigned of his own free will with the consent of his parliament was unblushingly repeated at the coronation of the young prince.

## DEATH AND CHARACTER OF EDWARD II

Edward of Carnarvon (for so we must now call him) was destined to add one to the long catalogue of princes to whom the loss of a crown has been but the prelude to the loss of life. The attention of the earl of Lancaster to alleviate the sufferings of his captive did not accord with the views of the queen and her paramour. He was given to the custody of Sir John de Maltravers, a man who, by his former sufferings, had proved his attachment to the party.



To conceal the place of Edward's residence, he successively transferred the prisoner from Kenilworth to Corfe, Bristol, and Berkeley, and by the indignities which were offered to him, and the severities which were inflicted, laboured to deprive him of his reason or to shorten his life. It was in vain that the deposed monarch solicited an interview with his wife, or to be indulged with the company of his children. Isabella had not the courage to face the husband whom she had so cruelly injured, nor would she trust her sons in the presence of their father. Though in possession of the sovereign power, she was still harassed with the most gloomy apprehensions. In several parts of the kingdom associations were known to exist for the avowed purpose of liberating the captive; her scandalous connection with Mortimer was publicly noticed by the clergy in their sermons; and there was reason to fear that the church might compel her by censures to cohabit with her consort. To prevent the last she had recourse to her usual expedient. As her son led an army against the Scots, she called an assembly of prelates and barons at Stamford, laid before them her pretended reasons for dreading the sanguinary vengeance of her husband, and prevailed on them to declare that,



ENTRANCE TO ROOM IN BERKELEY CASTLE

(This room was the scene of the crime)

even if she desired it, they would not permit her to return to the society of Edward of Carnarvon.

Thomas Lord Berkeley, the owner of Berkeley castle, was now joined with Sir John Maltravers in the commission of guarding the captive monarch. It chanced that the former was detained at his manor of Bradley by a dangerous malady, during which the duty of watching the king devolved on two of his officers, Thomas Gournay and William Ogle. One night, while he was under their charge, the inmates of the castle were alarmed by the shrieks which issued from his apartment; the next morning the neighbouring gentry, with the citizens of Bristol, were invited to behold his dead body. Externally

[1327 A.D.]

it exhibited no marks of violence; but the distortion of the features betrayed the horrible agonies in which he had expired; and it was confidently whispered that his death had been procured by the forcible introduction of a red-hot iron into the bowels. No further investigation was made; and the corpse was privately interred in the abbey church of St. Peter in Gloucester.<sup>1</sup>

The first Edward had been in disposition a tyrant. As often as he dared, he had trampled on the liberties or invaded the property of his subjects; and yet he died in his bed, respected by his barons, and admired by his contemporaries. His son, the second Edward, was of a less imperious character; no acts of injustice or oppression were imputed to him by his greatest enemies; yet he was deposed from the throne and murdered in a prison. Of this difference between the lot of the father and the son the solution must be sought in the manners and character of the age. They both reigned over proud and factious nobles, jealous of their own liberties, but regardless of the liberties of others; and who, though they respected the arbitrary sway of a monarch as haughty and violent as themselves, despised the milder and more equitable administration of his successor. That successor, naturally easy and indolent, fond of the pleasures of the table and the amusements of the chase, willingly devolved on others the cares and labours of government. But in an age unacquainted with the more modern expedient of a responsible minister, the barons considered the elevation of the favourite as their own depression, his power as the infringement of their rights.

The result was what we have seen—a series of associations having for their primary object the removal of evil counsellors, as they were called, from the person of the prince, but gradually invading the legitimate rights of the crown, and terminating in the dethronement and assassination of the sovereign. For the part which Isabella acted in this tragedy no apology can be framed. The apprehensions of danger to her life, under which she attempted to conceal her real purposes, were of too flimsy a texture to blind the most devoted of her partisans; nor could she palliate her adulterous connection with Mortimer by retorting on her husband the charge of conjugal infidelity. In a few years her crime was punished with the general execration of mankind. She saw her paramour expire on a gibbet, and spent the remainder of her life in disgrace and obscurity.

<sup>1</sup>“The mystery surrounding Edward’s tragic end,” says Mackinnon,<sup>o</sup> “gave rise to a curious but incredible story of his changing his clothes with his servant, of his escape to Ireland and retirement to Lombardy where he lived several years as a hermit—all told with the circumstantial minuteness of a romancer to screen the culpable parties from the guilt of a horrible outrage, or whitewash their odious memory.”



TOWER ATTACHED TO KEEP OF BERKELEY CASTLE

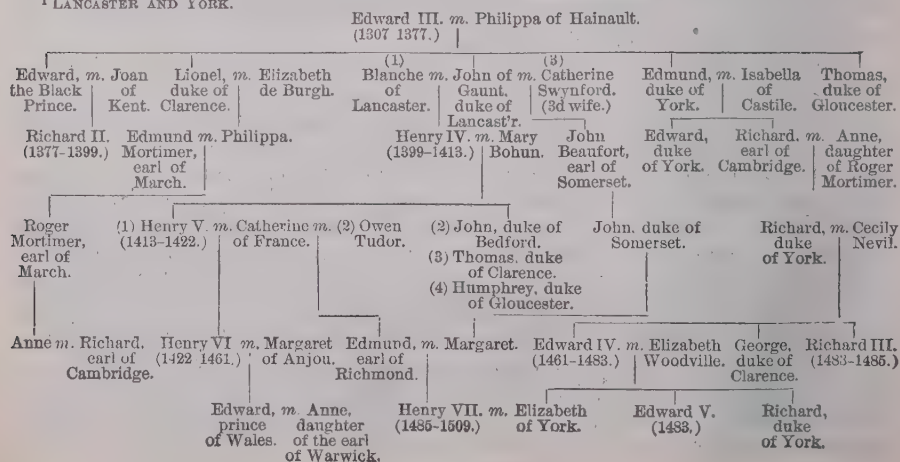
(Showing window of fatal room)

EDWARD III,<sup>1</sup> AND THE SCOTCH WAR

For some years, however, Isabella and Mortimer enjoyed the reward of their guilt. The youth of the king allowed them to retain that ascendancy over his mind which they had hitherto exercised; and the murder of his father secured them from the resentment of an injured husband. Of the forfeited estates of the Despensers and their partisans, the larger portion, with the title of Earl of March, fell to the lot of Mortimer; whilst the queen obtained the sum of £20,000 for the present payment of her debts, and a yearly income to the same amount for her future expenses.

In the parliament an act of indemnity was passed for all violences committed during the revolution; the award against the Despensers was re-enacted; the judgments given against the late earl of Lancaster and his adherents were reversed; both the Great Charter and the charter of forests were confirmed, and certain grievances abolished; and a council of regency was appointed, to consist of four bishops, four earls, and six barons. Most, however, of its members belonged to the queen's party, and those who were not under her control were gradually dismissed by the contrivance of that unprincipled woman and her paramour.

The first measures of the new government were disconcerted by an unexpected occurrence. Since the truce with Scotland only a few years had expired; but the state of affairs in England offered to the Scottish king a temptation which he had not the virtue to resist. He determined, in violation of his engagements, to wrest, if possible, from the young king a solemn renunciation of that superiority which had been claimed by his father and grandfather. Aware of the intentions of Bruce, the English government had recourse to every expedient to avert hostilities. The lords of the marches were ordered to observe the articles of the late treaty; it was solemnly confirmed by the new king; envoys were sent to negotiate with the Scottish monarch; and it was at last agreed that ambassadors should meet in the marches, and treat of a final peace. But Bruce summoned his military retainers to join him at the same place and on the same day; and Edward, to be prepared for the event, was compelled to issue similar orders to the tenants

<sup>1</sup> LANCASTER AND YORK.



[1327 A.D.]

of the crown and the men of the northern counties. The negotiators met: the Scots insisted on their own terms; and when the English demurred, an army of twenty-four thousand men under Randolph and Douglas crossed the borders, and ravaged the county of Cumberland.

Edward consumed six weeks at York, waiting for the arrival of his forces. At the suggestion of Mortimer, he had purchased, for the sum of £14,000, the services of John of Hainault and a body of foreigners, who were lodged in the best quarters and treated with the best cheer. On Trinity Sunday the king entertained five hundred knights, the queen sixty ladies, at their respective tables; but the festivity was interrupted by an alarm of a tumult in the city. The insolence of the foreigners had irritated the Lincolnshire archers; and in a battle, which lasted till night, some hundreds were slain on each side. The men of Hainault claimed the victory; but they were compelled from that moment to use the same precautions as in a hostile country, and never considered themselves safe till they had left the island. Commissioners were appointed to inquire into the origin of the quarrel; whatever may have been the result, it was deemed prudent to suppress it.<sup>d</sup>

In the pages of Froissart,<sup>f</sup> we find a vivid description, "how the king of England made his first journey against the Scots." Having marched to Durham, he followed the course of the invaders by the smoke of the desolating fires which had marked their progress. Still the Scots wasted the country around; and the large English army, encumbered with a vast camp-equipage, and marching "through marishes and savage deserts, mountains and dales," followed them in vain for two days. It was then determined to leave behind them the baggage and stores of provisions, each horseman carrying a single loaf; and on the third day they crossed the Tyne. Here, suffering great privations, the English host remained seven days, looking in vain for their enemy, whom they expected to cross by the same ford. At length Edward proclaimed a great reward for the man who would discover to him where he would find the Scots; and Thomas de Rokeby led him back by a march of three days to the Wear, where they were encamped in huts, on a neighbouring hill. The two armies were ranged in order of battle; and "then some of the lords of England brought their young king on horseback, before all the battalions of the host, to give thereby the more courage to all his people." But the river was between the armies, and the hill was inaccessible. Heralds summoned the Scots to come into the plain and fight; but the Scots answered, "Here we shall abide, as long as it shall please us."

For three days the armies remained in this position; but on the fourth morning, when the English looked upon the mountain, the enemy was no more seen. Edward followed, and found them in a still more formidable position, and for eighteen days "they lodged each against other." But on



EDWARD III

the first night two hundred Scots broke into the English camp, with the cry of "Douglas! Douglas! Ye shall die, thieves of England," and they nearly captured the young king sleeping, cutting asunder the cords of his tent. At last, the Scots again silently retreated by a night-march, and the English, giving up the pursuit in despair, returned to Durham, and thence to York. This was the first lesson in warfare of the great Edward. The youth was out-generalled; and it is recorded that he wept, when he was finally circumvented by the skill of an enemy so inferior in numbers.

In the ensuing spring of 1328, a peace was concluded with Scotland, by which the independence of that country, under King Robert Bruce, was fully recognised, the claim of feudal superiority being wholly renounced. It was also agreed that the Scotch regalia, as well as the "stone of destiny," should be restored. Thirty thousand marks were paid by Scotland, in compensation for the damages caused by the invasion of the previous year. Further, the sister of Edward was contracted in marriage with David, the son of Robert Bruce, who became king, upon the death of his heroic father, in 1328.

#### THE FALL OF MORTIMER

The treaty with Scotland was unpopular in England; and the Londoners resisted the removal of the famous coronation stone. The ex-queen Isabella and Mortimer, earl of March, were from this, and other causes, becoming odious. The young king was not considered responsible for this wise but unpopular settlement of the ancient dispute as to Scotland being a fief of the English crown. In 1328, a few months after his return from his northern campaign, Edward was married to Philippa, daughter of the count of Hainault, to whom he had been contracted by his mother. He was advancing to manhood, and had shown his courage and activity in his march to the Tyne. But Mortimer and Isabella were still the ruling powers in the state. Dangers were gathering around them; and they put on a bold front to their enemies. A confederacy against them was formed between the earl of Lancaster, nominally the head of the regency, and the late king's brothers, Kent and Norfolk. These princes were irresolute, and Lancaster was visited by a heavy fine. The earl of Kent, a weak young man, was persuaded by the spies and agents of Mortimer that Edward II was still alive; and he was imposed upon to the extent of addressing a letter to the deposed king, under the belief that he was in captivity. The letter was conveyed to Isabella and Mortimer, who summoned a pretended parliament, composed of their partisans, which adjudged the unfortunate victim to die as a traitor; and he was accordingly beheaded on the 19th of March, 1330.

A little after this, Queen Philippa gave birth to a son, Edward, so renowned in coming years as the Black Prince. It was time that the king should assert his own authority against his mother and her favourite. He confided his purpose to the earl of Montacute. A parliament was to assemble at Nottingham; and the ex-queen took up her residence in the castle, with Edward and Mortimer. The castle was filled with guards; and the keys of its gates were taken every night to the private chamber of Isabella. But there was a subterraneous passage, leading from the west side of the sandstone rock on which the castle stands, the entrance to which from the road is still known as Mortimer's hole. This communication was made known to Edward and Montacute by the governor. In the silent midnight hour of the 10th of October, Montacute entered, with sufficient force, and being

[1330 A. D.]

joined by the young king, they proceeded to the rooms of the principal tower, and having seized the object of their search, by forcing his chamber-door and slaying those knights who defended the entrance, they carried him off in spite of Isabella's cries of "Spare my gentle Mortimer." The next morning the king issued a proclamation, in which he announced that the affairs of the kingdom had been evil-managed, to the dishonour of the realm, and to the impoverishment of the people; that he had caused the earl of March, and others, to be arrested, as the principal movers of these ills; and that all men should know that for the future he would himself govern his people by right and reason, as became his own dignity, and with the advice of the common council of the realm. On the 26th of November, Mortimer was condemned as a traitor, by a parliament at Westminster. The charges against him were, that he had fomented the dissensions between the late king and his queen; that he had illegally assumed the power vested in the council of regency; that he had caused Edward II to be put to death; that he had compelled the earl of Lancaster and others to pay excessive fines; and had instigated the plot against the earl of Kent. He was executed on the 29th of November, with four others, as his accomplices. The pope wrote to Edward not to expose the shame of his mother; and she, therefore, passed the rest of her life, twenty-eight years, in confinement at her manor of Rising.

#### THE RESULTS OF MISRULE; THE NEW EPOCH

We at length may quit this ghastly region of crime and retribution. In the annals of England there is no era of twenty years so full of revolution and counter-revolution; of imbecile authority struggling with lawless force; of bitter hatreds and outraged affections; of prosecutions and executions and secret murders. Such a system of misrule, approaching at times to a state of anarchy, must of necessity have been accompanied by widespread corruption and general misery. There is a contemporary English poem, *On the evil Times of Edward II*, which describes briefly, but emphatically, some of the class-iniquities and national calamities of the days of Gaveston and the Despensers. According to this picture of manners, the fiend showed his mastery, and raised such a strife, "that every lordling was busy his own life to save; each was provoked to murder the other, and would spare none for kindred. While these great lordlings were hurled on a heap, the prelates of holy church were blinded with covetousness. And then came a murrain of the cattle, and a dearth of corn, and poor simple men were a-hungred." This quaint old rhymer speaks as a bitter satirist; but with a circumstantial precision which shows that he wrote from his own observation. "Simony and covetise have the world at their will. Abbots and priors ride with horses and hounds as if they were knights, while poor men cower at the abbey-gate all day in hunger and in cold." As he satirises the church, so is he equally severe upon baron and knight. He accuses them even of cowardice; "they are lions in hall, and hares in the field. Knightship is debased and lame of foot. There is a new cut of squierie in every town—gentle men that should be, that are swollen with pride, and have cast nurture into the ditch. Justices, sheriffs, mayors, and bailiffs—they know how to make the dark night out of the fair day. If the king raises a taxation, it is so twitted away that half is stolen ere it is accounted for—there are so many partners. The rich are spared, and the poor are robbed. Every man is ready to fill his own purse, and the king has the least part, and he hath all the curse. The pleader





[1330 A.D.]

tion of the general body of the people, such as it is described in the poem *On the evil Times of Edward II*, is not so apparent in the usual historical relations.

Whatever might have been the ferocity and cruelty of the days of chivalry, whose most golden period belongs to the reign of Edward III, we may well believe that the spirit which it engendered had considerable influence in forming the character of what was now the English nation. Froissart delights in setting forth the peaceful graces of the regal and noble life—the minstrelsy and tales of glee, the dances and the carols. He goes forth to the chase with hawks and hounds. He sees the fairest maiden bestow the silken scarf upon the victor in the tournament. He hears without any shudder the cries of the herald, “The love of ladies”—“Glory won by blood.” He sees not the bleeding horse and the gasping knight. There are death-wounds in the *mêlée*; but the wine-flask is in the lighted hall. In the same spirit does he describe the course of warfare—the brilliant charge of the cavalry, the unbroken ranks of the footmen, the fatal aim of the archers, the solemn confession before battle, the elation of heart at the cry of “advance banners,” the knightening in the field. The horrors are passed over in a few brief sentences, containing the emphatic words “burned”—“robbed”—“wasted”—“pillaged”—“slain”—“beheaded.” And yet out of all this was engendered a better state of society, which could never have grown amongst an unchivalrous aristocracy and an unwarlike yeomanry. Out of the Norman oppressors and the Saxon serfs had arisen a great race, whose blood, having mingled with that of the first Britons and their Roman masters, had at length produced one nation “inferior to none existing in the world,” says Macaulay:<sup>k</sup> “Every yeoman from Kent to Northumberland valued himself as one of a race born for victory and dominion, and looked down with scorn upon a nation before which his ancestors had trembled.”

This was the spirit which made Crécy, the first great popular remembrance, long cherished with a defying pride; but which had a positive effect for instant good upon the Englishmen who fought by the side of Edward and his son, as well as upon all who heard of their countrymen’s daring and steadiness. Politically, the French war was unjust. Morally, it elevated the whole people. The same spirit which won the great battles of the Somme and the Loire had to win many a constitutional fight against the attempted encroachments upon liberty of the powerful monarch who led the English lords and yeomen to victory. As the whole nation rose in military prowess—as the archer in his buff jacket became as important as the knight in his steel hauberk—the physical hardihood and the intellectual vigour of the people were more and more developed. The burgher became more resolved to maintain his free charters with his own right arm; and the noble found that his own security was mixed up with the liberty and happiness of the commons; and he joined with them in making redress of grievances go hand in hand with the grant of supplies. Then, too, men began to think. Miracles ceased in the presence of holy relics, and dispensations for sin came to be despised. The preaching of Wycliffe found willing hearers. The tales of Chaucer were read in the baronial hall and in the student’s chamber. The universities were filled with scholars. The laws were administered in the language of the nation. The Anglo-Norman had given place to that noble tongue upon which our literature has been built. Five centuries ago, the course upon which the English people had to run their race was straight before them; and however they have been assailed by tyranny, or however corrupted by prosperity, they are still marching forward on the same vantage ground.

Edward was twenty years of age in 1332. His great talents, his resolved character, and his towering ambition were rapidly developing themselves. In him, the martial spirit of his grandfather had revived with a loftier and more chivalrous generosity. His public actions were less regulated by his own arbitrary will than those of the first Edward; and he had a more extended range of opinion to propitiate than that of a feudal aristocracy. His wars were essentially popular. When, in 1346, he resolved upon the invasion of France, he published a manifesto upon the cause of the war, which he addressed to the provincial of the order of Preaching Friars in England, in which he exhorts him to urge his brethren to set forth this cause to their congregations in their sermons. This shows that the great king did not manifest that indifference to the sentiments of his people, which the mere despot, and the agents of despotism, think themselves privileged to assume. His wars involved heavy charges upon the industry of the nation; but they were nevertheless invariably considered as national undertakings. If these undertakings had been regarded upon strictly reasonable principles by king and people, the young heir of Robert Bruce would not have been disturbed in his succession to the throne of Scotland, nor the right of Philip of Valois to be king of France disputed. The Scottish wars, whatever form they might assume, were unavoidable, as long as two military nations, undivided by seas or mountains, had aggressions to carry forward and injuries to revenge. The gradual interfusion of races and interests could be the only pacificator. The French wars, prolonged as they were for a hundred and twenty years, had a natural termination, when the plans of continental dominion were found to be utterly incompatible with the prosperity of this island realm. The importance of the Scottish wars passed away, for the most part, when Bruce had fought his great fight for independence. The French wars involve so many passages of the most vivid historical interest, present so many remarkable points of comparison between the two nations, and have had such an enduring effect upon the policy of both governments that these events will require to be related with occasional detail till the extinction of the English power in France was happily accomplished.

#### EDWARD BALIOL

The attempt of Edward Baliol to recover the crown of Scotland during the minority of the young king, David, arose out of the discontent of some English lords who claimed lands in that country. The king of England is supposed, with good reason, to have encouraged the attempt; but the passage of armed men through the northern counties was strictly forbidden: and Baliol sailed with his associates from the Humber, and landed in Fife in August, 1332. His success was marvellous. On the 27th of September he was crowned at Scone. But his reverse of fortune was equally rapid. On the 16th of December he was surprised at Annan, and fled to the marches. During his brief tenure of power, Baliol had acknowledged that the crown of Scotland was a fief held under the crown of England; and Edward had concluded with him a treaty of alliance. Early in 1333, the Scots, under the leaders who acted in the name of King David, invaded England; Baliol commenced the siege of Berwick; and the English king came in May to his aid.

On the 19th of July was fought the great battle of Halidon Hill, in which Edward was completely victorious. Here, amidst a fearful slaughter of his countrymen, fell the regent Douglas, and many earls and barons. Berwick.



[1333-1341 A.D.]

was surrendered to the English, and Baliol was again seated on his uneasy throne. Then, at a parliament held at Edinburgh, a large portion of the south of Scotland was annexed to England. This impolitic dismemberment of the kingdom was an outrage upon the national feeling, and Baliol was again driven forth in 1334. Again, in 1335, Scotland was ravaged by the English forces, in concert with Baliol; and for several years a struggle was carried on, with varied success. But Edward had other objects presented to his ambition. The king of France had espoused the cause of the Scottish nation against Baliol and his powerful supporter; and Edward had now an ostensible motive for commencing a great war, for the purpose of asserting his pretensions to the crown of France. In a few years the adherents of David were the winners of fortress after fortress; and the son of Bruce, in 1341, returned to his kingdom.

## THE FRENCH SUCCESSION

In the manifesto of the 15th of March, 1346, addressed to the provincial of the Preaching Friars, King Edward states that upon the death of his uncle, Charles, king of France, he being in his minority, by the advice of his lords spiritual and temporal, and of his most skilled councillors, sent ambassadors into France to demand the crown; and that they were compelled to return, their lives having been threatened by Philip, who had usurped the royal authority. Charles IV, called the Fair, died early in 1328, leaving no male issue. But a posthumous daughter was born five months after his death. In the interval, Philip of Valois, who was cousin to the deceased king, had been appointed regent. Some French authorities state that Edward demanded the regency, but that Philip was appointed by the peers of France. But there can be no doubt that Edward put forward his pretensions in the way which he stated in his manifesto of 1346. In 1329, however, he went to France, and did homage for his lands there to his rival Philip. He was then only seventeen years of age, and was under the tutelage of Mortimer and his mother. But in 1337, after the king of France had taken part in the Scottish war, Edward boldly assumed the title of King of France, and prepared to enforce his claim at the sword's point. His claim rested upon these grounds:

What is called the Salic law, by which females in France are excluded from succession to the throne, was an unwritten law; and was not even a well-defined and fixed principle in all its bearings. Although it set aside the female herself, Edward contended that it did not set aside the male heir of such female. His mother, Isabella, was sister to three successive kings; and though excluded from the throne herself might transmit a title to her son. He was the nearest male heir through his mother. Philip of Valois, although the affinity was through his father, was not so near akin as Edward by one degree. The civilians were greatly divided upon the question, and Edward had, no doubt, abundant counsel to bring his demands to the arbitrament of warfare. In all his proceedings he seems to have conducted this great contest as if it were a wager of battle, in which heaven would decide the right by the issue. The waste of life, the destruction of property, never disturbed the course of feudal policy. And yet, in 1340, Edward, addressing Philip of Valois, demanded what he called his rightful inheritance; and added, "to prevent the mortality amongst Christians, since the quarrel apparently belongs to you and me, we are desirous that the controversy between us may be decided by our own persons, body to body; and in case you shall not vouchsafe this way, that then the dispute may be ended by the battle of one hundred of the

most efficient persons of your party, and as many of my liege subjects." The king of France replied that he had seen the letters addressed to one Philip of Valois, but as they did not come to him he should return no answer, but as soon as he should think fit would drive out of his kingdom those who had presumed to enter it in arms. Edward had invaded France from Flanders in 1339, but upon this occasion he returned to England without striking any important blow. He had depended upon foreign alliances, which had failed him in the hour of need.

In 1340, Edward, who had gone over to England, leaving the queen at Ghent, was informed that Philip had collected a large fleet in the harbour of Sluys, at the mouth of the Schelde.<sup>b</sup> The king immediately collected every vessel in the southern ports, and declared his intention to seek and fight the enemy. The opposition and entreaties of his council were despised. "You are all," he exclaimed, "in a conspiracy against me. I shall go: those who are afraid may stay at home." He sailed with a gallant fleet from Orwell, and the next evening, off Blankenberghe, discovered across a neck of land the forest of masts which occupied the harbour. Three knights were landed, who reported at their return that they had reckoned nineteen sail of unusual dimensions, two hundred ships of war, and a still greater number of smaller vessels.

During the night the enemy moved from their anchorage, and at sunrise were discovered in four lines moored across the passage. Their ships carried turrets provided with stones on their mast-heads, and were fastened to each other with chains of iron. Edward placed the strongest of his ships in front, so that every vessel carrying a body of men-at-arms was accompanied by two sail manned with archers. At first, the king put out to sea; a movement which impressed the enemy with a notion that he declined an engagement; but his object was to avoid the sun, which shone full in his eyes; and soon afterwards, having the wind and tide in his favour, he bore down on the first line of the French. Each commander selected his opponent, and met with a gallant resistance: but the discharge of the archers gradually cleared the decks of the enemy; the men-at-arms immediately boarded; every ship in the first division was captured; and the banner of England waved triumphantly over the colours of France.

At this important moment arrived Lord Morley with a fleet from the northern counties; and the victors with their friends proceeded to attack the three remaining divisions. But a panic struck the second and third lines of the enemy; the men leaped from their ships, which they could not disengage, into their boats; and more than two thousand are said to have perished in the waves. The fourth line remained, consisting of sixty large vessels, reinforced by the bravest of those who had escaped from the captured ships. This, though the victory was already won, opposed an obstinate resistance to the conquerors; and by prolonging the contest till midnight afforded to a few stragglers the opportunity of escaping in the dark. With the exception of these, the whole fleet remained in the hands of the English. Edward is said to have lost two ships, which were sunk, and about four thousand men; the slain and drowned of the enemy amounted, according to report, to seven times that number.<sup>d</sup>

The victory was so complete that the French courtiers did not dare to apprise Philip of the event which had transferred his entire fleet to his enemy. His buffoon was instructed to hint to him the issue of his great preparations to stop the passage of Edward into Flanders. "The English," said the clever jester, "are rank cowards, for they had not the courage to jump overboard

[1340-1344 A.D.]

as your majesty's French and Normans did." The naval victory of Sluys was followed by the siege of Tournay. It was at this period that Edward challenged Philip to single combat. But that year a truce between France and England was concluded which lasted till 1342. In 1343 negotiations for peace were carried on before the pope at Avignon, without any result. In 1344 the war was recommenced.<sup>b</sup>

It was after the disastrous failure of the siege of Tournay that Edward had a serious quarrel with his chief ministers. Suddenly, without any previous warning, he crossed from Zealand to England and dismissed the chancellor, treasurer, and master of rolls, and ordered the arrest of three of the judges and many of the revenue collectors. Then he ordered John Stratford, archbishop of Canterbury and president of the council, to answer before the court of exchequer to the charge of wasting royal money. The archbishop appealed to Magna Charta, and refused to appear before any other judges than his peers. At the next meeting of parliament the lords upheld his contention and insisted on their privileges. Edward, although protesting that such action meant a weakening of his prerogative, was finally forced to drop the proceedings against Stratford.<sup>a</sup>

#### THE FLEMISH ALLIANCE

The character of Edward III was produced by a combination of the qualities of the knight and the politician. He was ready to take the foremost place in the battle-field; to run great hazards in his own person; to surround himself with all the pomp of chivalry, and to display its occasional courtesy and munificence. But he clearly understood the position of England with relation to the other European states; and he was not insensible to the advantages he possessed in the superior condition of his own people, and, what was of more importance, in their free spirit as compared with the French. France, England, and Flanders had many points of resemblance, and were drawn closer together than any other European nations. But they had also essential points of difference. The nobles of France did not form a strong collective body like those of England. The people had not been blended with the aristocracy in the common assertion of their liberties. True freedom—that which has been won, and can be maintained—was unknown to France. There were no institutions which could be considered established or sound. There were continual changes of principles of government; no recognised rights, amidst alternations of sudden liberty and absolute power. Thus, there was no great popular class upon whom the king and the nobility could rely, and at whose head they could confidently march to victory.

On the other hand, Flanders was essentially democratic. The burghers had accumulated riches far above those of the rest of Europe; and their corporations of trades in Ghent, Bruges, and other cities had established a power before which their sovereign counts trembled and their nobles scarcely exhibited their authority. The great enemy of their liberties was the king of France. He had defeated the revolted burghers at Cassel, in the first year of his reign; and the Flemings, now under their great leader, Jacob van Artevelde, were prepared for the strictest alliance with England. This extraordinary man, commonly known as the "brewer of Ghent," was a noble, allied to the first families in Flanders. He was a "brewer," as a prince in England is often a "fishmonger." He was a member of the guild of brewers. Edward knew the value of this alliance with the Flemings and their demo-



cratic leader. Their friendship was founded upon something higher than the patronage of the king or the servility of the tribune of the people. Queen Philippa held the brewer's infant son, the famous Philip, at the baptismal font; and Artevelde thought to find a powerful protector for his Flemings against the tyranny of their native rulers, and the jealousy which France felt of a dangerous neighbour, by recommending that the burghers should depose Louis, count of Flanders, and call Edward, prince of Wales, to the government. Bruges and Ypres supported the proposition. The populace of Ghent suddenly turned against the man under whose authority they had arrived, in common with the other towns, at an unequalled height of prosperity—an authority far more potent than that of their sovereign count, who had removed himself for safety to France. They murdered Artevelde. At his instigation Edward had assumed the title of King of France. When the king heard of his friend's death, he put to sea in great anger and returned to England. A deputation from all the trading towns, except Ghent, appeased his wrath, and the alliance was continued. "So, little by little," says Froissart,<sup>f</sup> "the death of Jacob van Artevelde was forgotten."

This event happened in July, 1345. The commercial intercourse between England and Flanders was, at this time, of the greatest importance to both countries. France had scarcely any internal trade, and less foreign commercial intercourse. With Bruges on the north and Bordeaux on the south, the traffic of London and Bristol and the Cinque Ports had become very large. The parliament of England willingly voted large sums for the war with France. While Edward was negotiating with Artevelde, the earl of Derby was winning battles in Gascony. English armies had also previously found an entrance to France through Brittany, in consequence of a disputed succession to the duchy. Edward supported the claim of John de Montfort against that of Charles of Blois, nephew of the French king. The defence of the castle of Hennebon by Joan de Montfort, during the captivity of her husband, is one of the most interesting episodes of the wars in which England was engaged. The historian and the artist have delighted to exhibit the heroic duchess, as described by Froissart<sup>f</sup> with "the courage of a man, and the heart of a lion," showing to the people of Rennes her infant boy, and saying, "See here my little son, who shall be the restorer of his father." They have painted her, after the old chronicler, besieged in Hennebon, and at the last extremity looking down along the sea, out of a window in the castle, and crying aloud, smiling for great joy, "I see the succours of England coming." Sir Walter Manny was her deliverer; and the road to France was open through Brittany.

All these attacks upon the French kingdom, conducted with various fortune by England, from 1338 to 1345, were but preludes to the great attempt of 1346, when Edward, relying less upon Gascon or Fleming than upon his English yeomen, landed near Cape la Hogue, on the coast of Normandy. He had with his army his own first-born son, now sixteen years of age. He had earls of famous name, barons and knights. But his "four thousand men of arms, and ten thousand archers, besides Irishmen and Welshmen that followed the host on foot," were his main strength. They were the despised "fantassins" of the mounted warriors. They belonged to a novel system of tactics, which the French historian, Michelet, says "arose out of a new state of society"; and the deeds which they did "revealed a secret which nobody suspected—that of the real want of military power of the feudal world, which was believed to be the only military world." The French nobles, themselves full of courage and contempt of death, despised the infantry and archers taken from the common people. The English earls and knights led them on

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foot to victory. The French leaders were afraid of trusting the people with the mighty bow. The English twice conquered France with a handful of yeomen. This is the feeling with which Barante, a Frenchman, speaks of Crécy and Agincourt—and he is right.

## EDWARD'S NORMAN CAMPAIGN

Edward III assumed the title of king of France in 1337, and in 1340 he quartered the arms of France with those of England. Upon his coins he was king of England and France. In that year a statute was passed which shows how completely the feeling of nationality had now possessed the race of Englishmen, and how jealous they were of the independence of their island. "Know ye," says Edward, "that whereas some people do think that by reason that the realm of France is devolved to us as right heir of the same, and forasmuch as we be king of France, our realm of England should be put in subjection of the king and of the realm of France in time to come. We will, and grant, and stablish, that our said realm of England, nor the people of the same, of what estate or condition they be, shall not in any time to come be put in subjection nor in obeisance of us, nor of our heirs and successors, as kings of France." All the supposed pre-eminence of the French race over the English had been obliterated in the amalgamation of three centuries. In 1362, it was enacted that all pleas in the courts "shall be pleaded, showed, defended, answered, debated, and judged in the English tongue," and not in the French tongue, "which is much unknown in the said realm."

The English people, speaking the English tongue, had become inspired with the passion for continental dominion. Under the Norman kings and the Norman barons they had been made to feel the yoke of the conquerors. They would now go forth themselves to conquest. There was a great issue to be tried, in a daring adventure for the possession of the noble land that their king demanded as his own. Edward was called by his rival Philip "the wool-merchant." The growers of wool, the dealers of the staple, would go forth with bow and bill to encounter, at any odds, the chivalry of France. On the 10th of July, 1346, ten thousand archers of England were lodged on the sands near Cape La Hogue. As if the circumstances of the Norman conquest were to be parodied, Froissart says, "The king issued out of his ship, and the first foot that he set on the ground, he fell so rudely that the blood burst out of his nose. The knights that were about him took him up and said, 'Sir, for God's sake, enter again into your ship, and come not a land this day, for this is but an evil sign for us.' Then the king answered quickly, and said, 'Wherefore? This is a good token for me, for the land desireth to have me,' of the which answer all his men were right joyful."

The march of the invading army was in perfect conformity with the usual mode of making war in the feudal times. To desolate the country, to burn the towns if they resisted, to plunder the inhabitants even when they peacefully submitted—these were the aspects in which King Edward and his English presented themselves to the people over whom he claimed to rule. Keeping near the coast, they arrived at Barfleur, which was given up "for fear of death"; gold and silver and jewels were found, and "so much riches that the boys and villeins of the host set nothing by good furred gowns." On they marched to Cherbourg, "a great and rich town, but into the castle they could not come, it was so strong." From Cherbourg they proceeded to Carentan, where the castle was taken by assault. During this progress along the sands

and marshes of the coast, the fleet kept in view; and the captured burgesses that were worth ransom were sent on board. In this manner the army reached Caen. They entered the city, but the people cast down stones and timber and iron upon the English who had entered their streets, and killed and wounded five hundred of them.

Edward was now fully committed to the dangers of his adventure; for he sent his ships home, laden with plunder and prisoners. From Caen, he rode in the same order as before, "brenning and exiling the country," till he reached Evreux; and thence marched to Louviers. His object was to cross the Seine at Rouen, and then march to Calais, expecting to be joined by an army of Flemings. But Philip was at Rouen before him, and was encamped on the right bank of the river, having destroyed the bridge of boats. Below Rouen the passage of the Seine was too difficult to be attempted; and the English army was therefore led along the left bank, by Vernon and Mantes, to Poissy—a march of more than sixty miles. The bridge here was partially destroyed. The position of the English was now one of extreme peril. They were separated by two great rivers, the Seine and the Somme, from their Flemish auxiliaries; and Philip was collecting a great force as he proceeded towards Paris in a parallel march on the right bank of the Seine. There was no course but that of fronting the danger. Part of Edward's host marched on to St. Germain, and even to Neuilly. King Philip caused all the penthouses of the city to be pulled down, and took up a position at St. Denis.

Meanwhile, the English had repaired the bridge of Poissy, the broken arches and joists of which lay in the river; and Edward rested in the nunnery at Poissy. He then crossed the bridge at Poissy; while Philip, at St. Denis, was preparing to resist an attack upon Paris. The course of the English was now direct by Beauvais, on to the Somme, through Poix. But Philip had made a rapid march upon Amiens, detachments of his men-at-arms having preceded him along the right bank of the Somme, guarding every ford and breaking down every bridge. The main body of his army was gradually shutting up the invaders in the nook between the Somme and the sea. Edward had reached Airaines; and he had sent out his marshals with three thousand archers and men-at-arms to find some passage. At Picquigny they were boldly met, and again at Pont de Remy, and could accomplish nothing. They returned to Airaines and made their report, and "the king of England was right pensive." The English marched out of Airaines in the morning, and the French entered the town at noon.

In haste the English had departed from Airaines. When the French marched in, the meat was on the spits, the bread was in the oven, the tables were spread for dinner, the wine-tuns were at hand. There was no time for feasting. Rapidly they marched to Oisemont, where the king took up his quarters. The marshals had ridden to the gates of Abbeville and onward to St. Valery. The bridge of Abbeville was within the walls; the Somme widened and was more dangerous as it neared the sea. Prisoners of the country were brought in to Edward; and he "right courteously demanded of them if there were any amongst them that knew any passage beneath Abbeville." If any man would show such a passage, he and twenty of his company should be quit of his ransom. In the hour of his need, help came from one of those humble men that the tyrannous host had made war upon in their corn-fields and hovels. "A varlet, called Gobyn Agace, stepped forth and said to the king, 'Sir, I promise you on the jeopardy of my head I shall bring you to such a place.'" It was a passage a little above Abbeville, hard in the bottom with



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white stones, thence called Blanquetaque. Here the river was tidal; and Agace said that when the flood was gone the stream was so low that it might be passed without danger.

The king slept not much that night. At midnight his trumpet was sounded, and at daybreak of that morning of August the host had departed from Oisemont, led by Gobyn Agace to the much-desired ford. At the sun-rising they had reached it. But the flood was up; and they waited till the hour of prime—the first canonical hour of prayer—until the tide ebbed. But a great company of horse and foot, to the number of twelve thousand, had been gathered under the command of a Norman baron, Sir Godemar du Fay, on the right bank of the river. The French and English struggled in the ford; and the Genoese of Philip's army did great trouble with their crossbows; but the archers of Edward shot so wholly together that at length the way was cleared, and Sir Godemar du Fay was discomfited and fled. The king having crossed, he thanked God for his army's escape from their great peril; and dismissed Gobyn Agace with a present of a hundred nobles and a horse. The army then marched on, and lodged in the fields near Crécy. The king of France heard that the afternoon flood had come in at Blanquetaque; and so he rested that night at Abbeville.<sup>b</sup>

#### THE BATTLE OF CRÉCY (1346 A.D.)

Edward was now within a few days' march of the frontiers of Flanders, but nothing was seen or heard of his Flemish auxiliaries. He was probably tired of retreating, and encouraged by the result of the remarkable battle at Blanquetaque. When told that Philip would still pursue him, he said, "We will go no further." As he had not the eighth part of the number of men that Philip had, his marshals selected an advantageous position on an eminence a little behind the village of Crécy.<sup>1</sup> After supper he entered his oratory, and, falling on his knees, prayed God to bring him off with honour if he should fight on the morrow. Rising at early dawn, he and his son Edward heard mass and communicated; the greater part of his people confessed and put themselves in a comfortable state of mind. They had not been harassed for many hours; they had fared well: they had had a good night's rest, and were fresh and vigorous.

After mass the king ordered the men to arm and assemble, each under his proper banner. In the rear of his army he enclosed a large park near a wood, in which he placed all his baggage wagons and all his horses; for everyone, man-at-arms as well as archer, was to fight that day on foot. The first division was under the command of his young son, with whom were placed the earls of Warwick and Oxford, and other experienced captains; it consisted of about 800 men-at-arms, 2,000 archers, and 1,000 Welsh foot. A little behind them, and rather on their flank, stood the second division of 800 men-at-arms and 1,200 archers, who were commanded by the earls of Northampton and Arundel, the lords De Roos, Willoughby, and others. The third division stood in reserve on the top of the hill; it consisted of 700 men-at-arms and

<sup>1</sup> The hollow in which the battle was fought is called "*La vallée des claires ou gentilshommes*." The wood at the extreme right of the field, where 30,000 French were killed on the morning after the battle, is still called by the people "the forest bathed in blood." Towards the centre of the field is the spot where, according to Crécy tradition, the king of Bohemia is said to have fallen; his badge of three ostrich feathers and motto—"Ich Dien"—being said to have been taken from him and assumed by the Black Prince.

2,000 archers. The archers of each division formed in front, in the shape of a portcullis or harrow.

After his march and counter-march on the day of Blanquetaque, Philip rested at Abbeville, and he lost a whole day there, waiting for reinforcements, among which were one thousand lances of the count of Savoy. This morning, however, the French king marched to give battle, breathing fury and vengeance: his countenance was clouded—a savage silence could not conceal the agitation of his soul—all his movements were precipitate, without plan or concert. It seemed as if the shades of De Clisson and his murdered companions flitted before his eyes and obscured his vision. He ran rather than marched from Abbeville, and when he came in sight of the well-ordered divisions of Edward, his men were tired, and his rearguard far behind. By the advice of a Bohemian captain, he agreed to put off the battle till the morrow, and two officers immediately rode, one along the van and the other towards the rear, crying out, "Halt, banners, in the name of God and St. Denis!" Those that were in front stopped, but those behind rode on, saying that they would not halt until they were as forward as the first.

When the van felt the rear pressing on them they pushed forward, and neither the king nor the marshals could stop them, but on they marched without any order until they came near the English. Then the foremost ranks fell back at once in great disorder, which alarmed those in the rear, who thought there had been fighting. There was then room enough for those behind to pass in front had they been willing so to do: "some did so, and some remained very shy." All the roads between Abbeville and Crécy were covered with common people, who, while they were yet three leagues from their enemy, were bawling out, "Kill! kill!" "There is no man," says Froissart,<sup>i</sup> "unless he had been present, that can imagine or truly record the confusion of that day, especially the bad management and disorder of the French, whose troops were innumerable." The kings, dukes, counts, barons, and lords of France advanced each as he thought best. Philip was carried forward by the torrent, and as soon as he came in sight of the English, his blood began to boil, and he cried out, "Order the Genoese forward, and begin the battle, in the name of God and St. Denis!" These Genoese were famous cross-bowmen: according to Froissart, they were fifteen thousand strong. But they were quite fatigued, having that day marched six leagues on foot. They told the constable that they were not in a state to do any great exploit that day. The count d'Alençon, King Philip's brother, hearing this, said, "See what we get by employing such scoundrels, who fail us in our need." The susceptible Italians were not likely to forget these hasty and insulting words, but they formed and led the van. They were supported by the count d'Alençon, with a numerous cavalry.

While these things were passing, a heavy rain fell, accompanied by thunder: and there was a fearful eclipse of the sun. About five in the afternoon, the weather cleared up and the sun shone forth in full splendour. His rays darted full in the eyes of the French, but the English had the sun at their backs. When the Genoese had made their approach, they set up a terrible shout to strike terror into the English; but the English yeomen remained motionless, not seeming to care for it: they sent up a second shout, and advanced, but still the English moved not; they shouted a third time, and advancing a little began to discharge their crossbows. Then the English moved, but it was one step forward, and they shot their arrows with such rapidity and vigour that "it seemed as if it snowed." These well-shot arrows pierced shield and armour; the Genoese could not stand them. On seeing these auxiliaries waver and then fall back, the king of France cried out in a fury, "Kill me those

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scoundrels, for they stop our way without doing any good!" and at these words the French men-at-arms laid about them, killing and wounding the retreating Genoese. All this wonderfully increased the confusion; and still the English yeomen kept shooting as vigorously as before into the midst of the crowd: many of their arrows fell among Alençon's splendid cavalry, and killing and wounding many made them caper and fall among the Genoese, "so that they could never rally or get up again."

Having got free from the rabble-roust, Alençon and the count of Flanders skirted the English archers and fell upon the men-at-arms of the prince's battalia, where they fought fiercely for some time. The second division of the English moved to the support of the prince. The king of France was eager to support Alençon, but he could not penetrate a hedge of English archers which formed in his front. But without the king's forces Alençon, with whom fought French, Germans, Bohemians, and Savoyards, seemed to all eyes more than a match for the prince. At a moment when the conflict seemed doubtful, the earl of Warwick sent to request a reinforcement from the reserve. Edward, who had watched the battle from a windmill on the summit of the hill, and who did not put on his helmet the whole day, asked the knight whether his son was killed, or wounded, or thrown to the ground? The knight replied, "No, sire, please God, but he is hard beset." "Then," said the king, "return to those who sent you, and tell them that they shall have no help from me. Let the boy win his spurs; for I am resolved, if it please God, that this day be his, and that the honour of it be given all to him and to those to whose care I have intrusted him." When Sir Thomas Norwich reported this message, they were all greatly encouraged, and repented of having ever sent him. Soon after this, Alençon was killed, and his battalions were scattered.

The king of France made several brilliant charges, but he was repulsed each time with great loss: his horse was killed under him by an English arrow, and the best of his friends had fallen around him. Night now set in, but not before he had lost the battle. At the hour of vespers he had not more than sixty men about him of all sorts. John of Hainault now laid hold of his bridle-rein and led him away by force, for he had entreated him to retire before this, but in vain. The king rode away till he came to the castle of La Broye, where he found the gates shut, for it was dark night. He summoned the châtelain, who came upon the battlements and asked who called at such an hour. The king answered, "Open, open, châtelain, it is the fortune of France!" The governor knew the king's voice, descended, opened the gates, and let down the bridge. The king and his company entered the castle, but he had with him only five barons.

Such was the memorable battle of Crécy: it was fought on Saturday, the 26th day of August, 1346. On the Sunday morning a fog arose so that the English could scarcely see the length of half an acre before them. The king sent out a detachment of 500 lances and 2,000 archers to reconnoitre. This detachment soon found themselves in the midst of a body of militia from Beauvais and Rouen, who, wholly ignorant of what had happened, had marched all night to overtake the French army. These men took the English for French, and hastened to join them. Before they found out their mistake the English fell upon them and slew them without mercy. Soon after, the same party took a different road, and fell in with a fresh force, under the archbishop of Rouen and the grand prior of France, who were also ignorant of the defeat of the French; for they had heard that the king would not fight till the Sunday. Here began a fresh battle, for those two spiritual lords were well provided with stout men-at-arms. They could not, however, stand



against the English: the two lords were killed, and only a few of their men escaped by flight. In the course of the morning the English found many Frenchmen, who had lost their road the preceding evening. All these were put to the sword; and of foot soldiers sent from the municipalities, cities, and good towns of France, there were slain this Sunday morning more than four times as many as in the great battle of Saturday. When this destructive detachment returned to headquarters, King Edward sent to examine the dead, and learn what French lords had fallen. The lords Cobham and Stafford were charged with this duty, and they took with them three heralds to recognise the arms, and two secretaries to write down the names. They remained all that day in the fields, returning as the king was sitting down to supper, when they reported that they had found the bodies of eleven princes, eighty bannerets, twelve hundred knights, and about thirty thousand common men.<sup>f</sup>

Among the slain the most distinguished was John, king of Bohemia. Age had not chilled in him the fire of youth: though blind, he placed himself in the first division of the French; and as the issue grew dubious, ordered the four knights, his attendants, to lead him into the hottest of the battle, "that I too," said he, "may have a stroke at the English." Placing him in the midst of them, and interlacing their bridles, they spurred forward their horses, and were almost immediately slain. By the writers of the age his conduct has been extolled as an instance of unparalleled heroism. His motto, *Ich Dien* (I serve), was adopted by the prince of Wales, and has been always borne by his successors.

The conquerors beheld with astonishment the result of this bloody and decisive battle. They did not attribute it to their own courage or the imprudence of the enemy, but to the protection of the Almighty, who had thus pronounced judgment in favour of their sovereign; and the thanksgivings which were offered up in the camp were quickly repeated in every town and village in England.<sup>d</sup> On Monday morning the king of England marched off to the north, keeping near the coast, and passing through Montreuil-sur-Mer. On Thursday, the 31st of August, five days after the great battle of Crécy, he sat down before Calais and began his famous siege of that place—a siege, or rather a blockade, which lasted nearly a year, and was enlivened by many brilliant feats of arms. An immediate consequence of his victory at Crécy was the withdrawing of the duke of Normandy from Guienne, where the earl of Derby was almost reduced to extremities notwithstanding the gallant assistance of Sir Walter Manny, who had removed a small body from Brittany to Gascony.

#### THE BATTLE OF NEVILLE'S CROSS (1346 A.D.)

While Edward was occupied at Calais, Philip resorted to measures which he hoped would create such a confusion in England as to oblige his immediate return thither. Ever since his guest David Bruce had been reseatd on the throne, he had kept up an active correspondence with Scotland. His communications were now more frequent, and, in the month of September, King David himself marched from Perth at the head of three thousand regular cavalry and about thirty thousand others, mounted on Galloways. It is said that he was confident of success, seeing that nearly the whole chivalry of England was absent. He rode into Cumberland, took the peel or castle of Liddel on the 2d of October, and then marched into the bishopric of Durham. While

[1346-1347 A.D.]

he lay at Bear Park, near the city of Durham, the English assembled an army in Auckland Park. The Scots were ignorant of all the movements of the English: Douglas, the famous knight of Liddesdale, who had scoured the country as far as Ferryhill, was intercepted on his return by the English at Sunderland bridge. He cut his way through them, but lost five hundred of his best men. David, though taken by surprise, immediately formed his troops, and a decisive battle was fought at Neville's Cross. The English counted among their forces three thousand archers, and these men as usual decided the affair. David, after being twice wounded, was forcibly made prisoner by one Copland, a gentleman of Northumberland. Three earls and forty-nine barons and knights shared the fate of the king. The earl of Menteith, who had accepted office under Edward, and the earl of Fife, who had done homage to Edward Baliol, were condemned as traitors without any form of trial, by the king in council at Calais. Menteith was executed, but Fife was reprieved on account of his relationship, his mother having been niece to Edward I. King David was soon carried to London and safely lodged in the Tower.

In the mean time Edward's ally, the countess de Montfort, continued to defend the inheritance of her infant son, being well supported by an English force of one thousand men-at-arms and eight thousand foot, under the command of Sir Thomas d'Agworth. On the night of the 18th of June, 1347, while her bitter enemy, Charles of Blois, was lying before Roche-de-Rien, which he was besieging with fifteen thousand men, he was suddenly attacked by the English. In the confusion of a nocturnal battle, Sir Thomas was twice taken prisoner, and twice rescued by his brave followers. A sortie from the garrison finished this affair: the French were thoroughly beaten and dispersed; Charles of Blois was taken prisoner and sent over to England, to add another royal captive to those already in Edward's power.

#### THE SIEGE OF CALAIS (1347 A.D.)

Edward, meanwhile, pressed the blockade of Calais. As it was a place of incredible strength, he wisely resolved not to throw away the lives of his soldiers in assaults, but to reduce it by famine. He girded it on the land side by entrenchments, and he built so many wooden houses for the accommodation of his troops that his encampment looked like a second town growing round the first; the old French writers, indeed, call it *la ville de Bois*. At the same time his fleet blockaded the harbour and cut off all communication by sea. John de Vienne, the governor of Calais, could not mistake Edward's plan, and, to save his provisions, he determined to rid himself of such as are called, in the merciless language of war, "useless mouths." Seventeen hundred poor people, of both sexes and of all ages, were turned out of the town, and driven towards the English lines. Edward gave them all a good dinner, and then dismissed them into the interior of the country, even presenting them with a little money to supply their immediate wants. As provisions waxed low the governor made a fresh search for "useless mouths," and five hundred more of the inhabitants were thrust out of the town: but this time Edward was not so merciful, and all of them are said to have perished miserably between his lines and the town walls, as the governor would not readmit them.

A French fleet, attempting to relieve the place, was met by the earl of Oxford, and carried to England. After this the hopes of the garrison began to fail them, and they wrote to King Philip that they had eaten their horses,

their dogs, and all the unclean animals they could procure, and that nothing was left for them but to eat one another. This letter was intercepted by the English; but Philip knew the straits to which they were reduced, and resolved to make a great effort to save this important place. The *oriflamme*, the sacred banner of France, which was not to be used except against infidels, was unfurled; the vassals of the crown were summoned from all parts; and, in the month of July, Philip marched towards Calais. That town, however, was only approachable by two roads—the one along the seashore, the other over bogs and marshes; and Edward guarded both—the one with his ships and boats, which were crowded with archers; the other by means of towers, fortified bridges, and a great force of men-at-arms and archers, under the command of the brave earl of Derby, who, as well as Sir Walter Manny, had come from Gascony for this great enterprise. Philip was not bold enough to attempt either passage; and after a fruitless attempt at negotiation, and an idle challenge, he withdrew his army and left Calais to its fate. When the faithful garrison had witnessed his departure, they hung out the flag of England, and asked to capitulate. Edward, enraged at their obstinate resistance, refused them any terms, saying that he would have an unconditional surrender. Sir Walter Manny, and many barons who were then present, pleaded in favour of the men of Calais. “I will not be alone against you all,” said the king. “Sir Walter, you will tell the captain that six of the notable burgesses must come forth naked in their shirts, bare-legged, with halters round their necks, and the keys of the town and castle in their hands. On these I will do my will, and the rest I will take to my mercy.”

When Sir Walter Manny reported this hard condition to John de Vienne, that governor went to the market-place and ordered the church bells to be rung: the people—men, women, and children—repaired to the spot, and, when they had heard Edward’s message, they all wept piteously, and were incapable of forming any resolution. Things were in this state when the richest burgess of the town, who was called Messire Eustace de St. Pierre, rose up and said before them all, “Gentlemen, great and little, it were a great pity to let these people perish; I will be the first to offer up my life to save theirs.” After him another notable burgess, a very honest man, and of great business, rose and said that he would accompany his compeer Messire Eustace; and this one was named Messire Jehan d’Aire. After him rose up Jaques de Wisant, who was very rich in goods and lands, and said that he would accompany his two cousins, as did Peter Wisant his brother: then the fifth and the sixth offered themselves, which completed the number the king demanded. The governor, John de Vienne, mounted a small hackney, for his wounds prevented him from walking, and conducted them to the gate. The English barriers were opened, and the six were admitted to the presence of Edward, before whom they prostrated themselves, and presenting the keys, begged for mercy. All the barons, knights, and others who were there present, shed tears of pity; but the king eyed them very spitefully, for much did he hate the people of Calais; and then he commanded that their heads should be struck off. Every Englishman entreated him to be more merciful, but he would not hear them. Then Sir Walter Manny said, “Ha! gentle sire, let me beseech you to restrain your wrath! You are renowned for nobleness of soul—do not tarnish your reputation by such an act as this. These worthy men have, of their own free will, nobly put themselves at your mercy, in order to save their fellow-citizens.” Upon this the king made a grimace, and said, “Let the headsman be summoned.” But the queen of England, who had joined her husband after the battle of Neville’s Cross, and was far advanced in her



[1347-1349 A.D.]

pregnancy, fell on her knees, and with tears said, "Ah! gentle sire! since I have crossed the sea with great danger, I have never asked you anything: now I humbly pray, for the sake of the Son of the holy Mary and your love of me, that you will have mercy on these six men." The king looked at her, and was silent awhile: then he said, "Dame, I wish you had been somewhere else; but I cannot refuse you—I put them at your disposal." Philippa caused the halters to be taken from their necks, gave them proper clothes and a good dinner, and then dismissed them with a present of six nobles each.

On the following day, August 4th, 1347, the king and queen rode towards the town, which they entered to the sound of trumpets, drums, and all kinds of warlike instruments. They remained there until the queen was delivered of a daughter, who was called Margaret of Calais; and after that they returned to England, Edward having agreed to a truce with Philip. On the 14th of January, 1348, he asked the advice of his parliament touching the prosecution of the war with France. The commons, suspecting that this was but a prelude to the demand of a subsidy, declined giving any answer. When the parliament met again, on the 17th of March, the king told them that the French were making mighty preparations to invade England, and he demanded an aid on that account. In real truth there was no danger whatever; but, after bitter complaints of taxation and consequent poverty, three-fifteenths were voted to be levied in three years.

In the course of the following year he commanded in a naval battle against the Spaniards belonging to the ports of the Bay of Biscay, who had given him many causes of discontent by joining the French and by plundering his trading vessels. The battle was fought within sight of the hills behind Winchelsea, whence the queen's servants watched it with an anxious eye, and the Spaniards were completely defeated, with the loss of fourteen ships. As if in mockery of the petty carnage of men, who, doing their most, could only sacrifice a few thousand lives at a time, and on a given spot, the Black Death now invaded Europe, destroying its hundreds of thousands and depopulating hundreds of towns and cities at one and the same time.]

#### THE BLACK DEATH

The Black Death is alleged to have had its origin in the centre of China, in or about the year 1333, and is reported to have been accompanied by various phenomena in the earth and atmosphere of a very novel and destructive character. Nearly every infectious or contagious disease which has desolated mankind appears to have had its origin in the farthest East, and to have travelled along thence to Europe. It is alleged that, before it reached the West, the Black Death exhausted itself in the place of its origin. Like most other plagues, it was infinitely more destructive at the commencement of its career than after it had endured for a time. In course of time, either the original virus of the disease is weakened, or those who are most susceptible of it are removed by death, or remedial measures are discovered which check or extinguish it. For more than three centuries the plague wasted England, though at no time, it seems, so seriously as at its first and last visitations.

The Black Death, as our forefathers called it, from the dark purple blotches which appeared on the skin when the blood and tissues had become wholly disorganised through the virulence of the disorder, still lingers in the East, under the name of the Levant or oriental plague. But the progress of sanitary science has probably put an end to the worst ravages of a disease which

was so terrible more than five centuries ago. In England it does not seem to have been assisted by any prevalent distress among the people. The period just before the plague was one of prosperity and abundance; and though our forefathers were immeasurably unclean in their habits and surroundings, and remained unclean for centuries afterwards, the best conditions of life do not appear to have given an immunity from the plague. Among the victims of the first year were one of Edward's daughters and three archbishops of Canterbury. So the narrative given us by Boccaccio proves that all classes were equally affected, for the ladies and gentlemen who retire in the *Decameron* to tell each other stories in a country house on the road to Fiesole had all of them lost relations by the plague. The Black Death visited Christ church, Canterbury, very lightly, for a century before the prior had laid on pure water from the hills to the monastery.

On the 1st of August, 1348, the disease made its appearance in the seaport towns of Dorsetshire, and travelled slowly westwards and northwards, through Devon and Somerset, to Bristol. In order to arrest the progress of the mortality, the authorities of Gloucestershire prohibited all intercourse with the citizens of Bristol. It was in vain; the plague spread to Oxford, where it was terribly destructive, and travelling slowly in the same measured way, reached London by the 1st of November. It appeared in Norwich on the 1st of January, and thence spread northwards. Later in the year 1349, the Scotch made one of their customary raids into England, and, as they ravaged the north, invented an oath, "By the foul death of the English." On their retreat they were attacked by the pestilence in the forest of Selkirk, and the northern part of the island suffered as seriously as the more populous south. The mortality was, no doubt, enormous and appalling. It is probable that one-third of the population perished. To be sure, panic always exaggerates numbers. One chronicler says that nine out of ten died. Similar amplifications, which have been heedlessly accepted by writers who are inexperienced in possibilities, are found in all the chroniclers. We are told that sixty thousand persons perished in Norwich between January and July, 1349. Norwich was probably the second city in the kingdom at the time, and Norfolk was certainly the richest county; but the number is twice as much as the population of both city and county at the time. Joshua Barnes,<sup>l</sup> the author of a diffuse life of Edward III, pretends to give exact information as to the persons who died in the principal English cities. His numbers are undoubtedly untrustworthy. The estimate nearest to likelihood is that of Knighton.<sup>h</sup> He was a canon of Leicester, and lived a short time after the events. He tells us that the deaths in the three parishes of Leicester town were 1,480. Even this number is probably exaggerated, for there is reason to conclude that at this time the population of Leicester was under 3,500.

Every town had its plague-pit. That of London was a spot afterwards occupied by the Charterhouse, and purchased for the purpose of sepulture by Sir Walter Manny, one of Edward's captains. Hecker estimates the loss of population in Europe at twenty-five millions, a moderate and probable calculation. No doubt the ravages of the pestilence were more general among the poorer classes. But, as we have already stated, the more opulent were not unaffected by it. The disease made havoc among the secular and regular clergy, and we are told that a notable decline of learning and morals was thenceforward observed among the clergy, many persons of mean acquisitions and low character stepping into the vacant benefices. Even now the cloister of Westminster abbey is said to contain a monument in the great flat stone, which we are told was laid over the remains of the many monks who

[1349 A.D.]

perished in the great death. The novelist Boccaccio dwells on the effect which the mortality caused in the character of the survivors, and how panic or despair made men callous, reckless, superstitious, heartless, cruel, and licentious; and Sismondi, in his great history of the French people, and of the Italian Republics, has collected contemporaneous evidence to the same effect.

The Black Death formed an epoch; and, for many years afterwards, facts were computed according to their nearness from the great pestilence. A century after the event, Gascoigne<sup>m</sup> makes it the era of the new departure in Oxford, after which learning, morality, and the adequate discharge of duties began to wane; the universities were, relatively speaking, deserted, and the whole spirit of society was changed. It is said by Sir Harris Nicolas that of the three years, 1349, 1361, and 1369, in which note was made of the extraordinary virulence of a disease now become sporadic, the first pestilence was said to have lasted four months; the second, through the winter, for eight months and nineteen days; the third, for nearly three months. These dates of duration, given centuries after the event, cannot be accepted as authentic, but they are indirect testimony of the singular impression which the calamity left on the mind of England. In several Hertfordshire manors it was the practice for thirty years to head the schedule of expenditure with an enumeration of the lives which were lost, and the tenancies which were vacated after the great death of 1348. If some antiquary were to have the patience to peruse and tabulate the taxing rolls of Edward I, and compare the names of residents in the several manors with the entries of tax-paying inhabitants resident in the same manors after the great plague, he would undoubtedly find that thousands of names perished from the manor registers. It may be noted that the foundation of colleges in Oxford, which was rapidly proceeding before this stupendous event, ceased for many years; when it was taken up with renewed vigour.<sup>i</sup>

#### THE STATUTE OF LABOURERS

The effects of this plague are to be traced in the acts of the English government. Lands went out of cultivation from the want of labourers; and those who could carry away their capital fled to other countries. On the 1st of December, 1349, the king issued a precept to the mayors and bailiffs of all the ports, stating that no small portion of the people being dead of the pestilence, and the treasury of the kingdom being greatly exhausted, it had been notified to him that many persons were quitting the country with their wealth, which, if tolerated, would leave the land equally destitute of men and money; and upon these grounds he directed that no man be suffered to leave the kingdom, except he be a merchant, notary, or messenger. But the black plague left still more enduring effects than the great mortality—soon to be repaired by hasty marriages—or the emigration, thus forcibly arrested. It produced the statute of Labourers—an arbitrary act, whose principles, however gradually mitigated, pervaded the relations of employer and servant long after the days of feudal despotism, and which still cling to our institutions in the law of Settlement. The statute was one of unmitigated selfishness. But it appears to be an universal law of such visitations, in times which looked upon them only as manifestations of the divine wrath, and not of the mercy which was to bring good out of evil, that they rendered the powerful more oppressive, the rich more greedy, and the sensual more abandoned. The author of the *Continuation of the Chronicle of William de Nangis*<sup>n</sup> says, speaking of the Continent, that after the pestilence men became more covetous and litigious



—charity growing more cold, and iniquity and ignorance more abounding. There were few left to teach the young. The generation was demoralised.

The preamble of this remarkable statute states the exigency which demanded it, without any of those attempts to conceal a real motive which modern legislation sometimes resorts to: "Because a great part of the people, and especially of workmen and servants, late died of the pestilence, many seeing the necessity of masters, and great scarcity of servants, will not serve unless they may receive excessive wages." The workmen and servants were practically aware of the natural law which regulates

wages: dependence upon the number of labourers seeking employment. The government set their ordinances in opposition to that natural law. It was enacted that every able-bodied man and woman, not being a merchant, or exercising any craft, or having estate or land, should be bounden to serve, whenever required so to do, at the wages accustomed to be given in the twentieth year of the king, and in five or six common years next before. And that if any man or woman, whether free or bond, should be required to serve at such customary wages, and would not, he or she should be committed to the next gaol. It also enacted that labourers departing from their service should be imprisoned; and that those masters who consented to give the higher wages should be liable to be mulcted in double the amount paid or promised. The statute then goes on to apply the same regulations to all artificers—saddlers, skinnners, white-tawers, cordwainers, tailors, smiths, carpenters, masons, tylers, shipwrights, carters. But to balance the low wages against the price of commodities, it was also enacted that butchers, fishmongers, brewers, bakers, poulterers, and all sellers of victual, should be bound to sell the same for a reasonable price. It was moreover enacted that no



ROBERT BRANCH, MAYOR OF  
LYNN, TIME OF EDWARD III

person should give alms to such as might be able to labour, or presume to favour such in their sloth, under pain of imprisonment.

But the laws of nature were too strong for the laws of policy. Two years after, we have another statute, which recites that, "it is given the king to understand in this present parliament, that the said servants, having no regard to the said ordinances, but to their ease and singular covetise, do withdraw themselves to serve great men and others, unless they have livery, and wages to the double and treble of what they were wont to take before." A scale of wages is then set forth for labourers in husbandry; and the wages of carpenters, masons, tylers, and others concerned in building, are also fixed. The principle of confining the labourer to one locality is established by enacting that, with the exception of the inhabitants of Stafford, Lancaster, Derby, Craven, and of the Welsh and Scotch marches—who may come and go to other places in harvest time—"none of them go out of the town where he dwelleth in the winter, to serve the summer, if he may serve in the same town." The first statute of Labourers, in what regards a fixed rate of wages,

[1351 A.D.]

could not have been enforced without a limitation of the area in which the labourer should seek employment, as defined by the second statute. That law of God which plants in the heart of man the desire to ameliorate his condition, had gradually, without the sanction of any written law, put an end to the property of one human being in another, to a considerable degree, when this statute of Labourers was enacted. Had the pestilence come a century earlier, when the distinctions between the bondman and the free were in far higher efficiency, no laws for regulating wages, or for binding the labourer to the soil, would have been needed. When the slave had died in the common visitation, the master would have lost the services of the man, but he would have had one mouth less to feed. His land would have been untilled, and he must have borne the infliction, as if it were a murrain of his cattle. The pestilence came when labour and capital had become exchangers. But those who had been used to command labour upon their own terms were impatient of the inevitable alteration, when the pestilence exhibited to the free labourers the natural advantage of their reduced numbers. They demanded a free exchange of their property with the other property of food and money. A free exchange, says the statute of Edward, is "to the great damage of the great men, and impoverishing of all the commonalty." But no selfish legislation could wholly prevent this free exchange.

But, although we must regard this attempt to limit the rate of wages by statute as unjust and inefficient, we cannot shut our eyes to the fact that there was a serious difficulty for the legislature of Edward III to surmount in some way. The act of parliament says that the labourers withdrew themselves from service unless they had wages to the double or treble of that they were wont to take before. This averment is confirmed by Knighton,<sup>h</sup> a chronicler of the time, who mentions as exorbitant wages the payment of a shilling a day, with his food, to a mower, and eightpence a day, with food, to a reaper. The shilling-a-day was equal to fifteen shillings of present money; and if that rate could have been maintained for all husbandry operations, the land must have gone out of cultivation for a time, till the balance of capital and labour had been restored by an equalisation of the amount of land to be tilled, and the number of labourers prepared to till it. The parliament stepped in with its rude tyrannical remedy, to repress the other tyranny. The statute said that a mower should receive fivepence. According to the same law, which also regulates the payment by wheat or money, at the will of the employer, fivepence was equal to half a bushel of wheat. The average produce of wheat per acre was less than six bushels. The extravagant demands of the labourers of the time of Edward III had no relation to the just proportion that must ever subsist between the rate of wages and the commercial value of the produce out of which the labour is to be paid and the capital maintained in its efficiency. It was not a time when such questions could be understood by the interested parties on either side.<sup>b</sup>

#### THE ORDER OF THE GARTER

It was after his return from Calais that Edward instituted an order of knighthood which has survived all his other achievements, as well as produced better fruits than his victories on the fields of France. This was the order of the Garter, which he established in 1350. The cause of this august institution has been attributed to such a frivolous accident as the dropping of a lady's garter in a ball-room; but a higher source has been sought for it than

the popular legend, by learned inquirers into English historical antiquarianism. According to some, it originated in the word "garter" having been given by the king as the password to his soldiers on the day of the battle of Crécy; while others allege that it was because, on this occasion, he ordered his garter to be raised on the point of a lance as the signal for onset. Others, going farther back, assert that the institution originated so early as the time of Richard I, who gave to his chief officers certain leather straps, to be bound round the left leg, in the storming of Acre, to distinguish them from the other soldiers of the crusade; and that Edward III merely revived an order which had fallen into utter decay. But it is unlikely that distinctions bestowed by such a chivalrous sovereign as the Lion Hearted could thus easily have dropped out of remembrance; and therefore Edward must be considered as its real founder, let the cause that prompted him be what it might.

Every preparation was made to give due grandeur and importance to the inauguration of this fairest and most highly honoured of all the chivalrous



WINDSOR CASTLE

(Originally built by William the Conqueror; largely rebuilt for Edward III, who was born at Windsor, by William of Wykeham; enlarged in reign of George IV)

institutions. "The king," says Froissart, "founded a chapel at Windsor in honour of St. George, and established canons there to serve God, with a handsome endowment. He then issued his proclamation for this feast by his heralds, whom he sent to France, Scotland, Burgundy, Hainault, Flanders, Brabant, and the empire of Germany, and offered to all knights and squires that might come to this ceremony, passports to last for fifteen days after it was over." At this splendid assembly of Windsor, which comprised the noblest of these several countries, the king and the elected knights "were clothed in gowns of russet, powdered with garters blue, wearing the like garters also on their right legs, and mantles of blue with scuteheons of St. George. It was intended that the knights of the Garter should consist of forty, but at this first installation only twenty-six were elected; and among their names, which have been carefully preserved, may be discovered those of the principal champions in the subsequent French and Scottish wars, and who founded some of the most distinguished families of England. But pre-eminent over them all, and highest in the list, was that of Edward the Black



[1350-1356 A.D.]

Prince, late the hero of Crécy, and soon after to be the victor of Poitiers, who was the first knight of the Garter. In the long roll of illustrious princes, warriors, and statesmen, extending from that period to the present day, whose motto has been, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, considering the age in which he lived, to find a nobler and worthier character.<sup>i</sup>

## THE BATTLE OF POITIERS (1356 A.D.)

Philip of Valois, who had held a troublesome possession of the throne of France for twenty-two years, died in August, 1350. It was a period when the war with England was suspended, without any real approach to a permanent peace. Edward had proposed to resign his pretensions to the French crown, on the condition that he should receive the absolute sovereignty of the provinces in France which had been held as fiefs by preceding English kings. This offer presented a secure basis for a friendly arrangement. Philip rejected it; John, his son and successor, consented to it. After several years of negotiation, the French procurators refused to agree to the terms which their king had promised. The cession of Calais, upon which Edward insisted, was probably more repugnant to the French than that of Gascony. In 1355, Prince Edward led an army from the walls of Bordeaux, ravaged the country to the foot of the Pyrenees; and, taking a northward course, laid in ashes cities and towns, and filled a fertile land with desolation, which had been unvisited by war for a hundred years. In those times, and even in later periods, the ravage of populous districts, and the destruction of commercial towns, have been defended upon the principle that to weaken the resources of an enemy is to abridge the duration of a time of warfare. Whilst his son was ravaging on the banks of the Garonne, King Edward was leading an army from Calais to the Somme. The want of provisions drove him back after a march of ten days. Meanwhile the Scots had surprised Berwick; and the king hastened home. In the depth of winter he marched into Scotland, having retaken Berwick, and he carried havoc through the Lothians. His fleet, laden with provisions, could not make the port of Leith; and he recrossed the border, leaving behind him the feeling of deadly revenge with which the Scots recorded this season of calamity as "the burnt Candlemas."

In July, 1356, Prince Edward, now known as the Black Prince, marched out of Bordeaux, upon a second expedition of waste and pillage. Ascending the Garonne as high as Agen, he turned to the provinces of Quercy, Limousin, and Auvergne. The time of the harvest and the vintage was at hand, but the corn was trodden under foot, and the vineyards destroyed. The little army was now in the very centre of France. King John was advancing from Chartres to drive back the marauders; and he crossed the Loire, at Blois, marching on towards Poitiers. Prince Edward was in a hostile country, and he could gain no knowledge of the line upon which the French were moving. He resolved, however, upon retreat. As the English army marched, also in the direction of Poitiers, "they wist not truly where the Frenchmen were," wrote Froissart,<sup>f</sup> whose narrative of the battle is here largely used; "but they supposed that they were not far off, for they could find no more forage, whereby they had great default of victual in their host; and some of them repented that they had destroyed so much as they had done before." On the 17th of September, being Saturday, the van of Prince Edward's small band fell in with the rear of King John's army. There was a skirmish, and those English who rode ahead saw all the fields covered with men-at-arms.

The French king entered into the city of Poitiers. The locality was full of recollections of the glory of France. Here Clovis defeated Alaric, king of the Visigoths. Here Charles Martel drove back an immense host of invading Moslems. Edward took up his quarters in a strong place, amongst hedges, vines, and bushes. On the Sunday morning, the French trumpet blew, and every man mounted on horseback, and went into the field, where the king's banner waved in the wind; and there was all the flower of France, with banners and pennons and rich armoury. Three knights went out to see the number of the English; and they reported that they estimated them at two thousand men-at-arms, and four thousand archers, and fifteen hundred other men; but that they were wisely ordered, and that they had lined the hedges and banks with archers, by a road on which four horsemen only could ride, and that at the end of that fortified way there were men-at-arms afoot, and archers before them, so that they would not easily be discomfited. Cardinal [Talleyrand de] Périgord then solicited the king that he might ride to the prince, and show him what danger he and his handful of Englishmen were in. The cardinal went, and the prince of Wales answered to his entreaties—"Sir, the honour of me and my people saved, I would gladly fall to any reasonable way." Between the armies rode the cardinal that Sunday; but could accomplish no agreement. Edward offered to surrender what he had won in that expedition, and to swear not to bear arms against the French king for seven years. But John required, finally, that the prince and a hundred knights should yield themselves prisoners. On the Monday morning, the 19th of September, the cardinal again came; but there was no remedy but to abide the battle. The French marshals approached with their battalions, and their horsemen entered the road where the great hedges were set full of archers. No bow was bent as the columns of cavalry proudly marched up that narrow way. But a command was given; and along the whole extent of that crowded lane, sudden showers of arrows turned what was a procession into a struggle of advance and retreat. At the first flight of the deadly shafts of the English archers, the horses rushed back, and flung out, and fell upon their riders. Then the Gascon men-at-arms went in amongst the press and slew the knights and squires in that great disorder. The French also, who were behind, recoiled; and on came the division of the duke of Normandy; and the men took their horses and fled, when they saw the dreaded archers coming down a little hill, on their flank and rear. Leaping on their horses, the reserve of men-at-arms of England now advanced; for the lord Chandos said to the prince, "Sir, take your horse and ride forth, the day is yours." And the prince cried, "Advance banner, in the name of God and of St. George!" Then he saw the lord Robert of Duras lying dead, and he told his men to take him upon a targe to the cardinal of Périgord, whose nephew he was, and to salute him by that token; for the cardinal's men were out in the field against him, which was not pertaining to the right order of arms. Onward the little army went into the thick of their enemies; and the archers shot so wholly together, that none durst come in their danger. At last the king's division encountered the Englishmen. There was Lord James Audley, always in the chief of the battle, and he was sore hurt, but as long as his breath served him he fought; and Warwick was there, and Suffolk, and many knights of Gascony. "King John was that day a full right good knight; if the fourth part of his men had done their endeavours as well as he did, the journey had been his in all likelihood." But the French fled from those fields of Beauvoir and Maupertuis, even to the gates of Poitiers. There was a great press to take the king; and he yielded to Sir Denys de Morbeyne, who promised to

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bring him and his young son, Philip, to the prince of Wales. Where was the prince when John of France could not go forward because of the press around him? "The prince of Wales," says Froissart, "who was courageous and cruel as a lion, took great pleasure to fight and chase his enemies." But Chandos said, "Set your banner a-high on this bush, that your people may draw hither; nor can I see banners nor pennons of the French; wherefore rest and refresh you, for ye be sore chafed." A red pavilion was set up; and the prince drunk wine; and many lords gathered around him as they came in from the chase. But shortly came up the kingly captive in great peril; for he was surrounded by English and Gascons, who had taken him out of the hands of Sir Denys Morbecyne, and strove which should have him. That night the prince of Wales made a supper in his lodging to the French king, and to the great lords that were prisoners. "And always the prince served before the king, as humbly as he could, and would not sit at the king's board, for any desire that the king could make, and exhorted him not to be of heavy cheer, for that King Edward, his father, should bear him all honour and amity, and accord with him so reasonably that they should be friends ever after." And the prince praised the king's great valiantness, and said that every Englishman who saw each man's deed plainly accorded to him the prize and chaplet. This scene, so gracefully performed by him who, a few hours before, was "courageous and cruel as a lion," was in perfect accordance with the system of chivalry. It is not a feeling to be despised—that gentleness and courtesy which prompted the words and actions of the prince, after this marvellous victory. The right hand of fellowship to a fallen foe is, happily, a principle that has survived the feudal ages in the wars of England. When policy, as in modern instances, has compelled her government to violate it, the people feel ashamed, and the public opinion of another generation reverses the judgment of those who have played the part of the ungenerous victor. On the day after the battle, the prince of Wales marched with his royal prisoner to Bordeaux, the great bulk of captive knights having been admitted to easy ransom.



FIGURE OF KNIGHT ON  
TOP OF CHANTRY

(Erected over Lord Edward le Despenser, who held high command under Edward the Black Prince. Tewkesbury Abbey)

#### FRANCE DURING JOHN'S CAPTIVITY

On the 24th of May, 1357, the Black Prince returned to London, in a triumphal procession, with his royal prisoner. In the pageant the captive—as if the spirit of chivalry was set in contrast with the old Roman pride of leading conquered kings in chains—was shown to the people as an honoured guest; whilst the winner of the great field of Poitiers rode humbly beside him. King John was lodged in the Savoy, a pleasant palace belonging to the duke of Lancaster, King Edward's son; and in the winter following there were jousts in Smithfield, in which the kings of England, of France, and of Scotland were present to take part in the feats of arms. King John was then removed to Windsor with his son Philip. It was a festive season in England.



In France there was the extremity of suffering. There were heavy sums to be raised for the ransoms engaged to be paid for the prisoners of Poitiers; and the unhappy cultivators were ground down to the lowest point of misery by the lords of the soil, who had fled in terror before the stout English bowmen. On the 21st of May, 1358, commenced that insurrection of the peasants which was called the *Jacquerie*, from the nickname which the poor French villain bore of Jacques Bonhomme.

During the captivity of John, the government of the dauphin, Charles, was harassed by contending factions; and the kingdom was in a condition little short of anarchy. John settled with Edward the conditions of a peace, to take place upon the expiration of the truce. He consented to the hard terms which the king of England insisted upon; for a prince of the blood, Charles of Navarre, called the Bad, was adding to the distractions of the kingdom, by setting up claims to the crown. But the regency of France rejected the terms which their captive monarch had agreed to. Edward again invaded France in the autumn of 1359, with a more powerful army than he had ever before assembled; and at the end of March he was encamped before Paris. The fatigues of his winter campaign had greatly reduced his numbers; and now, beleaguering a city which was too strong for assault, he was in want of provisions, and was compelled to retire. The route towards Chartres was covered with men and horses that dropped from hunger and exhaustion; and all the superstition that in those days clung to the firmest minds, was called up by a terrible storm, which swept the camp with a deluge of rain, and which made Edward think of that vengeance of heaven that awaited the man of blood. Thoughts of pacification entered his heart. Negotiations were set on foot, and the great peace of Bretigny was concluded on the 8th of May. The king of England resigned his pretensions to the crown of France, and to the territories of Normandy, Anjou, and Maine. He restored all the conquered places, with the exception of Guines and Calais. He was content to be lord of Aquitaine, retaining Gascony, Poitou, and other dependencies, in full sovereignty. Three million crowns of gold were to be paid in six years for the ransom of King John. The captive king was set at liberty before the end of the year. But peace with England brought no tranquillity to France. Amidst their distractions, King John went back to his wasted country. Petrarch had proceeded to Paris upon an embassy to congratulate the king upon his return to his dominions, and he thus describes the scene which met his eyes: "When I viewed this kingdom, which had been desolated by fire and sword, I could not persuade myself it was the same I had formerly beheld—fertile, rich, and flourishing. On every side it now appeared a dreadful desert; extreme poverty, lands untilled, fields laid waste, houses gone to ruin, except here and there one that was defended by some fortification, or which was enclosed within the walls; everywhere were seen the traces of the English, and the dreadful havoc they had made. Touched by such mournful effects of the rage of man, I could not withhold my tears." Petrarch might have added the ravages of the *Jacquerie* and of the Free Companions, who had been pillaging since the truce of 1357, to the havoc of the English.

#### THE ENGLAND OF CHAUCER

The condition of the people of England at the epoch of the Peace of Bretigny presents a striking contrast to that of the people of France. With the exception of the miseries produced by the second pestilence of 1361, we may

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regard the seventh decade of the fourteenth century as a period of English prosperity. France was devoured by the companies of adventurers and brigands who obeyed no law. England was only disturbed by the transition from serfdom to free labour, in which the labourers asserted their own importance somewhat beyond the limits of discretion. France was weighed down by the oppressions through which property was extorted from the industrious classes, whether by the exactions of the nobles, or the unlimited taxation of the government; and the feudal confederacy to obtain money from a country so devastated by war was met by the *Jacquerie* of the peasants, and the revolts of the burgesses. England, whenever a tax was demanded for carrying on hostilities, had a parliament, which always turned round steadily upon the king, and required extension of liberties or redress of grievances. At the commencement of the war with France in 1340, before a subsidy was given, the king's commissioners had to show letters patent authorising them "to grant some graces to the great and small of the kingdom." In 1348 the commons granted a subsidy on condition that no illegal levying of money should take place. In 1351 a statute was passed that no one should be constrained to find men-at-arms, other than those who held land by such services, except by consent of parliament. There was always a struggle going forward between the king and the parliament; but it was no longer a struggle merely between the king and the nobles. The commons had obtained an integral share in the government; and before the end of the reign they were strong enough to remove an administration, and impeach those whom they considered evil advisers of the crown.



CHAUCER

This strength of the deputies of the people is conclusive evidence that the middle classes, during nearly half a century, had attained so much wealth and consideration, that the old feudal relations of society may be deemed nearly at an end. There probably is no better evidence of the many distinctions of rank amongst the laity, which now existed, than the statute of Apparel of 1363. It has a few words about regulating the diet of servants; but the chief clauses are intended to restrain "the outrageous and excessive apparel of divers people against their estate and degree."

The statute begins with servants, called grooms—as well servants of lords, as of artificers and tradesmen. They and their wives are to wear cloth of a certain low price, with no gold, or silver, or silk, or embroidery. This enactment shows that there was an amount of luxury amongst this class, which ill accords with the notion which some entertain, that below the aristocracy all was rude and miserable. The first enacting clause about dress thus comprises mechanics and commercial servants; the last relates to labourers in husbandry—carters, ploughmen, shepherds, cowherds. If they had not forty shillings of goods or chattels, they were to wear only blanket and russet, and girdles of linen, according to their estate. In these two classes must have been

comprised the bulk of the population. Chaucer, the shrewdest observer and the truest painter of manners—who, although he wrote the *Canterbury Tales* twenty years after this period, would naturally in his retirement describe the social state of which he had been a busy member—has little notice of the humbler classes of the community, the peasants, the servants, and the working artisans. Chaucer's Ploughman was a man of "goods and chattels," yet though he had spread many a load of dung, and would thresh and ditch, yet paid his tithes and was kind to the poor. He was the small farmer, of whom the land was full—the humble tenant, who was no longer at the bidding of his lord. He was the Parson's brother. The attendant of Chaucer's Knight was a yeoman. The statute of Apparel places the yeoman under the same regulations as the people of handicraft, and they were to wear no vesture of higher price than forty shillings the whole cloth, without things of gold and silver and costly fur. Chaucer's Yeoman comes in his coat and hood of green, with his sheaf of peacocks' arrows, and his mighty bow. He knows all the usage of woodcraft, for he is a forester; and in spite of statute he has a silver image of St. Christopher, the patron of field-sports, on his breast. He is a specimen of the bold race that won Crécy and Poitiers—men who were shooting at the butts on every common in England, while the French peasantry, who were not intrusted with the cross-bow till after the Peace of Bretigny, and then again were forbidden their manly exercises, were playing at dice and draughts in imitation of their lords. Chaucer's men of handicraft are the Haberdasher, Carpenter, Weaver, Dyer, and Tapiser (tapestry maker). They are clothed each in the livery of his "solemn and great fraternity." They have chattels and rent enough to be aldermen, a dignity to which their wives look forward, in the hope to be called Madame. The Prentice to such worthies has been painted in one of the *Canterbury Tales*—a proper stout fellow, full of jollity, loving the tavern better than the shop—a dancer at bridals, and a dice-player. The Cook of Chaucer so describes the dissolute youth, probably of gentle blood, who aped the manners of the great in an age when luxurious indulgence was becoming common to all ranks. The amount of individual wealth gave privileges which were not accorded to the mere social condition. There were degrees of permitted luxury amongst people of handicraft, citizens and burgesses, which the law recognised then, as much as individual homage does now. The tradesman who possessed five hundred pounds might wear cloth of silk, and a reasonable decoration of silver trimmings, and their wives and daughters might wear fur turned up with minever—even as gentlemen and esquires of a hundred a year. The citizens of Chaucer, who had chattels enough to be aldermen, were thus lifted out of the less wealthy class—whose wives might wear no silken veils, and must be content with cat-skin fur.

The gentlemen and esquires of the statute correspond with the Franklin of Chaucer—he of the beard as white as a daisy—the great householder, whose hospitality was so abundant that "it snowed in his house of meat and drink." In his hall stood his table ready covered all the long day. He gave no sanction to the recent innovation of "the privy parlour," in which the lord of the mansion sometimes now sought to evade the duties of the festive hall. The Franklin was a public man—a sire at sessions, a knight of the shire. He was only below the knight in rank and raiment, according to the statute. The knights possessing four hundred marks by the year might wear what they pleased except ermine; and their wives might have pearls and precious stones on their heads. Chaucer's Knight comes in his soiled cassock, and his coat of mail. He had late returned from fighting in mortal battles, and



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was about to perform his pilgrimage. His son, the young Squire, had been warring in companionship with his father; but his locks are now curled, and his short gown, with sleeves long and wide, is embroidered with white and red flowers, as it were a mead. The Sergeant at Law, who no doubt takes rank with the great of the land, appears not to have been proud of his dress; for he rode but humbly in a medley coat, girt with a sash of silk, with small bars. But his deportment was far more impressive than his dress—"his words were so wise"—a busy man, and yet one that appeared busier than he was. The Physician was by his side, in his bright purple cloak and his furred hood—one who, although he talked of the ascendancy of the planets and of magic natural, was learned in Æsculapius and Galen. Of the laity of this goodly company we have not forgotten the Wife of Bath, in speaking of apparel. She was a cloth-maker, with great custom; but her coverchiefs or head-dresses were of the finest quality, and her hosen were of scarlet. What were ordinances of apparel to her, who "husbands at the church-door had she had five"? If the statute affected her, she would despise it as most others did—for it was repealed within a year of its enactment.

Of this company of Chaucer who travelled from the inn of Southwark to St. Thomas's shrine at Canterbury,<sup>1</sup> seven of the characters belong to the ecclesiastical establishment of England—the Prioress, the Monk, the Friar, the Clerk of Oxford, the Parson, the Sumptnour (summoner), and the Pardoner. Looking at them generally in connection with the other classes that the statute of Apparel indicates, and that our first great English poet describes, we cannot but be impressed with this general view of a condition of society in which the distinctions of rank are so clearly marked, but in which there is no slavish submission either to high blood, or great wealth, or outward sanctity, or professional distinction. Henry Bailey, the host of the Tabard, is the director of the pilgrimage. He presides over the supper that precedes the departure of the pilgrims, and he suggests that to shorten the journey each "should tellen tales alway." The "very perfect gentle Knight" feels no humiliation at agreeing to this proposal; and he relates his noble romance of chivalry as readily as the Miller tells his tale with its broad jests. The Prioress and the Nun have no false shame in being under the safeguard of the courtesy of the Knight, who is "meek as is a maid." The Sergeant at Law, who sits as judge at assize, and the solemn Physician, are wayside and board companions with the Haberdasher and the other worthies of the London guilds. The lordly Monk, looking with some pity upon the meek Parson and the studious Clerk of Oxford, has no scorn of his poor unworldly brothers in their humility. The prosperous Franklin listens to the slender and choleric Reve, who might be his neighbour's steward; and the Merchant, in his Flanders hat, "sounding alway the increase of his winning," has no fear of his position being compromised by the familiarity of the rough Shipman, on his wretched hackney, dressed in his gown of faldings or coarse cloth. The Cook, and the Manciple, a provider of commons for the inns of court, make mirth for the company by their quarrels and their jokes; and the Friar tells a story of diablerie in dispraise of the Sumptnour. Surely in this fellowship, in which there is no arrogance and no servility, we may recognise a state of society where class distinctions were so marked that haughtiness and reserve were not thought necessary for the assertion of individual dignity; but in which there was a natural respect of man for his fellows—the spirit which had made England great.

[<sup>1</sup> The Canterbury Tales in their underlying design are an exposition of chivalrous sentiment. This is thrown into relief by the different positions of the characters introduced.]

## THE WAR IN CASTILE

England was not permitted to remain many years at peace. If the chivalrous King John had lived—he who, when the Treaty of Bretigny was not faithfully kept by the French, came again to England, and yielded himself prisoner—it is probable that the high regard of the two kings for the courage and courtesy of each other might have cemented a friendship which would have extended to the people of each realm. John returned to England in 1363, leaving France under the government of the dauphin. He died in 1364, at the Savoy; and the dauphin became king of France, as Charles V. Without the chivalrous qualities of his father—for his prudence had been too conspicuous at Poitiers, where he left his young brother, Philip, to fight alone by the side of the king—he possessed a sagacity of more practical value in a sovereign than personal bravery. “There never was a king,” said Edward III, “who cared so little about arming himself, and yet gave me so much to do as this Charles.” The prince of Wales, with the title of prince of Aquitaine, was appointed to the possession and government of the southern provinces which had been ceded to Edward at the Peace of Bretigny; and with all the splendour of his reputation, and the high qualities which he really possessed, he disgusted the nobles of Gascony by his haughty bearing. The people of the ceded provinces were indignant that they should have been transferred in complete sovereignty to England. They clung, as Frenchmen, to the feudal superiority of France; and they resolved to obey the English king with their lips, but never to forget their allegiance to the crown of which English kings had been the vassals. Their discontent was smouldering, when the prince of Wales took up the cause of Peter I, king of Castile and Leon, who had been driven from his throne by his half-brother, Henry, assisted by a strong band of Free Companions, under the command of the great adventurer, Du Guesclin. Peter has been branded with the name of “the Cruel.” His private history is so complicated with his public character, that we must content ourselves with stating that his imprisonment and supposed murder of his wife, Blanche de Bourbon, provoked the invasion of Castile by the French forces in 1366, and the dethronement of the unpopular king. Peter had previously made an alliance with Edward III, and he now fled to the court of the Black Prince at Bordeaux. It is difficult to understand the motive which induced the policy of attempting the restoration of Peter to his throne, beyond hostility to a cause which Charles of France had espoused. In 1367, the Black Prince led a great army of English, Gascons, and Normans from Bordeaux; and entering Navarre, by the pass of Roncesvalles, met the army of Henry in Castile, near the right bank of the Ebro. The battle of Najera [or Navarrete] was a complete victory, in which the Black Prince displayed the resources of a great commander even more remarkably than in his previous successes. This was not a battle in which the proud and pampered nobles of France were intoxicated by their own superiority of numbers, as at Crécy and Poitiers. It was a battle of real soldiery on both sides—the English yeomen against the Free Companions—Chandos against Du Guesclin. It was a victory not only useless to the prince of Wales, but injurious in many ways to himself and his country. The faithless Peter, when he had been restored, refused to abide by his promise of paying the cost of the war. Edward’s army was reduced to the utmost misery by the want of provisions; and the prince had contracted a fatal malady which in a few years terminated his career of glory. He hastily returned to Gascony. The ingrate king was in six months hurled from

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his throne, and murdered by his half-brother. The greatest trophy of this campaign was the capture of Du Guesclin. An old writer has related a scene at Bordeaux singularly illustrative of the manners of this age. Bertrand goes to the prince, in the gray coat which he wears, and the prince cannot keep from laughing when he sees him, and says, "Well, Bertrand, how fare ye?" Bertrand bows a little, and replies, "Sir, when it shall please you, I may fare better; many a day have I heard the rats and mice, but the song of birds it is long since I heard. I shall hear them when it is your pleasure." The prince tells Bertrand he may go, if he will swear never to bear arms against him, or to assist Henry of Spain. Bertrand refuses, and reproaches the prince that he had gone to Spain through covetousness, and in hopes to have the throne after Peter's death: but that Peter had cheated him, for which he thanked Peter heartily. "By my soul, he is right," saith the prince. And then he tells Bertrand he shall go, but not without a good ransom. He answers that he is a poor knight, that his estate is mortgaged, that he owes ten thousand florins besides, and that the prince ought to be moderate. Edward replies that what Bertrand himself fixes he would be content with. Then Bertrand says that he ought not to value himself too low, and that he would engage to give for his freedom one hundred thousand double golden florins. "You cannot pay it," said the prince, "nor do I want it," and Bertrand protests that he would not give less than sixty thousand, and if Henry of Spain and the king of France would not lend them, all the sempstresses of France would spin the ransom for him. The prince would have quitted him for ten thousand double florins. All the barons marvel greatly, and Chandos says to Du Guesclin, "If you have need of any help, I will lend you ten thousand." "Sir," quoth Bertrand, "I thank you; but before I seek anything of you, I will try the people of my own country."

## RENEWAL OF THE WAR

In 1368 the Spanish campaign was producing much public evil for the prince of Wales. He imposed a heavy tax upon the people of Gascony; and the great lords carried their complaints to the throne of Charles V. The interference of France was a violation of the Treaty of Bretigny; but Charles ventured to summon the prince of Aquitaine to answer the complaint, assuming the position of his feudal lord. The prince said he would come with sixty thousand lances. The great war was now renewed. Edward III reassumed the title of king of France. There can be no doubt that it was the settled policy of Charles to obtain possession of Gascony and the other ceded districts. King Edward was growing old. His son was in feeble health. The government of the English was a yoke of which the Gascon nobles and people were impatient. In that age of military adventurers, the leaders changed their sides without much scruple, and many of the fighting Gascons went over to the banner of France. The French king adopted a bold policy, and assembled a fleet at Harfleur for the invasion of England; and Philip of Burgundy was to be its commander. When he was a captive boy at Windsor, he asserted his title to the name of the Bokl by striking the cup-bearer of Edward III for serving his master before the king of France. But Philip gave up the attempt to invade England; and he showed no rash disposition to encounter the duke of Lancaster, who had landed at Calais with a great army. The king of France would not allow a battle to be risked, which might terminate as other great battles had done. He suffered Lancaster to march



through the northern provinces. But in 1370 the French entered Gascony. The Black Prince took the field, and the royal princes of Anjou and Berri retired before him. Limoges had been betrayed to these dukes by the inhabitants; and during a month's siege Edward, sick almost to death, was carried in a litter from one point to another of the attack. The capital of Limousin was at length taken by storm. The last warlike act of the Black Prince was one which associates his name with the infamous system of cruelty that makes the individual bravery, endurance, and courtesy of the later feudal times look like a hollow mockery—a miserable imposture of self-glorification, trampling upon the higher principle that unites strength with mercy. Three thousand men, women, and children were butchered in cold blood when Limoges was taken. A few knights, resolved to battle to the last, placed their backs against a wall, and long fought against superior numbers. These Prince Edward ordered to be received to ransom. This was chivalry. Such contradictions show how unsafe a guide it was for the rulers of mankind; and how blessed were the people who the soonest escaped from its accursed dominion.

The Black Prince, in broken health, came back to England. His brother John of Gaunt, the duke of Lancaster, succeeded him in the government of Gascony. Du Guesclin was now at the head of a daring band; and those of Bordeaux who said of him, whom they called an ugly fellow—which in truth he was—"There is no castle, however strong, that would not soon surrender if he went thither to assault it," were true judges of his character. Wherever the English banner was displayed, Du Guesclin was there at the head of his adventurers. There were no great battles fought, for the French always avoided them. In vain Lancaster marched through France, from Calais to Bordeaux, in 1373. The French were ready to harass him by skirmishes, but not to fight in any general engagement. In vain Sir Robert Knolles led an army from Calais to the walls of Paris. A sagacious policy determined the French government to prolong an indecisive but most effective war. One by one the English lost many of their strong places. A truce was concluded in 1374, which lasted till 1377. The possessions which had been surrendered by the Treaty of Bretigny were all lost, with the exception of Bordeaux, Bayonne, and Calais. Too much of France was surrendered by that treaty to a foreign rule; and it was in the natural course of events that the feeling of nationality, to which its provisions were repugnant, and which an unwise rule had rendered more odious, should assert itself; and, gaining strength by every small success, leave England at last a very limited dominion, as the costly purchase of the ambition of forty years.

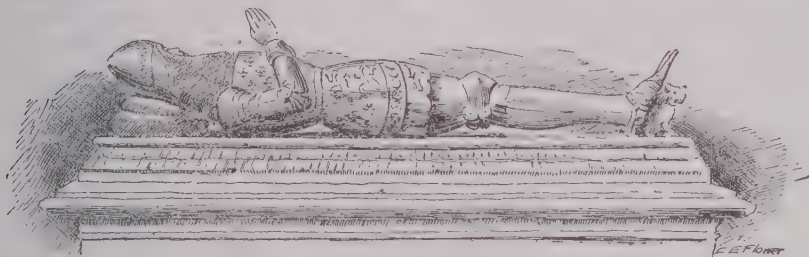
#### EDWARD'S LAST YEARS

In 1369, King Edward lost his queen, Philippa, the faithful wife of his boyhood and his age. In 1376, her first-born, the great prince of Wales, never rallying from the fever of his Spanish campaign, and worn out by the excitement of wars and conquests, which had begun from his earliest years, also died. To the old king remained John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, his third son (Lionel, the second, had died in 1368); Edward of Langley, duke of York; and Thomas of Woodstock, duke of Gloucester. After the death of Queen Philippa, the happy fortune of the king seems to have deserted him. When the prince of Wales returned to England, he regained the popularity which he had lost in Gascony, by opposing his father's government. The

[1376-1377 A.D.]

expiring passions of dotage, more miserable than its tears, had thrown the conqueror of France under the dominion of a mistress, Alice Perrers. To her influence, and that of her creatures, the eldest son of the king was naturally opposed. With the support of the prince of Wales, the parliament, in 1376, forced a measure upon the king, in which her name is mentioned in connection with unlawful suits prosecuted by way of "maintenance." But it was also clear that the Black Prince looked with jealousy upon the power of John, duke of Lancaster, who was thought to aspire to the crown. Edward had the interests of his son to maintain, Richard of Bordeaux. The friends of Lancaster were accused of misdemeanours in the parliament of 1376; but the prince of Wales died, and Lancaster regained his influence.

It would be tedious for us to follow the ill-understood contests of the remaining span of Edward's life. Richard, then ten years of age, was presented to the houses of parliament as the successor to all the rights of his



MONUMENT OF EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE IN CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

father. But the influence of the duke of Lancaster was all-powerful. The speaker of the commons, William de la Mare, who had led the opposition supported by the prince of Wales, was imprisoned; and William of Wykeham was deprived of his temporalities, and dismissed the court. His merits will be ever associated with his splendid educational foundations of Winchester and New College, Oxford. Lancaster took up the cause of John Wycliffe, who was under prosecution for his opinions; and when the reformer was called to defend himself at St. Paul's before the bishop of London, the duke accompanied him, and a violent quarrel ensued between the laymen and the ecclesiastics. A riot, in which the citizens of London took part against the king's powerful son, ensued. Thus were the last few months of the life of Edward disturbed. He had completed the fiftieth or jubilee year of his reign in February, 1377, and he published a general amnesty for all offences—evidently an act of the ruling power in the state, for Wykeham was excluded. He died on the 21st of June, 1377, with none to soothe his last hours but Alice Perrers. She took the ring from his finger, and the mighty victor was alone with the all-conqueror.

#### THE ENGLISH CHURCH

The state of the English church will be more clearly developed in the next reign than in that of Edward III. During the half century in which he sat upon the throne, the outward magnificence of the ecclesiastical hierarchy had reached its height. The great churches were finished with a refinement of taste which has left succeeding ages to wonder and copy. Then were com-

pleted the cathedrals of Lincoln, Wells, Peterborough, Salisbury. The abbey church of Westminster lifted up its glorious arches in rivalry with those of Winchester, which its munificent bishop, Wykeham, had remodelled. London was covered with the houses of the mendicant orders, who have fixed their names upon the localities which they inhabited—Blackfriars, and Whitefriars, and Crutchedfriars, and Austinfriars. Parish churches were in almost every principal street of the metropolis. The rural parishes were as bountifully supplied for the ministrations of religion. But amidst all these external indications of a power which it might be supposed would never die, there was a growing conviction that this house was built upon the sands. A quarter of a century before the death of Edward III—in 1353—a law had been passed against provisors—those who obtained from the pope a reversion of benefices and church dignities. In 1356, Wycliffe began his career as an ecclesiastical reformer by writing his treatise called *The Last Ages of the Church*. In 1365, the pope having demanded the arrears of the tribute known as “Peter’s pence,” it was refused by the parliament, and Wycliffe strenuously supported this resistance to the demand. But there was something more formidable to the papal authority, and to the system which was founded upon it, than the acts of the legislature. There was a public opinion forming, which, before the circulation of books by printing, and with the imperfect communication of one district with another, was diffused in a very remarkable way through the country. A general feeling began to spread that the church dignitaries, and the religious orders, were more intent upon their own aggrandisement, and the gratification of their own luxury, than the upholding of the faith and duties of the Gospel. The mass of the people were ignorant of the essentials of religion, though they bowed before its forms. In the universities there were young men who were like Chaucer’s clerk:

“Sounding in moral virtue was his speech,  
And gladly would he learn and gladly teach.”

To such the covert licentiousness of the monks, and the open profligacy of the mendicant orders, was a deep humiliation. They went forth, each to his small country cure, to speak of a holier religion than belonged to the worship of relics, or the purchase of indulgences. The sumptnours, who were the ministers of the extortions of the ecclesiastical courts, and the pardoners, who hawked about dispensations for sin, were their especial aversion. The satire of Chaucer was a reflection of the prevailing estimate of the monk, “full, fat, and in good point;” of the friar, “a wanton and a merry;” of the sumptnour, who thought “a man’s soul was in his purse;” of the pardoner, with his wallet “full of pardon come from Rome all hot.” In their sermons, secular priests now freely quoted the holy scriptures, in the common tongue; and they looked forward to the work which their great leader Wycliffe, the honoured professor of theology at Oxford, was preparing—the translation into English of Christ’s Testament. His citation for heresy in the last year of Edward III was the tribute to his importance. In a few years the preaching of Wycliffe and his disciples would go through the land, scattering the corruptions of the church with a power that for a time seemed likely to shake the whole fabric of society. The age was not ripe for the great Reformation that then seemed impending. But out of Wycliffe’s rectory of Lutterworth seeds were to be borne upon the wind, which would abide in the earth till they sprang up into the stately growth of other centuries.<sup>b</sup>





ST. ANDREW'S, WESTPORT

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE REIGN OF RICHARD II

[1377-1399 A.D.]

England, bound in with the triumphant sea,  
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege  
Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,  
With inky blots, and rotten parchment bonds:  
That England that was wont to conquer others,  
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.

SHAKESPEARE (*Richard II*, Act II, Scene I).

THE funeral obsequies of the late king occupied some time, but on July 16th, 1377, Richard was crowned in Westminster Abbey. The ceremony was unusually splendid, but the fatigue and excitement were too much for the royal boy, who, after being anointed and crowned, was so completely exhausted that they were obliged to carry him in a litter to his apartment. After some rest he was summoned to the great hall, where he created four earls and nine knights, and partook of a magnificent banquet, which was followed by a ball, minstrelsy, and other somewhat turbulent festivities of the time. Considerable pains were taken to spoil this young king from the first; such adulation and prostrations had not been seen before in England; and if the bishops and courtiers did not preach to the boy the "divine right," they seem to have made a near approach to that doctrine; and they spoke gravely of the intuitive wisdom and of the heroism of a child not yet eleven years old.

These men were indisputably answerable for much of the mischief that followed; but now the beauty of the young king's person and the memory of his father endeared him to his people, and a long time passed before they would think any ill of the son of their idol, the Black Prince. The duke of Lancaster, the titular king of Castile, more popularly known under the name of John of Gaunt,<sup>1</sup> had long been suspected of the project of supplanting his

[<sup>1</sup> John, duke of Lancaster, the fourth son of Edward III, and the eldest one that survived him, took his name, John of Gaunt, from his birthplace, Ghent or Gand, then pronounced Gaunt. Gairdner says of him that he was "a man whose inward endowments, either of virtue or discretion, by no means corresponded with his artificial greatness."]

nephew; but his unpopularity was great, and he yielded with tolerably good grace to the force of circumstances. As if on purpose to exclude the duke, no regular regency was appointed; but the morning after the coronation the prelates and barons chose, "in aid of the chancellor and treasurer," twelve permanent councillors, among whom not one of the king's uncles was named. John of Gaunt withdrew to his castle of Kenilworth; but nothing could remove the popular belief that the duke aimed at the throne, and prophecies were afloat which, like other such predictions, probably helped to work their own fulfilment a few years later, when his son, Henry of Bolingbroke, dethroned his cousin Richard.

The French were not slow in trying to take the usual advantage of a minority. The truce expired before the death of Edward, and Charles refused to prolong it. In close union with Henry of Trastamara, who was provoked by the duke of Lancaster's continuing to assume the title of king of Castile, he got together a formidable fleet, and insulted and plundered the English coast, before Richard had been a month on the throne. A parliament<sup>1</sup> was assembled whilst the impression of these injuries was fresh; and in order to obtain supplies of money (the treasury being exhausted) it was stated that the realm was in greater danger than it had ever been. Supplies were voted, and, by borrowing greater sums of the merchants, government was enabled to put to sea a considerable fleet under the command of the earl of Buckingham, one of the duke of Lancaster's brothers. Buckingham met with little success, and his failure, however unfairly, added to the unpopularity of the Lancastrian party.

John of Gaunt, however, obtained the command of the fleet (1378), with nearly all the money which had been voted. He detached a squadron under the earls of Arundel and Salisbury, who, in crossing the Channel, fell in with a Spanish fleet, and suffered considerable loss. The two earls, however, succeeded in their main object, and took possession of the town and port of Cherbourg, on the coast of Normandy, which were ceded to England by the king of Navarre, who was again engaged in a war with the French king, and who was glad to purchase the assistance of England at any price. In the month of July the duke sailed with the great fleet for the coast of Brittany, where the conquests of the French had reduced another ally of England almost to despair. The duke of Brittany, son of the heroic countess de Montfort, ceded to the English the important town and harbour of Brest, which Lancaster secured with a good garrison. The duke then invested St. Malo, but the constable Du Guesclin marched with a very superior force to the relief of that place, and compelled the duke to return to his ships. The great fleet then came home.

A striking circumstance which had occurred did not tend to brighten the duke's laurels. The Scots, receiving their impulse from France, renewed the war, surprised the castle of Berwick, made incursions into the northern counties, and equipped a number of ships to cruise against the English. Berwick was recovered soon after by the earl of Northumberland; but one John Mercer, who had got together certain sail of Scots, French, and Spaniards, came to Scarborough, and made prize of every ship in that port. Upon learning the injuries done, and the still greater damage apprehended from these sea-rovers, John Philpot—"that worshipful citizen of London"—lamenting the negligence of government, equipped a small fleet at his own expense, and, without waiting for any commission, went in pursuit of Mercer. After a fierce

[<sup>1</sup> Before the end of this session of parliament Alice Perrers, Edward III's mistress, was arrested, charged with having solicited causes in the king's courts for reward. She was tried before a committee of the lords, found guilty, and banished.]

[1378-1379 A.D.]

battle, the doughty alderman took the Scot prisoner, captured fifteen Spanish ships, and recovered all the vessels which had been taken at Scarborough. On his return, Philpot was received in triumph by his fellow-citizens, but he was harshly handled by the council of government for the unlawfulness of acting as he had done without authority, he being but a private man.

In the month of October, 1378, the parliament met at Gloucester, and in a very bad humour; the government wanted money—the commons a reform of abuses. The disputes ended in a compromise, the commons being allowed to inspect the accounts of the treasurers, which was granted as a matter of favour, but not of right, nor were they to consider it as a precedent: they also obtained copies of the papers, showing how the moneys they had voted had been raised; but this also was granted as if proceeding from the king's good pleasure. In the end they granted a new aid by laying additional duties on wool, wool-fells, hides, leather, and other merchandise.

John de Montfort, the duke of Brittany, had been driven to seek refuge in England, and the French king annexed his dominions to the crown of France. This premature measure reconciled all the factions in the country; and John was recalled by the unanimous voice of the Bretons. Leaving his wife, an aunt of King Richard,<sup>1</sup> in England, he embarked with one hundred knights and men-at-arms, and two hundred archers. Charles instantly prepared to send a French army into Brittany, and then the duke implored the assistance of a force from England. A considerable army was raised and sent to his relief, under the command of the earl of Buckingham.

Buckingham landed at Calais, and from Calais he marched to Artois, Picardy, Champagne, and other inland provinces of France, plundering and devastating the open country. His progress was watched by far superior forces; but, firm to the system which the cautious Charles had adopted, the French would not risk a battle, and the English, after a circuitous march, reached the frontiers of Brittany without meeting any resistance. But the earl of Buckingham was scarcely there when the king of France died, and the Bretons, who knew that a boy was to ascend the throne, thinking that they should no longer stand in need of their assistance, began to entertain as much jealousy and hatred of the English as they had hitherto done of the French. Montfort was unable to resist the wishes of his subjects; and as the uncles of the young king Charles VI, who formed the regency, were willing to treat and to recognise his restoration, he concluded a peace with France, and engaged wholly to abandon the interests of England. Buckingham returned home in the following spring, glad to escape from the hostility of the Bretons.



RICHARD II  
(1366-1400)

<sup>1</sup> Montfort married Mary, the fourth daughter of Edward III and Queen Philippa.



## POPULAR DISCONTENT

These proceedings had cost large sums of money, and the nation was sorely harassed by taxation, or by the way in which the taxes were levied. In an evil hour parliament passed a capitation tax: this was a repetition of the tax imposed in the last year of the preceding reign, but slightly modified, so as to make it fall less heavily on the poor. Every male and female of fifteen years of age was to pay three groats; but in cities and towns the aggregate amount was to be divided among the inhabitants according to their abilities, or in such a way that no individual should pay less than one groat, or more than sixty groats for himself and his wife. Where there was little or no registration, the fixing of the age was sure to lead to disputes: the collectors might easily take a boy or girl of fourteen to be fifteen, and poverty would induce many of the poor knowingly to make a misstatement of the opposite kind. But the levying of this awkward tax might have passed over with nothing more serious than a few riots between the people and the tax-gatherers, had it not been for other circumstances involved in the mighty change which had gradually been taking place in the whole body of European society.

The peasantry had been gradually emerging from slavery to freedom, and began to feel an ambition to become men, and to be treated as such by their superiors in the accidental circumstances of rank and wealth. In this transition state there were mistakes and atrocious crimes committed by both parties; but ignorance may be particularly pleaded in exculpation of the people, while that very ignorance, and the brutalised state in which they had been kept, were crimes or mistakes on the part of the upper classes, who had now to pay a horrible penalty. The enfranchisement of the peasantry, which was the real motive of the movement—for the rest was an afterthought, begotten in the madness of success, and the frenzy inspired in unenlightened minds by the first consciousness of power—was so sacred an object that nothing could disgrace or eventually defeat it. In Flanders, notwithstanding that there the more respectable burghers took a share in the insurrection, many frightful excesses had been committed upon the aristocracy, and in France the recent *Jacquerie* had been little else than a series of horrors. The attempt of the French peasantry offered a discouraging example to their neighbours in England; but the democratic party had had a long triumph in Flanders; and at this very moment the son of Van Artevelde, the brewer of Ghent, with Peter Dubois, was waging a successful war against their court, their nobles, and the whole aristocracy of France.

From the close intercourse between the two countries, many of the English must have been perfectly acquainted with all that was passing in Flanders, and from it have derived encouragement. A new revolt had also commenced in France, headed by the burghers and inhabitants of the towns; it began at Rouen, where the collectors of taxes and duties on provisions were massacred. Many of our historians have attributed part of the storm which was now gathering in England to the preaching of Wycliffe's disciples; but their original authorities seem to have been prejudiced witnesses against the church reformer. The convulsion is sufficiently accounted for by the actual condition of the people of England at this period. That condition, though far superior to the state of the French people, was still wretched and galling. A considerable portion of the peasantry were serfs or "villeins," bound to the soil, and sold, or transmitted with the estates of the nobles and other landed proprietors. The present discontents and sufferings of the classes immediately above these

[1380-1381 A.D.]

serfs—the poor townspeople on the coast, more particularly, who had been plundered by the foreign fleets—no doubt contributed to hurry on the sanguinary crisis; but it was the poll-tax that was the proximate cause of the mischief. At first the tax was levied with mildness; but being farmed out to some courtiers who raised money upon it from Flemish and Lombard merchants, it was exacted by their collectors with great severity. But the obstinacy of the people kept pace with the harshness of the collectors; many of the rural districts refused payment.

## THE UPRISINGS IN KENT AND ESSEX

The recusants were handled very sorely and uncourteously in various places in Kent and Essex, where “some of the people, taking it in evil part, secretly took counsel together, gathered assistance, and resisted the exactors, rising against them, of whom some they slew, some they wounded, and the rest fled.” Alarmed at these proceedings, government sent certain commissioners into the disturbed districts. One of these commissioners, Thomas de Bampton, sat at Brentwood, in Essex. The people of Fobbing, on being summoned before him, said that they would not pay one penny more than they had done, “whereupon the said Thomas did grievously threaten them, having with him two sergeants-at-arms of the king.” These threats made matters worse; and when Bampton ordered his sergeants to arrest them, the peasants drove him and his men-at-arms away to London.

Upon this Sir Robert Belknap, chief justice of the common pleas, was sent into Essex to try the offenders; but the peasants forced him to flee, and chopped off the heads of the jurors and clerks of the commission. They stuck these heads upon poles and carried them through all the neighbouring townships and villages, calling upon all the poor to rise and join them. “The commons of England” (for so the peasants called themselves, and were called by others) wanted nothing but a leader, and this they soon found in a “riotous priest,” who took the name of Jack Straw. In a few days, not only the whole agricultural population of Essex were up in arms, but their neighbours in Kent, Suffolk, and Norfolk were following the example. In Kent, an act of brutality on the part of a tax-gatherer, and an act of great imprudence (considering the prevailing excitement) on the part of a knight, fanned the flames of revolt.

One of the collectors of the poll-money went to the house of one Walter the Tyler, in the town of Dartford, and demanded the tax for a young maiden, the daughter of Walter.<sup>1</sup> The mother maintained that she was but a child, and not of the womanly age set down by the act of parliament: the collector said he would ascertain this fact, and he offered an intolerable insult to the girl. The maiden and her mother cried out, and the father ran to the spot and knocked out the tax-gatherer's brains. The neighbours applauded the deed, and everyone prepared to support the Tyler. About the same time, Sir Simon Burley went to Gravesend with an armed force, claimed an industrious man living in that town as his escaped bondsman, and carried him off a prisoner to Rochester castle. The commons of Kent now rose unanimously, and

[<sup>1</sup> Most of the earlier historians, as the writer here does, have identified Wat Tyler, or Wat the Tyler, the leader of the peasant revolt, with the tiler of Dartford whose killing of the royal tax collector for an insult to his daughter was one of the incidents that led to the outbreak. But there is apparently no reason for this identification of the two men other than the fact that they both plied the same trade. Gairdner *o* does not believe them to be one and the same.]

being joined by a strong body of the men of Essex, who crossed the Thames, they fell upon Rochester castle, and compelled the garrison to deliver up Sir Simon's serf with other prisoners. In the town of Maidstone, the insurgents appointed Wat the Tyler their captain, and then took out of prison, and had for their chaplain or preacher, "a wicked priest called John Ball," at that time confined on a charge of heresy.<sup>1</sup>

On the Monday after Trinity Sunday, 1381, Wat Tyler entered Canterbury, and after terrifying the monks and the clergy of the cathedral, he forced the mayor, aldermen, and commons of the town to swear to be true to King Richard and the lawful commons of England: then, beheading three rich men of Canterbury, Wat marched away towards London. On his march recruits came to him from all quarters of Kent and Sussex; and by the time he reached Blackheath (June 11th) there were, it is said, one hundred thousand desperate men obeying the orders of Wat Tyler. While at this spot the widow of the Black Prince, the young king's mother, fell into their hands; but in the midst of their fury they respected her, and after granting a few kisses to some dirty-faced and rough-bearded men she was allowed, with her retinue and maids of honour, to proceed quietly to London.

While this host was bivouacked about Blackheath and Greenwich, John Ball, the priest of Kent, kept them to their purpose by long orations or sermons, in which he insisted that all men were equal before God, and ought to be so before the laws—and so far he was right; but it appears he went on to recommend an equality of property, which is impracticable, and a destruction of all the upper classes, which is monstrous. His eloquence had such an effect on the multitude that, forgetting his own doctrines of equality, they vowed they would make him primate and chancellor of England. They occupied all the roads, killed such judges and lawyers as fell into their hands,<sup>2</sup> and made all the rest of the passengers swear to be true to King Richard and the commons, to accept no king whose name was "John" [referring to the influence of Lancaster], and to pay no tax except the fifteenths which had been paid by their forefathers. The young king, with his mother, with his cousin Henry of Bolingbroke, with Simon Sudbury, archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor, Sir Robert Hales, treasurer, and some other members of the government, threw himself into the Tower of London. The duke of Lancaster was in Scotland negotiating a peace. Some of the council were of opinion that Richard should go and speak with the insurgents, but the archbishop and the treasurer strongly objected to this measure, and said that nothing but force should be used "to abate the pride of such vile rascals."

On the 12th of June, however, Richard got into his barge, and descended the river as far as Rotherhithe, where he found a vast multitude drawn up alongshore. "When they perceived the king's barge," says Froissart,<sup>d</sup> "they set up shouts and cries as if all the devils from hell had come into their coun-

[Ball's theory of democracy was expressed in the delightful little couplet which he is said to have used as a text for his sermons:

When Adam delved and Eve span,  
Who was then the gentleman?]

[<sup>2</sup> Walsingham *c* tells us that Wat Tyler's plans provided, as a first step towards correcting the evils of the time, the beheading of all the lawyers in the country, "for he had taken it into his head that, on all those learned in the laws being killed, everything for the rest would be regulated according to the decree of the commonalty." Lord Campbell *f* points out that the same spirit manifested itself in Cade's rebellion in the reign of Henry VI. Shakespeare (*Henry VI. Part II*) makes one of Cade's lieutenants say, "The first thing we do let's kill all the lawyers." As late as the Gordon riots (1780) the mob laid siege to the inns of court, declaring that if all the lawyers were exterminated "the skin of an innocent lamb might no longer be converted into an indictment."<sup>1</sup>



[1381 A.D.]

pany." Startled and terrified, the persons with the king put about the boat, and, taking advantage of the rising tide, rowed back with all speed to the Tower. The commons, who had always professed the greatest attachment to Richard's person, now called aloud for the heads of all the ministers; and marching along the right bank of the river to Southwark, and then to Lambeth, destroyed the Marshalsea and King's Bench, and burned the furniture and all the records and books in the palace of the primate. At the same time the men of Essex advanced along the left bank of the river, and threatened the northeastern part of London. Walworth, the mayor, caused the movable part of London bridge to be drawn up, to prevent the men of Kent from crossing the river; but on the following day a passage was yielded to them through fear, and the insurgents entered the city, where they were presently joined by all the rabble. At first their demeanour was most moderate: "they did no hurt, they took nothing from any man, but bought all things they wanted at a just price." But the madness of drunkenness was soon added to political fury. The rich citizens, hoping to conciliate the mob, had set open their wine cellars for them; and, thus excited, they went to the Savoy, the house of the duke of Lancaster, broke into this palace, and set fire to it. To show that plunder was not their object, the leaders published a proclamation ordering that none, on pain of death, should secrete or convert to his own use anything that might be found there, but that plate, gold, and jewels should all be destroyed. It would have been well had the prohibition extended to the duke's wines, but they drank there immoderately, and thirty-two of the rioters, engaged in the cellars of the Savoy, were too drunk to remove in time, and were buried under the ruins of the house.

Newgate was then demolished; and the prisoners who had been confined there and in the Fleet joined in the work of havoc. The Temple was burned, with all the books and ancient and valuable records it contained; and about the same time a detachment set fire to the priory of St. John of Jerusalem, in Clerkenwell. They now also proceeded to the shedding of blood. They probably felt that antipathy to foreigners common to uneducated people; but against the Flemings, who, it was popularly said, fattened on their miseries, they bore the most deadly rancour. The sanctuary of the church was disregarded, and thirty Flemings were dragged from the altar into the streets, and beheaded; thirty-two more were seized in the Vintry, and underwent the same fate. Some of the rich citizens were massacred in attempting to escape; those who remained did nothing for the defence of the city, and all that night London was involved in fire, murder, and debauchery.

On the morning of the 14th it was resolved to try the effect of concession and of promises. A proclamation was issued to a multitude that crowded Tower Hill, clamouring for the heads of the chancellor and treasurer; and they were told that, if they would retire quietly to Mile End, the king would meet them there, and grant all their requests. The gates were opened, the drawbridge was lowered, and Richard rode forth with a few attendants without arms. The commonalty from the country followed the king; "but all did not go, nor had they the same objects in view." On arriving at Mile End, Richard was surrounded by upwards of sixty thousand peasants; but their demeanour was mild and respectful, and they presented no more than four demands, all of which, except the second, were wise and moderate. These four demands of the peasants were: (1) The total abolition of slavery for themselves and their children forever; (2) the reduction of the rent of good land to fourpence the acre; (3) the full liberty of buying and selling, like other men, in all fairs and markets; (4) a general pardon for all past offences.

The king, with a gracious countenance, assured them that all these demands were granted; and, returning to town, he employed upwards of thirty clerks to make copies of the charter containing the four clauses. In the morning these copies were sealed and delivered, and then an immense body of the insurgents, consisting chiefly of the men of Essex and Hertfordshire, quietly withdrew from the capital: but more dangerous men remained behind. The people of Kent, who had been joined by all kinds of miscreants, had committed some atrocious deeds on the preceding day, while the king was marching to Mile End. Almost as soon as his back was turned, with a facility which excites a suspicion of treachery or disaffection on the part of the garrison, they got into the Tower, where they cut off the heads of the archbishop of Canterbury, the chancellor; Sir Robert Hales, the treasurer; William Apuldore, the king's confessor; Legge, one of the farmers of the tax, and three of his associates. The widow of the Black Prince, who was in the Tower, was completely at their mercy; but the *ci-derant* "Fair Maid of Kent" was again quit for a few unsavoury kisses. The horror of the scene, however, overpowered her; and she was carried by her ladies in a senseless state to a covered boat. As soon as he could, the king joined his mother, who had been finally conveyed to a house called the Royal Wardrobe.

### *Death of Wat Tyler*

Wat Tyler and the leaders with him rejected the charter which the men of Essex had so gladly accepted. Another charter was drawn up, but it equally failed to please, and even a third, with still larger concessions, was rejected with contempt. The next morning the king left the Wardrobe and went to Westminster, where he heard mass. After this he mounted his horse, and, with a retinue of barons and knights, rode along the "causeway" towards London. On coming into West Smithfield he met Wat Tyler. The mayor and some other city magistrates had joined the king, but his whole company, it is said, did not exceed sixty persons. In the front of the abbey of St. Bartholomew, Richard drew rein, and said that he would not go thence until he had appeased the rioters. Wat Tyler said to his men, "Here is the king! I will go speak with him. Move not hand or foot unless I give you a signal." Wat, who had procured arms and a horse, rode boldly up to Richard, and went so near that his horse's head touched the flank of Richard's steed. "King!" said he, "dost thou see all those men there?" "I see them," replied the king; "why dost thou ask?" "Because they are all at my will, and have sworn by their faith and loyalty to do whatsoever I bid them." During this parley the Tyler played with his dagger, and, it is said by some, laid hold of Richard's bridle.

It is probable that this uneducated man, intoxicated by his brief authority, was coarse and insolent enough; but to suppose that he intended to kill the king is absurd. Some say that Richard ordered his arrest; others that William Walworth, the lord mayor, thinking that he intended to stab the king, rode up and plunged a short sword into his throat without any orders. All accounts agree in stating that, whether with sword, dagger, or mace, it was the mayor who struck the first blow. Wat Tyler turned his horse's head to rejoin his men, but Ralph Standish, one of the king's esquires, thrust his sword through his side, "so that he fell flat on his back to the ground; and, beating with his hands to and fro for a while, gave up his unhappy ghost." When the men of Kent saw his fall they cried out, "We are betrayed! They have killed our captain and guide!" and the foremost men in that disordered

[1351 A.D.]

array began to put their arrows on the string. The personal intrepidity of the royal boy—for Richard was only in his fifteenth year—saved his life. He rode gallantly up to the insurgents and exclaimed, "What are ye doing, my lieges? Tyler was a traitor—I am your king, and I will be your captain and guide." On hearing these words, many slipped away—others remained; but, without a leader, they knew not what to do. The king rode back to his lords, and asked what steps he should take next. "Make for the fields," said the lord mayor: "if we attempt to retreat or flee, our ruin is certain; but let us gain a little time, and we shall be assisted by our good friends in the city." The king and his party made for the northern road, and the mob, wavering and uncertain, followed him to the open fields about Islington. Here a thousand men-at-arms joined the king, under the command of Sir Robert Knolles. The insurgents, now thinking their case hopeless, either ran away through the corn-fields, or, throwing their bows on the ground, knelt and implored for mercy.

While these events were passing in London and its neighbourhood, the servile war had spread over a great part of England; but, as the nobles shut themselves up in their strong castles, little blood was shed. Henry le Despenser, the bishop of Norwich, despised this safe course; he armed his retainers, collected his friends, and kept the field against the insurgents of Norfolk, Cambridge, and Huntingdon. He surprised several bodies of peasants, and cut them to pieces: others he took prisoners, and sent straight to the gibbet or the block.

Soon after the death of Wat Tyler, Richard found himself at the head of forty thousand horse, and then he told the people that all his charters meant nothing, and that they must return to their old bondage. The men of Essex made a stand, but they were defeated with great loss. Then courts of commission were opened in different towns to condemn rather than to try the chief offenders. Jack Straw and John Ball, the strolling preachers, Lister, and Westbroom, who had taken to themselves the titles of kings of the commons in Norfolk and Suffolk, with several hundred more, were executed. The whole number of executions is said to have amounted to fifteen hundred.

When parliament assembled, it was seen how little the upper classes of society were prepared for that recognition of the rights of the poor to which, in the present day, no one could demur without incurring the suspicion of insanity. The king had annulled, by proclamation to the sheriffs, the charters of manumission which he had granted to the insurgents, and this revocation was warmly approved by both lords and commons. There was a talk, indeed, about the propriety and wisdom of abolishing villeinage; but the notion was scouted, and the owners of serfs showed that they neither doubted the right by which they held their fellow-creatures in a state of slavery, nor would hesitate to increase the severity of the laws affecting them. They



TIME OF RICHARD II



passed a law by which "riots, and rumours, and other such things" were turned into high treason. But this parliament evidently acted under the impulses of panic and of revenge for recent injuries. The commons, however, presented petitions calling for redress of abuses in the administration: but they only attributed the late insurrection to the extortions of purveyors—to the venality and rapacity of the judges and officers of the courts of law—to the horrible doings of a set of banditti called "maintainers"—and to the heavy weight of recent taxation.<sup>b</sup>

#### WYCLIFFE

In all the insurrectionary proceedings which so clearly indicated a condition of society in which those lowest in the social scale met with little consideration and no immediate redress, we cannot perceive—what has been maintained with a confidence very disproportioned to the evidence—that the "theory of property" expounded by Wycliffe was a main cause of this anarchy<sup>1</sup>: that "the new teaching received a practical comment in 1381, in the invasion of London by Wat the Tyler." The assumed connection of the "new doctrine" with the insurrection may be attributed to the hostility with which the Lollard opinions were assailed by the misrepresentations of the apprehensive ecclesiastics and their historians. The agitation of Wycliffe and his followers was coincident with the insurrection of the villeins, but it was not of necessity a cause. Agitation of any kind begets other agitation. But this was not the direct effect which some impute to the dissemination of Wycliffe's tenets.

Within a few months after the accession of Richard II the rector of Lutterworth, in consequence of letters from the pope, was summoned before the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London, to answer for his opinions. He defended his doctrines, and was dismissed, with a direction to be cautious for the future. After the insurrection of 1381 had been quelled, a synod of divines was called, in which many of Wycliffe's opinions were censured as heretical, erroneous, and of dangerous tendency. To follow up their triumph, the prelates procured an act to be passed by the lords to the following effect: That divers evil persons, under the dissimulation of great holiness, go about from county to county, and from town to town, "without the license of our holy father, the pope, or of the ordinaries of the places, or other sufficient authority, preaching daily, not only in churches and churchyards, but also in markets, fairs, and other open places." The sermons so preached, it is alleged, have been proved before the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishops and prelates, and a great part of the clergy, to contain heresies and notorious errors.

Further it is said, "which persons do also preach divers matters of slander, to engender discord and dissension betwixt divers estates of the said realm, as well spiritual as temporal, in exciting of the people, to the great peril of all the realm." The act then directs the sheriffs to hold such preachers and

[<sup>1</sup> Freeman <sup>h</sup> points out that one great result of the revolt was to associate in men's minds the two ideas of religious reformation and social or political revolution. "Wycliffe," he says, "was himself as guiltless of the revolt of the villeins as Luther was of the Peasants' War, or of the reign of the anabaptists. But in both cases the teaching of the more moderate reformer had a real connection with the doings of the reformers who outstripped him. From this time Lollardy was under a cloud. It was held to be all one, not only with heresy but with revolution."<sup>a</sup>]

[1381 A.D.]

their abettors "in arrest and strong prison, till they will justify themselves according to the law and reason of holy church." This victory over the "poor preachers" was very short-lived. Wycliffe petitioned against the act. The commons represented that it had been passed without their consent. It was immediately repealed; and we hear nothing more in the legislative records about preachers of heresies, till, eighteen years afterwards, a law was passed to burn them. To us it appears manifest that, in repealing this act, the parliament asserted its conviction that the heresies, the notorious errors, the matters of slander, which were preached in open places, had solely reference to the alleged corruptions of the church, and that to subject the kingdom to the jurisdiction of the prelates, as the act proposed, was to surrender the civil freedom which their ancestors had maintained. The men who refused to assent to the proposal of the king that slavery should be abolished would have been ready enough to sanction the imprisonment of the preachers of universal equality, if such had been their doctrine. Undoubtedly Wycliffe himself did not hesitate to maintain that the revenues of the church, applied not to the service of the altar by its diligent ministers, but to the upholding of the excessive pride and luxury of prelates and abbots and other "possessioners," were superfluous, and were truly the patrimony of the poor. Wycliffe is also reported to have said, although he attempted to explain his meaning away, that "charters of perpetual inheritance were impossible." In contending that the preachers of the Gospel were bound to lead a life of self-denial, like that of their great master, he naturally provoked a fiercer indignation than was excited by his more abstract doctrines regarding the Eucharist and the sacrament of matrimony.

He was at last compelled to submit himself to the judgment of his ordinary, and he withdrew to his rectory. But he had accomplished a work which no ecclesiastical censure could set aside. He had translated the Scriptures into the English language. Whenever he and his disciples were assailed by the higher ecclesiastics, he had appealed to the Bible. His translation of the Bible was now multiplied by the incessant labour of transcribers. The texts of the Bible were in every mouth, as they were re-echoed in the sermons of his preachers, in churches and open places. The poor treasured up the words of comfort for all earthly afflictions. The rich and great meditated upon the inspired sentences which so clearly pointed out a more certain road to salvation than could be found through indulgences and pilgrimages. During the remaining years of the fourteenth century, the principles of the Lollards took the deepest root in the land. Wycliffe died in 1384, but his preaching never died. His Bible was proscribed; his votaries were imprisoned and burned. But the sacred flame was never extinguished. The first English reformer appeared in an age when civil freedom asserted itself with a strength which was never afterwards subdued or materially weakened. He fought a brave fight for religious freedom, with very unequal forces, against a most powerful hierarchy. But such contests are not terminated in a few years. The reforms which in the eternal laws are willed to be permanent are essentially of slow growth. When the "poor preachers" had slept for a century and a half their day of triumph was at hand.

It has been said that of this generation one-third of the English people became Lollards, as the followers of Wycliffe were now termed. The ecclesiastical hierarchy held them as the tares (*lolium*) amongst the wheat. In the next generation began the futile process of attempting to weed out the tares. The gradual reforms by which the ancient state of England was preserved and invigorated were resisted by those who had directed the fortunes of her

ancient church. In the fulness of time it fell—a warning to those who dwell in the edifice reconstructed out of its materials, precious even in their occasional incongruity.

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

The age in which the “poor preachers” disseminated their opinions was an age in which knowledge began to spread, and literature was to some extent cultivated. The abstract doctrines of the Lollards had been enforced by the satires of “Piers Ploughman”—full not only of sarcasm and invective, but of real poetry. Chaucer had arisen with his various knowledge, his familiarity with courtly and with common life, his acquaintance with the writings of Dante and Petrarch and the Italian fablers. He gave to his native English a copiousness and elegance which it had not previously possessed. He cast aside the use of Latin, which limited literature to the few. He brought his translations and adaptations within the reach of the many. From Boccaccio he borrowed his *Knight's Tale*, “as olde stories tellin us.” To this romance he added vigorous descriptions and graceful fictions which are wanting in his model. He invented the English heroic couplet—the fruitful parent of a noble poetical progeny. His *Romaunt of the Rose* is of French origin. His *Troilus and Cresseide*, as he tells us, is from “myne auctor Lollius,” an Italian of Urbino. His poems contain frequent allusions to the great Latin writers. *The House of Fame* has not been traced to a distinct origin. *The Canterbury Tales*—with their Arabian fiction and philosophy; their reflections of mediæval splendour and of mediæval injustice as exhibited in the *Clerk of Oxenford's Tale*, which, written by Boccaccio, he learned of Petrarch at Padua; their wonderful pictures of English life, so thoroughly founded upon his own genius and powers of observation—would appear miraculous performances if we were to fall into the common notion that the end of the fourteenth century was an age of ignorance. Ignorance, very gross, no doubt, there was; but the national mind was awake, or such works could never have been produced. They were meant to be popular—and they were popular. Limited in their circulation by the necessary expense of their multiplication in manuscript, they found their way to the noble's privy chamber, the franklin's fireside, and the student's cell.

Most men, with any pretensions to knowledge, had some acquaintance with the novelties of literature and the current European fables. In the inventory under the will of a clerk of Bury, in 1370, we find his service-book, a law book, a book of statutes, and a book of romances. The passion for fiction existed before printing multiplied the possession of works of amusement. The French romances were the courtly reading, before Chaucer and Gower came with their more attractive English. Gower, “the moral Gower,” was far inferior in genius to Chaucer. In him that great attribute of genius, humour, was wholly wanting. His *Confessio Amantis*, full indeed of affectations, the pedantry of love, contains many interesting narratives and wise disquisitions. The early writers of fiction, without the creative power which has made Chaucer universal and enduring, used their stories as the vehicle for imparting the most recondite knowledge—and Gower was of this class. But in him we may trace the large range of inquiry that belonged to his time, destitute of scientific exactness, but leading into wide regions of speculation. The demand for poetry and fiction is strikingly exemplified by an incident connected with Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. Richard, the luxurious king, is



[1381-1382 A.D.]

in his barge on the Thames. He sees the poet in a boat, and inviting him to come on board desires him to "book some new thing."

When Froissart came to England, in 1394, he brought a French romance to Richard, which he laid ready on the king's bed. "When the king opened it, it pleased him well, for it was fair enlumined and written. Then the king demanded me whereof it treated, and I showed him how it treated matters of love; whereof the king was glad, and looked in it, and read it in many places, for he could speak and read French very well."<sup>d</sup> Froissart's commendation of the king's French shows that English was now commonly read and spoken; and that Chaucer and Gower had adapted themselves to that change which has carried our tongue to the ends of the earth. Upon Wycliffe's Bible our present translation is mainly founded. Sir John Mandeville, in 1356, wrote in English his *Travels*, so full of apocryphal marvels. Trevisa translated the *Polychronicon* of Higden in 1385. From him we learn that, at the time he wrote, gentlemen had "much left off to have their children taught French." The change had been gradually coming, for John Cornwall, a schoolmaster, in 1356 made his boys translate Latin into English. By the end of the fourteenth century the English were a nation, in language as well as in heart.<sup>k</sup>

## FLANDERS AND SCOTLAND

The king, being now (1382) in his sixteenth year, was married to Anne of Bohemia, daughter of the late emperor Charles IV, an accomplished and excellent princess, who deserved a better and a wiser husband.

At this time there were two popes, Urban VI, an Italian, and Clement VII, a Frenchman. France, Scotland, Spain, Sicily, and Cyprus were for Clement; England, Flanders, and the rest of Europe for Urban. The Italian pope, after looking about for a brave and sure champion, fixed his eyes on the warlike bishop of Norwich, who had so lately distinguished himself in the servile war of England. At the same time the Flemings, sorely pressed by the French, renewed their applications to England for assistance. After preaching a sort of crusade, the bishop of Norwich asked in the pope's name a tenth on church property, obtained the produce of a fifteenth on lay property, and raised a small army, and so passed over the Channel to make war.

The war in which this military churchman engaged presented two aspects: under one, it was a sacred crusade for the pope; but under the other it was a conflict waged in union with and for the rights and independence of the burghers and commons of Flanders against the aristocracy. After the murder of Jacob van Artevelde, the cause of democracy declined; and thirty-six years after that event the Flemings were reduced almost to extremities. In this state they fixed all their hopes on Van Artevelde's son, who had been named Philip, after his godmother Philippa, the wife of Edward III. Philip van Artevelde, warned by his father's fate, had passed his life in a quiet and happy retirement; and in 1381 he was dragged, with his eyes open to the worst consequences, to head the council and lead the armies of the dispirited people. For about fifteen months, which included the whole of his public life, his career was as brilliant as a romance: but in the month of November, 1382, he was defeated in the sanguinary battle of Roosebeke, and (in this more fortunate than his father) was killed by the enemy. After that dreadful defeat, the cause of the commons again declined.

Affairs were in this state at the arrival of the English force. The bishop of Norwich led his little army to Gravelines, which he stormed and took. He

next defeated an army of the count of Flanders, took the town of Dunkirk, and occupied the whole coast as far as Sluys; he then marched, with an impetuosity which astonished more regular warriors, to lay siege to Ypres, where he was joined by twenty thousand of the men of Ghent. Meanwhile, the count implored the protection of the young king of France, who sent a splendid army across the frontier. The bishop made one furious assault; but, on the approach of the French, he ran back to the coast. In England his failure was attributed to the jealousy of the duke of Lancaster.

In her jealousy of the powers of his uncles, the princess of Wales had surrounded her son with ministers and officers who were chiefly men of obscure birth. Richard, who lived almost entirely in the society of these individuals, contracted an exclusive affection for them, and as soon as he was able he began to heap wealth and honours upon them. Hence there arose perpetual bickerings between the favourites and the king's uncles. A dark mystery will forever hang over most of these transactions. Once the duke of Lancaster was obliged to hide himself in Scotland, and he would not return until Richard publicly proclaimed his conviction of his innocence.

In the month of April of this year, just after the duke had done good service against the Scots, the parliament met at Salisbury. One day during the session John Latimer, a Carmelite friar, a native of Ireland, gave Richard a parchment, containing the particulars of a conspiracy to place the crown on the head of his uncle. The king communicated the contents to Lancaster, who swore that they were all utterly false, and insisted that his accuser should be placed in safe custody to be examined by the council. The monk was accordingly committed to the care of Sir John Holland, the king's half-brother, who is said to have strangled him with his own hands during the night. The lord Zouch, whom the friar had named as the author of the memorial, declared upon his oath that he knew nothing about it, and the matter dropped.

Truces with Scotland were prolonged till the month of May, 1385, when the French sent John de Vienne, lord admiral of France, with a thousand men-at-arms and 40,000 francs in gold, to induce the Scots to make an inroad into England. The French knights soon complained bitterly of the pride of the Scots, the poverty of the land, and the lack of amusements. At last the French and Scots broke into Northumberland; but Richard, who now took the field for the first time, came up from York, and forced them to retire. With eighty thousand men, Richard crossed the borders, burned Edinburgh, Perth, and other towns: but then he was obliged to retreat; for information was brought that John de Vienne had crossed the Solway Firth, and was besieging Carlisle. The French and Scots marched off by the west, and returned towards Edinburgh, boasting that they had done as much mischief in England as the English had done in Scotland.

During this campaign, the royal quarters were disgraced by a vile murder. At York, during the advance, Sir John Holland assassinated one of the favourites, and the grief, shame, and anxiety caused by this event broke the heart of his mother, the princess of Wales, who died a few days after. After the campaign, the king made great promotions to quiet the jealousy of his relations; honours fell upon them, but these were nothing compared to the honours and grants conferred on his own minions. Henry of Bolingbroke, Lancaster's son, was made earl of Derby; the king's uncles, the earls of Cambridge and Buckingham, were created dukes of York and Gloucester. As Richard had no children, he declared that his lawful successor would be Roger, earl of March, grandson of Lionel, duke of Clarence.<sup>b</sup>

[1385-1386 A.D.]

The character of Richard II was now developing itself, and the hopes excited by his remarkable presence of mind in confronting the rioters on Blackheath were rapidly destroyed. Not that he was wanting in capacity, as has been sometimes imagined. For if we measure intellectual power by the greatest exertion it ever displays, rather than by its average results, Richard II was a man of considerable talents. He possessed, along with much dissimulation, a decisive promptitude in seizing the critical moment for action. Of this quality, besides his celebrated behaviour towards the insurgents, he gave striking evidence in several circumstances which we shall have shortly to notice. But his ordinary conduct belied the abilities which on these rare occasions shone forth, and rendered them ineffectual for his security. Extreme pride and violence, with an inordinate partiality for the most worthless favourites, were his predominant characteristics. In the latter quality, and in the events of his reign, he forms a pretty exact parallel to Edward II. Scrope, lord chancellor, who had been appointed in parliament and was understood to be irremovable without its concurrence, lost the great seal for refusing to set it to some prodigal grants. Upon a slight quarrel with Archbishop Courtenay, the king ordered his temporalities to be seized, the execution of which Michael de la Pole, his new chancellor, and a favourite of his own, could hardly prevent. This was accompanied with indecent and outrageous expressions of anger, unworthy of his station and of those whom he insulted.<sup>i</sup>

Soon after these events the duke of Lancaster was enabled to depart, to press his claim to the throne of Castile. A disputed succession in Portugal and a war between that country and Spain seemed to open a road for him. The king was evidently glad to have him out of England. Parliament voted supplies; and in the month of July the duke set sail with an army of ten thousand men. Lancaster landed at Corunna, opened a road through Galicia into Portugal, and formed a junction with the king of that country, who married Philippa, the duke's eldest daughter by his first wife. At first the duke was everywhere victorious; but in a second campaign his army was almost annihilated by disease and famine; and his own declining health forced him to retire to Guienne. In the end, however, he concluded an advantageous treaty. His daughter Catherine, the granddaughter of Pedro the Cruel, was married to Henry, the heir of the reigning king of Castile: 200,000 crowns were paid to the duke for the expenses he had incurred; and the king of Castile agreed to pay 40,000 florins by way of annuity to the duke and duchess of Lancaster. The issue of John of Gaunt reigned in Spain for many generations.

Encouraged by the absence of the duke, the French determined to invade England, and for this purpose upwards of one hundred thousand men, including nearly all the chivalry of France, were encamped in Flanders, and an immense fleet lay in the port of Sluys ready to carry them over. Charles VI, who determined to take a part in the expedition, went to Sluys, and even embarked; but this young king was entirely in the power of his intriguing and turbulent uncles, who seem to have determined (not unwisely, perhaps) that the expedition should not take place, and in the end the army was disbanded. The fleet was dispersed by a tempest, and many of the ships were taken by the English.

## THE KING AND GLOUCESTER

Richard gained no increase of comfort by the absence of Lancaster, whose younger brother, the duke of Gloucester, was far harsher than John of Gaunt had ever been. At the meeting of parliament, Gloucester headed an opposition



which determined to drive Richard's favourites, De la Pole and De Vere, from office. They began with De la Pole, who, after a weak attempt of the king to save him, was dismissed. After his expulsion, the commons impeached him of high crimes and misdemeanours, and he was sentenced to pay a heavy fine and to be imprisoned. Gloucester and his party then said that no good government could be expected until a permanent council was chosen by parliament—a council like those which had been appointed in the reigns of John, Henry III, and Edward II. Richard said he would never consent to any such measure. The commons then coolly produced the statute by which Edward II had been deposed; and one of the lords reminded him that his life would be in danger if he persisted in his refusal. Upon this, Richard yielded, and the government was substantially vested for a year in the hands of eleven commissioners, bishops and peers, to whom were added the three great officers of the crown. At the head of all was placed the king's uncle Gloucester.

The king was now twenty years of age, but he was reduced to as mere a cipher as when he was but eleven. In the month of August in the following year, 1387, acting under the advice of De la Pole and Tresilian, the chief justice, he assembled a council at Nottingham, and submitted to some of the judges the question whether the commission of government appointed by parliament, and approved of under his own seal, were legal or illegal. These judges certified under their hands and seals that the commission was illegal, and that all those who introduced the measure were liable to capital punishment. On the 11th of November following, the king, who had returned to London, was alarmed by the intelligence that his uncle Gloucester, and the earls of Arundel and Nottingham, the constable, admiral, and marshal of England, were approaching the capital with forty thousand men. The decision of the judges had been kept secret, but one of the number betrayed it to a friend of Gloucester. As soon as Richard's cousin, the earl of Derby, Lancaster's son and heir, learned of the approach of his uncle Gloucester, he quitted the court, went to Waltham Cross, and there joined him. The members of the council of eleven were there already.

On Sunday, the 17th of November, the duke entered London with an irresistible force, and "appealed" of treason the archbishop of York, De Vere, now duke of Ireland, De la Pole, earl of Suffolk, Robert Tresilian, chief justice, and Sir Nicholas Brember, knight, and lord mayor of London. The favourites instantly took to flight. De la Pole, the condemned chancellor, who had returned to court, succeeded in reaching France, where he died soon after; De Vere, the duke of Ireland, got to the borders of Wales, where he received royal letters, authorising him to raise an army and begin a civil war. He collected a few thousand men, but was met near Radcot, and thoroughly defeated by Gloucester and Henry of Bolingbroke. He then fled to Ireland, and afterwards to Holland, where he died. The archbishop of York was seized in the north, but was allowed by the people to escape: he also finished his days not long after in the humble condition of a parish priest in Flanders. After the defeat of his army under De Vere, Richard lost all heart, and retired into the Tower. His uncle Gloucester, who believed on pretty good grounds that the king and the favourites had intended to put him to death, showed little mercy. He drove every friend of Richard away from the court, and threw some ten or twelve of them into prison. The "merciless parliament," which met in the beginning of the year 1388, carried out the impeachments. The five obnoxious councillors were found guilty of high treason, their property was confiscated, and Tresilian and Brember, the mayor, were executed, to the joy of the people.

[1386-1394 A.D.]

The judges who had signed and sealed the answer at Nottingham were next impeached. Their only plea was that they had acted under terror of the king and the favourites: they were capitally convicted; but the bishops interceded in their behalf, and, instead of being sent to the scaffold, they were sent into exile for life in Ireland. Blake, however, who had drawn up the questions at Nottingham, was executed, and so was Usk, who had been secretly appointed under-sheriff to seize the person of the duke of Gloucester. The king's confessor, who swore that no threats had been used with the judges at Nottingham, was also condemned to exile in Ireland. It was hoped that the shedding of blood would stop here, but such was not the intention of Gloucester. After the Easter recess he impeached four knights, and these unfortunate men were all convicted and executed.

For about twelve months Richard left the whole power of government in the hands of his uncle and of the council or commission. It was during this interval that the battle of Otterburn, famous in song under the name of Chevy Chase, was fought (August 15, 1388) between the Scottish earl Douglas and the lord Henry Percy, the renowned Hotspur [as fully described in the history of Scotland]. Douglas was slain, but the English were in the end driven from the field, after both Hotspur and his brother, Lord Ralph Percy, had been taken prisoners. At length Richard gave a proof of that decisive promptitude which visited his mind at uncertain intervals. In a great council held in the month of May, 1389, he suddenly addressed his uncle—"How old do you think I am?" "Your highness," replied Gloucester, "is in your twenty-second year." "Then," added the king, "I am surely of age to manage my own affairs. I have been longer under the control of guardians than any ward in my dominions. I thank ye, my lords, for your past services, but I want them no longer." Before they could recover from their astonishment he demanded the great seals from the archbishop, and the keys of the exchequer from the bishop of Hereford; and within a few days he drove Gloucester from the council without meeting with any opposition. The chief administration of affairs was, however, left to another uncle, the duke of York, and to his cool-headed and calculating cousin, Henry of Bolingbroke.

Lancaster returned from the Continent after an absence of more than three years, and, from circumstances with which we are not sufficiently acquainted, he became all at once exceedingly moderate and popular. He conducted his brother Gloucester and the nobles of his party to court, where an affecting reconciliation took place. The duke was readmitted into the council; Lancaster was created duke of Aquitaine for life, and intrusted with the negotiation of a peace with France. A truce was concluded for four years. This truce also embraced Scotland, the king of which country, Robert II, had died the 19th of April, 1390, leaving the crown to his eldest son John, earl of Carrick, who took the name of Robert III.

## THE MURDER OF GLOUCESTER

After the death of "the good Queen Anne"—as Richard's wife had long been called by the English people—which happened at Sheen, on Whitsunday (1394), the king collected a considerable army, and crossed over to Ireland, where the native chiefs had been for some time making head against the English, and where some of the English themselves had revolted. This campaign was a bloodless one: the Irish chiefs submitted; Richard entertained them with great magnificence, knighted some of them, and, after spending a

winter in the country and redressing some abuses, he returned home, and was well received by his subjects.

Although the council was divided on the matter, Richard at last decided on contracting a matrimonial alliance with France; and in the month of October, 1396, he passed over to the Continent and married Isabella, the daughter of Charles VI—a princess who, according to Froissart,<sup>d</sup> was a miracle of beauty and of wit, but who was little more than seven years old. The blessing of a peace, or at least of a truce, for twenty-five years, was the consequence of this union, and yet the marriage was decidedly unpopular in England. The duke of Gloucester had always opposed it. It is said that the duke's declamations were the more vehement, because he suspected what would follow to himself; and it is certain that Richard asked assistance from Charles VI, to be given in case of need, and that this alliance with France gave him courage to undertake a scheme which his deep revenge had nourished for many years. The year after his marriage, in the month of July, Richard struck his blow with consummate treachery. After entertaining him at dinner, in his usual bland manner, he arrested the earl of Warwick. Two days after, he induced the primate to bring his brother, the earl of Arundel, to a friendly conference; and then Arundel was arrested. He had thus got two of his victims: to entrap the third, and the greatest of all, he went with a gay company to Pleshey castle, in Essex, where his uncle Gloucester was residing with his family. The duke, suspecting no mischief, came out to meet the royal guest, and, while Richard entertained the duchess with friendly discourse, Gloucester was seized by the earl marshal, carried with breathless speed to the river, put on board ship, and conveyed to Calais. A few days after, Richard went to Nottingham castle, and there, taking his uncles Lancaster and York, and his cousin, Henry of Bolingbroke, by surprise, he made them, with other noblemen, put their seals to a parchment, by which Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick were "appealed" of treason in the same manner that they had appealed the king's favourites ten years before. A parliament was then summoned to try the three traitors, for so they were now called by men like Henry of Bolingbroke, who had been partakers in all their acts, and by others who had supported them in their boldest measures.

On the 17th of September, Richard went to parliament with six hundred men-at-arms, and a bodyguard of archers. The commons, who had received their lesson, began by impeaching Thomas Arundel, archbishop of Canterbury, of high treason. Fearing the primate's eloquence, Richard artfully prevented his attending in the lords, and he was, at the king's will, banished for life. On the following day, his brother, the earl of Arundel, was condemned and beheaded on Tower Hill. On the 21st of September, a writ was issued to the earl marshal, governor of Calais, commanding him to bring the body of his prisoner, the duke of Gloucester, before the king in parliament. On the 24th (and three days were probably then scarcely enough for a king's messenger to travel to Calais and back) an answer was returned to the lords that the earl marshal could not produce the duke, for that he, being in custody in the king's prison in Calais, had died there.<sup>b</sup>

His body was granted to his widow, to be interred with the due honours: masses were appointed to be performed for his soul; and the parliament seems to have been contented with an account of his death, more summary and vague than would have been required in the case of the humblest subject.<sup>c</sup> "As I was informed," says Froissart,<sup>d</sup> "when he had dined, and was about to have washen his hands, there came into the chamber four men, and cast suddenly a towel about the duke's neck, and drew so sore that he fell to the



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earth, and so they strangled him, and closed his eyes; and when he was dead they despoiled him, and bare him to his bed, and laid him between the sheets naked, and then they issued out of the chamber into the hall, and said openly how a palsy had taken the duke of Gloucester, and so he died. These words were abroad in the town of Calais: some believed them, some not."

The lords appellants demanded judgment; the commons seconded their demand, and the dead duke was declared to be a traitor, and all his property was confiscated to the king. On the next day a document purporting to be Gloucester's confession, taken by Sir William Rickhill, one of the justices who had been sent over to Calais in the preceding month for that sole purpose, as was pretended, was produced and read in parliament.<sup>1</sup> On the 28th, Gloucester's friend, the earl of Warwick, was brought before the bar of the house: the earl pleaded guilty, but his sentence was commuted into perpetual imprisonment in the Isle of Man. In passing sentence on these nobles, there were many who condemned themselves. After their recent experience of the king, nothing but fatuity could make them repose confidence in any of his assurances, or in the steadiness of parliament; but, for want of any better security, they extracted from Richard a declaration of their own innocence in regard to all past transactions. This declaration was made in full parliament. After this the king, who was very fond of high-sounding titles, made several promotions of his nobles. Among these, his cousin Henry Bolingbroke was created duke of Hereford.

#### RICHARD'S MISRULE AND DEPOSITION

Gloucester's "merciless" parliament of 1388 had taken an oath that nothing there passed into law should be changed or abrogated; and now the very same men, with a few exceptions, took the same oath to the decisions of the present parliament, which undid all that was then done. The answers of the judges to the questions put at Nottingham, which had then been punished as acts of high treason, were now pronounced to be just and legal. It was declared high treason to attempt to repeal or overturn any judgment now passed; and the issue made of all the persons who had been condemned were declared forever incapable of sitting in parliament or holding office in council. "These violent ordinances, as if the precedent they were then overturning had not shielded itself with the same sanction, were sworn to by parliament upon the cross of Canterbury, and confirmed by a national oath, with the penalty of excommunication denounced against its infringers."

Before this obsequious parliament separated, it set the dangerous precedent of granting the king a subsidy, for life, upon wool; and a commission was granted for twelve peers and six commoners to sit after the dissolution, and examine and determine certain matters as to them should seem best. These eighteen commissioners usurped the entire rights of the legislature: they imposed a perpetual oath on prelates and lords, to be taken before obtaining possession of their estates, that they would maintain the statutes and ordinances made by this parliament, or afterwards by the lords and knights having power committed to them by the same; and they declared it to be

<sup>1</sup> Rickhill saw the duke alive at Calais on the 7th of September. The real object of his mission and the real circumstances of Gloucester's death are involved in a mystery never likely to be cleared up. But it seems that the universal impression, not only in England but also on the Continent, was correct, and that he was secretly murdered, and in a manner not to disfigure the corpse, which was afterwards delivered to his family.

high treason to disobey any of their ordinances. Thus, with the vote of a revenue for life, and with the power of parliament notoriously usurped by a junto of his creatures, Richard became as absolute as he could wish. "In those days," says Froissart,<sup>d</sup> "there was none so great in England that durst speak against anything that the king did. He had a council suitable to his fancies, who exhorted him to do what he list: he kept in his wages ten thousand archers, who watched over him day and night." This high and absolute bearing was, however, of short duration. The people were soon disgusted with Richard, who appeared only to crave power and money that he might lavish them on his minions, and indulge himself in an indolent and luxurious life.

A general murmur was soon raised against the late parliament: people said that it had not been freely chosen; that it had with bad faith and barbarity revoked former pardons and connived at illegal exactions; that it had been a party to the shameful impunity of the murderers of Gloucester; and that it had assisted the king in destroying the liberties of the kingdom. Matters were approaching this state when the mutual distrusts of two great noblemen, and the fears they both entertained of the cunning and vindictive spirit of the king, hurried on the catastrophe. Henry of Bolingbroke, now duke of Hereford, and Mowbray, now duke of Norfolk, were the only two that remained of the five appellants of 1386. To all outward appearance they enjoyed the favour and confidence of the king; but they both knew that their original sin had never been forgiven. The duke of Norfolk seems to have been the more



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alarmed or the more communicative of the two. Overtaking the duke of Hereford, who was riding on the road between Windsor and London in the month of December, during the recess of parliament, Mowbray said, "We are about to be ruined." Henry of Bolingbroke asked, "For what?" and Mowbray said, "For the affair of Radcot bridge." "How can that be after this pardon and declaration in parliament?" "He will annul that pardon," said Mowbray, "and our fate will be like that of others before us." And then he went on to assure Hereford that there was no trust to be put in Richard's promises or oaths, or demonstrations of affection; and that he knew of a certainty that he and his minions were then compassing the deaths of the dukes of Lancaster, Hereford, Aumale, and Exeter, the marquis of Dorset, and of himself. Henry then said, "If such be the case, we can never trust them"; to which Mowbray rejoined, "So it is, and though they may not be able to do it now, they will contrive to destroy us in our houses ten years hence."

This reign, as abounding in dark and treacherous transactions, is rich in historical doubts. It is not clear how this conversation was reported to

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Richard, but the damning suspicion rests upon Henry of Bolingbroke. When parliament met after the recess, in the month of January, 1398, Hereford was called upon by the king to relate what had passed between the duke of Norfolk and himself; and then Hereford rose and presented in writing the whole of the conversation. Norfolk did not attend in parliament, but he surrendered on proclamation, called Henry of Lancaster a liar and false traitor, and threw down his gauntlet. Richard ordered both parties into custody, and instead of submitting the case to parliament, referred it to a court of chivalry, which, after many delays, awarded that wager of battle should be joined at Coventry, on the 16th of September.

As the time approached, Richard was heard to say, "Now I shall have peace from henceforward"; but, on the appointed day, when the combatants were in the lists, and had couched their lances, throwing down his warder between them he took the battle into his own hands. After consulting with the committee of parliament—the base eighteen—to the bewilderment of all men, he condemned Hereford to banishment for ten years and Norfolk for life. Hereford went no further than France; Norfolk made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and not long after died broken-hearted at Venice. On the death of the duke of Lancaster, which happened about three months after the exile of his son Hereford, Richard seized his immense estates and kept them, notwithstanding his having, before Hereford's departure out of England, granted him letters-patent, permitting him to appoint attorneys to represent him and take possession of his lawful inheritance. But now there was no law in the land except what proceeded from the will of Richard, who, after ridding himself, as he fancied forever, of the two great peers, set no limits to his despotism.

He raised money by forced loans; he coerced the judges, and in order to obtain fines he outlawed seventeen counties by one stroke of the pen, alleging that they had favoured his enemies in the affair of Radcot bridge. He was told by some friends that the country was in a ferment, and that plots and conspiracies were forming against him; but the infatuated man chose this very moment for leaving England. In the end of the month of May, 1399, he sailed from Milford Haven with a splendid fleet. He took the field against the Irish on the 20th of June; and a fortnight after, his cousin, the duke of Hereford, landed at Ravenspur in Yorkshire. The duke had not escaped from France without difficulty, and all the retinue he brought with him consisted of the exiled archbishop of Canterbury, the son of the late earl of Arundel, fifteen knights and men-at-arms, and a few servants.

But the wily Henry was strong in the affections of the people: and both he and the archbishop had many personal friends among the nobles. As soon as he landed, he was joined by the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland; and as he declared that he came only for the estates belonging to his father, he was speedily reinforced by many who did not foresee and who, at that stage, would not have approved his full and daring scheme. He marched with rapidity towards the capital, and arrived there at the head of sixty thousand men. His uncle, the duke of York, quitted the city before his approach, and, as regent of the kingdom during Richard's absence, raised the royal standard at St. Albans. The Londoners received Hereford as a deliverer. A general panic prevailed among the creatures of Richard, some of whom shut themselves up in Bristol castle. The duke of York, with such forces as he could collect, moved towards the west, there to await the arrival of Richard.

After staying a few days in London, Henry marched in the same direction, and so rapid was his course that he reached the Severn on the same day as



the regent. The duke of York had discovered before this that he could place no reliance on his troops: and probably his resentment for the murder of his brother Gloucester was greater than his affection for his nephew Richard. Henry of Bolingbroke was also his nephew, and when he agreed to meet that master-mind in a secret conference, the effect was inevitable. York joined his forces to those of Henry, and helped him to take Bristol castle. Three members of the standing committee of eighteen, the earl of Wiltshire, Bussy, and Green, were found in the castle, and executed without trial. Henry then marched towards Chester, but York stopped at Bristol.<sup>b</sup>

For three critical weeks Richard remained in Ireland, ignorant of the extraordinary revolution which had destroyed his authority at home. The tidings overwhelmed him. But it was resolved that Lord Salisbury should repair forthwith to North Wales, while the king should make the necessary preparations for disembarking at Milford Haven. He lingered, however, in Ireland eighteen days longer. During this interval Salisbury was deserted by his disheartened and impatient followers. Richard, on landing, went in disguise to Conway, to concert measures with his general, whom, however, he found with only a few faithful followers, who had thrown themselves into the noble castle there. Meanwhile the leaders of the army at Milford Haven, influenced by despondency and probably by disaffection, disbanded their troops. Thomas Percy, earl of Worcester, the lord steward, broke his white staff, as a token that all authority derived from Richard's commission had expired.

At the same time the king, learning the decisive events at Bristol and the surrender of all the fortresses on the Scottish frontier to Henry, shut himself up in Conway castle. It became Henry's policy to show a semblance of negotiation, to lure Richard from his fastness. The earl of Northumberland accordingly was despatched with a thousand men, secretly posted at some distance, that their appearance might not alarm the fugitive monarch. Northumberland represented that Henry would be content with a free parliament, pardon, and restoration of inheritance, together with the hereditary office of chief justiciary for himself, and condign punishment on the murderers of Gloucester, and all their aiders and abettors. After solemn assurances of safety, ratified by Northumberland's oath, Richard consented to accompany that nobleman to an interview with Lancaster. On his journey, however, he suddenly caught a glance of the soldiers placed in ambush on the road. He expostulated. Northumberland told him it was only a guard of honour. The king claimed his liberty. Percy, now his confessed gaoler, avowed that the king was his prisoner. At the interview, Lancaster entered the apartment uncovered, bending his knee for the last time to his royal captive. "Fair cousin of Lancaster," said Richard, uncovering himself, "you are welcome!" "My lord," answered Henry, "I am come before my time; but your people complain that they have been governed too rigorously for twenty years. If it please God, I will help you to govern them better." "Fair cousin," replied the other, for the last time performing the part of king, "since it pleaseth you, it pleaseth me well." He was brought prisoner to Chester, where he was made to issue a proclamation for preserving the peace, and writs for calling together a parliament. On his arrival in London, he was lodged for one night in his palace, but on the next he was removed to the Tower, there to continue a close prisoner until parliament should pronounce judgment in his case.

The revolution which followed, though accomplished by a national revolt against misrule, becomes, nevertheless, a memorable event in English consti-

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tutional history, and a satisfactory proof of the opinion of the nation's ancestors respecting their government, from the elaborate care which they employed in clothing their proceedings with constitutional forms, and in regulating, by the principles of law, acts which are the least subject to its ordinary jurisdiction.

On an appointed day a deputation of lords and commons, consisting of an archbishop, the earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, Thyrning and Markham, justices, Stowe and Burbage, doctors of laws, with many other ecclesiastics and laymen, waited on the king; and, having reminded him of his declaration in Conway castle of his unfitness for government and readiness to resign, proceeded to request that he would embody this in a legal form. He accordingly read aloud, say the reporters, "with a cheerful countenance," a renunciation of the crown, absolving all his subjects from homage and fealty: "I confess, recognise, and from certain knowledge conscientiously declare that I consider myself to have been and to be insufficient for the government of this kingdom, and for my notorious demerits not undeserving of deposition." He added that, if he had had the power to nominate a successor, he should have placed his cousin Henry, duke of Lancaster, on the throne.

Not willing, however, to rest the legitimacy of the revolution upon a compulsory resignation, the estates of parliament assembled in Westminster hall, where the above acknowledgment and renunciation, having been read over in English and in Latin, was once more ratified by the lords and commons, amidst the applauses of the multitude assembled in that great hall. Still further to show them the deep foundations of national right, they received thirty-two articles of impeachment against the king; and having unanimously convicted him of the charges, which contain a recital of the principal acts of his reign, they then proceeded, "out of superabundant caution," to add a formal deposition to the apparently voluntary abdication. In all these bold measures they rigorously observed the usage of parliament and the formalities of law.<sup>e</sup>

The account given by certain historians of Richard's escape into Scotland, where he is said to have resided twenty years, requires a short statement of reasons for adhering to the common narrative. These reasons are as follows: (1) A long-continued fraud of this sort is with difficulty supposable, even in the case of a prince known only in his infancy within the narrow circle of a court, and produced to the public after an interval of many years. But what room for doubt could have existed respecting Richard at the time of his deposition, after a reign of twenty-two years, in which his reign was perfectly known to the nobility and people of France, Scotland, and Ireland, as well as England? (2) The declaration of Scrope, archbishop of York, that Richard had been put to death at Pontefract, published within a few miles of the place, and within about two years of the time, is evidence which, being then uncontradicted, is to us of the highest order. (3) The government of Scotland supported the revolts of the Percys and Owen Glendower. Could that government have omitted all mention in their public acts of their being the friends and allies of the lawful king of England? (4) The earl of Northumberland, who was beheaded in 1406, took refuge in Scotland, and was long sheltered there. Is it credible that he should not have ascertained beyond all doubt whether his late master was alive in that country? (5) Isabella of France, who had been affianced to Richard in her infancy, married Charles, duke of Orleans, in 1406, and died in childbed in 1409—a tolerable presumption that her family had sufficient assurance of Richard's death, twelve years before the time assigned for it by the Scotch tradition.

No doubt can be entertained that Richard was at first believed to be alive in Scotland. That a man who was called Richard was represented as living there at the accession of Henry VI is apparent from Rymer. That he originally personated the king of that name, and deceived some persons, is also probable. But, besides other difficulties, it may be concluded—from the total absence of minute and circumstantial statement of the manner of escape, of the place of residence, and of all other smaller facts, of which there could not fail to be some remaining intimation if the person were the true Richard—that he was soon detected; though the name or nickname of King Richard may have afterwards been applied to him.<sup>e</sup> Freeman<sup>h</sup> believes that there is no just ground for doubting that Richard either died or was murdered soon after the Welsh revolt of 1400. The appearance of a pretender who was made use of by both Scotch and French enemies was the almost inevitable sequence of every disputed succession.<sup>a</sup>

#### HENRY'S CLAIM TO THE THRONE

On the second day after Richard's deposition the duke of Lancaster was placed in his seat at the head of the nobility, but the throne was vacant. At the moment, however, of the sentence of deposition, the duke of Lancaster had claimed the throne, that no violence might be done to the startling metaphor of an immortal king; by which English laws express the simple fact that, when the supreme authority is extinguished by the death of one man, the law makes provision for its instantaneous revival in the person of another. The claim of Henry was framed so as to include a false assertion of hereditary right, without surrendering its true foundation in the consent of parliament and the misgovernment of his predecessor. "In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I, Henry of Lancaster, challenge this realm of England, because I am descended by right line of blood from the good lord King Henry III. The which realm was on the point to be undone for default of government, and undoing of the good laws." The new king was then seated on the throne.<sup>e</sup>

Henry's challenge by descent from Henry III was shrouded in purposed vagueness. He was, through his mother, the direct representative of Edmund, earl of Lancaster, the second son of Henry III, who according to an absurd rumour was really his eldest son. Henry's vague words might be taken as meaning only that he was the next to the crown in male succession. But that any claim of the kind should have been thought of when Henry had a perfectly good right by parliamentary election, shows how the ancient right of the nation freely to choose its sovereign was gradually dying out.<sup>h</sup>

It seems unaccountable that, in a country where the government was established on the basis of such a deposition, it should ever have been thought doubtful whether political power was held in trust or as property. No confusion could well have arisen if the moral character of this revolution had been carefully distinguished from its constitutional principles. To try the latter, we must suppose, for the sake of argument, the truth of the matters charged against the king. It is only thus that we can try its legitimacy, or ascertain from it the constitutional opinion of the fourteenth century. If it had been unsuspected of ambition, if no crime had subsequently tarnished its fame, its justice at least must have been unanimously owned. However wise or convenient it may be to exempt kings from criminal proceedings, which generally shake society to its centre without the likelihood of their being ever



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conducted with calmness and impartiality, it cannot be imagined that an inferior criminality in the acts of kings forms any part of the reason for exempting them from animadversion. A royal conspiracy against the liberty of the people is at least as heinous an offence as a conspiracy of subjects against the authority of their sovereign. Of such a conspiracy there is no pretence for acquitting Richard; nor can it be doubted that he united an irascible temper with deep, lasting, and watchful revenge. These dark qualities are odiously blended in his character with the lighter defects and better humoured vices, and served in ordinary times to hide the infernal disposition which broke out as soon as an opportunity of revenge presented itself. [Richard's character, indeed, is a strange combination of strength and weakness, courage and irresolution, indolence and energy. His protection of Wycliffe and encouragement of Chaucer are in marked contrast to other acts of his career.]

The contests for the crown which agitated England during the fifteenth century cannot be easily rendered intelligible, without premising a short sketch of the state of the royal family at the deposition of Richard. That prince left no issue by his first queen, Anne of Luxemburg, and the extreme childhood of the infant princess of France to whom he was affianced had not allowed him to complete his nuptials. Had the crown followed the course of hereditary succession, it would have devolved on the posterity of Lionel, duke of Clarence, the second son of Edward III. By the decease of the latter without issue male, his possessions and pretensions fell to his daughter Philippa, who, by a singular combination of circumstances, had married Roger Mortimer, earl of March, the male representative of the powerful baron who had been attainted and executed for the murder of Edward II. The son of that powerful delinquent had been restored to his honours and estates at an advanced period in the reign of Edward III, long after the violence of his father and brother's enemies had subsided. Edmund, his grandson, had espoused Philippa of Clarence. Roger Mortimer, the fourth in descent from the regicide, had been lord lieutenant of Ireland, and considered, or, according to some writers, declared to be heir of the crown in the early part of Richard's reign.

Edmund Mortimer, earl of March, in whom the hereditary claim to the crown was vested at the deposition of Richard, was then a boy of only ten years of age. Educated from childhood in a mild and honourable prison at Windsor, he faithfully served the Lancastrian princes till his death, which took place in the third year of Henry VI. Dying without issue, the pretensions to the crown which he inherited through the duke of Clarence devolved on his sister Anne Mortimer, who espoused Richard of York, earl of Cambridge, the grandson of Edward III by his fourth son Edmund of Langley, duke of York. But it is obvious from the above brief pedigree that during the life of Mortimer, who died in 1425, no pretension to the crown had accrued to any branch of the house of York.<sup>e</sup>

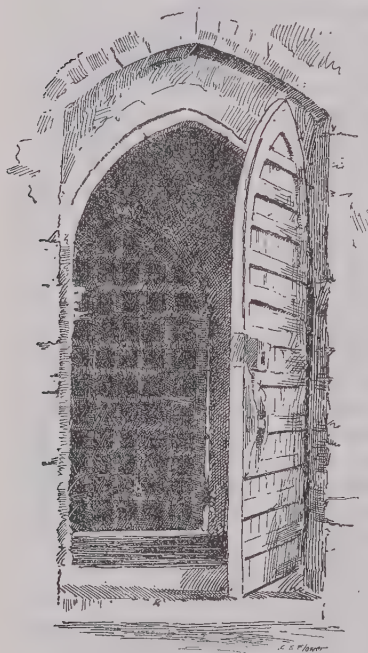


ABBOT'S HOUSE, TEWKESBURY

(Late fourteenth century)

## CONSTITUTIONAL GROWTH IN THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY

The period of the Hundred Years' War was the time in which what we may call the growth of England came to an end. The nation in its later shape was fully formed at the end of the thirteenth century. The changes in later times have been great and important; but they have been changes of detail. In the thirteenth century it was still by no means clear what was to be the



FOURTEENTH CENTURY DOORWAY

final shape of English institutions, what was to be the final position of the English people at home and abroad. In the fifteenth century all this had been fixed. The constitution, the laws, the language, the national character of Englishmen had all taken a shape from which in their main points they were never again to change. Up to this time the history of the nation has been the record of its growth; our study has had somewhat of a physical character. From this time our history ceases to be the record of the growth of a nation; it becomes the record of the acts of a nation after it has taken its final shape.

In a specially constitutional aspect, the reign of Edward III is hardly less important than the reign of Edward I. But its importance is of a different kind. The earlier reign fixed the constitution of parliament; it decreed that in an English parliament certain elements should always be present. It laid down as a matter of broad principle what the essential powers of parliament were. In the later reign, the essential elements of parliament finally arranged themselves in their several places and relations to one another. The powers, rights, and privileges of each element in the state, and the exact manner of exercising them, were now fixed and defined. The commons were now fully established as an essential element in parliament. It was further established that prelates, earls, and barons were to form one body, that knights, citizens, and burgesses were to form another. That is to say, as the attempt to make the clergy act as a parliamentary estate came to nothing, parliament now definitely took its modern form of an assembly of two houses, lords and commons.

## POWERS OF PARLIAMENT

A statute of Edward II in 1322 distinctly asserted the right of the commons to a share in all acts which touched the general welfare of the kingdom. But a distinction was for a long time drawn between the older and the newer element in the assembly. For a long time the doctrine was that the commons petitioned, and that their petitions were granted by the king with the assent of

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the lords. This position of the commons as a petitioning body is of the deepest importance, and looks both forwards and backwards. Looking backwards, it was an almost necessary result of the way in which parliament had grown up. The lords were and the commons were not representatives by direct succession of the ancient sovereign assemblies of the land. It was for them by immemorial right to advise the king and to consent to his acts. The commons had been called into being alongside of them; they had no such traditional powers; they could win them only step by step. Looking forwards, the position of the commons as a petitioning body was a source of immediate weakness and of final strength. For a while they simply petitioned; not only might their petitions be refused, but, if they were granted, they had no control over the shape in which they were granted. If the king granted a petition which involved any change in the law, it was by royal officers that the petition was put into the form of a statute after the representatives of the commons had gone back to their homes. Such a practice gave opportunity for many tricks. It was a frequent subject of complaint that the petitions which were said to be granted, and the statutes which were enacted in answer to them, were something quite different from what the commons had really asked for.

As long as the commons were mere petitioners at whose request a law was enacted, it might be held that the king was equally able to enact at the request of some other petitioning body. Thus we still find statutes sometimes enacted without the petition of the commons—sometimes, for instance, at the petition of the clergy. So again this same position of the commons as a petitioning body led to one distinction between them and the lords which has gone on to our own times—in one chief function of the ancient assemblies the commons never obtained a direct share. Parliament, like those ancient assemblies, has always been the highest court of justice. But its strictly judicial powers have always been exercised by the lords only. The commons, by virtue of their petitioning power, have become denouncers and accusers; but they



GATEWAY TO CASTLE  
(Built in time of Richard II)

have never become judges. By virtue of their petitioning power, they began, as early as the reign of Edward III, to denounce the ministers of the king, and to demand their dismissal. In the Good Parliament of 1376, and again in the parliament of Richard, ten years later, this power grows into a regular impeachment of the offenders, which is brought by the commons as accusers before the lords as judges. Whenever the commons have taken part in action



which was practically judicial it has always been under some other form. They have exercised a somewhat arbitrary and anomalous authority in defence of their own privileges. They have passed bills of attainder and bills of pains and penalties; but these take the form of legislative acts. Strictly judicial functions like those of the lords they have never claimed.

One effect of the growth of the commons was to give a more definite position to the lords. As long as there was only one body, and that a fluctuating body, membership of the assembly could not be looked on as conferring any definite status. None but the bishops and earls had any undoubted personal claim. Some abbots, some barons were always summoned; but for a long time they were not always the same abbots or the same barons. So long as this state of things lasted no definite line could be drawn between those who were members of the assembly and those who were not. It was only when a new body arose by the side of the old one, a body which confessedly represented all persons who had no place in the elder body, that membership of the elder body became a definite personal privilege.

#### THE ROYAL PREROGATIVE

As the growth of the commons at once raised and defined the position of the lords, so the general growth of the power of parliament at once defined and by defining strengthened the king's prerogative. It now became a question what acts were lawful to the king without the consent of parliament, and what acts needed that consent. It is clear that, whenever prerogative was defined, it was at once limited and strengthened. But the very strengthening was of the nature of a limitation. A power which was directly or indirectly bestowed by parliament ceased to be a power inherent in the crown. The struggle was, therefore, a hard one. The kings strove to hold their ground at every point, and to escape from the fetters which the nation strove to lay upon them. When the commons tried to make the king dismiss evil councillors or moderate the expenses of his household, when they tried to regulate the oppressive right of purveyance, the king was apt to find a loop-hole in some protest or reservation or saving clause. So the kings strove to keep the power of arbitrary taxation in their own hands, by drawing distinctions between customs and other sources of revenue. So they strove to keep the power of legislation without the consent of parliament, by drawing a distinction between statutes and ordinances, and by pretending to a right to suspend the operation of statutes. The greater and the smaller council were alike fragments of the national assembly, and both alike derived their special shape from the practice of personal summons. If one body so formed had the right of legislation, it might be argued that the other body so formed had it also. So again, as the commons grew, the form of their petitions, praying that such and such an enactment might be made by the king with the consent of the lords, seemed to recognise the king as the only real lawgiver. It might suggest the thought that he could, if he would, exercise his legislative powers, even though the commons did not petition, and though the lords did not assent. A crowd of loop-holes were thus opened for irregular doings of all kinds: for attempts on the part of the kings to evade every constitutional fetter; for attempts to reign without parliaments, to impose taxes by their own authority, or to legislate with the consent only of their own council, or of some other body other than a regular parliament. By the end of the fourteenth century we may say that the constitution and the powers of parlia-

[1399 A.D.]

ment were, as far as the letter of the law went, much the same as they are now. But it took three hundred years more to secure the observance of the letter of the law.

## WAR, PEACE, AND THE SUCCESSION

In those days a power was either exercised directly or it was not exercised at all. Thus one most important power which was freely exercised by our most ancient assemblies, but which modern parliaments shrink from directly exercising—the power of making peace and war—was in the fourteenth century in a very irregular state. Sometimes parliament claims a voice in such matters; sometimes the king seems to thrust a control over them on an unwilling parliament. That is to say, the kings wished to make parliament share the responsibility of their acts. A parliament could hardly refuse to support the king in a war which it had itself approved. The wars of Edward III, and his constant calls for money, made frequent parliaments needful. Perhaps no other series of events in English history did so much to strengthen and define every parliamentary power.

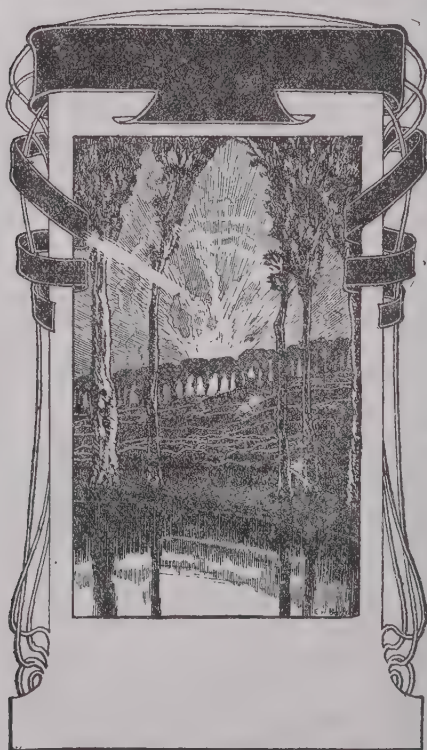
But it was mainly by the petitioning position of the commons that all power has thus been drawn into the hands of parliament. Any matter might become the subject of a petition of the commons. It followed that, as their petitions gradually grew into demands which could not be resisted, every matter might become the subject of legislation by the commons. In their position as petitioners lay their strength. They only petitioned, whilst the king enacted and the lords assented. But the humbler position gave them the first word. The enacting power of the king gradually came to be a mere power of refusing to enact, a power which has long ceased to be exercised. The humble petitioners came to be the proposers of everything, and so to be the masters of everything. They had the privilege of the *prærogativa tribus*.

The power of parliament to settle the succession to the crown—that is, the ancient right of election, in another shape, comes more largely into play at a later period. We have, however, one of the greatest instances of its exercise in the deposition of Richard and the settlement of the crown on Henry IV and his heirs. And twelve years before the ancient doctrine was carried out in practice, it was solemnly declared by Bishop Arundel and Thomas, duke of Gloucester, speaking in the name of parliament, that, by an ancient statute, parliament, with the common consent of the nation, had a right to depose a king who failed to govern according to the laws and by the advice of his peers, and to call to the throne some other member of the royal family in his stead. Most certainly there never was such a statute in the form of a statute; but the doctrine simply expressed the immemorial principle on which the nation had always acted whenever it was needful. And the statement that there was a statute to that effect was perhaps simply an instance of the growth of the doctrines of the professional lawyers. Men were beginning to forget that the earliest written law was nothing more than immemorial custom committed to writing. They were beginning to think that, wherever there was law or even custom, it must have had its beginning in some written even if forgotten enactment.

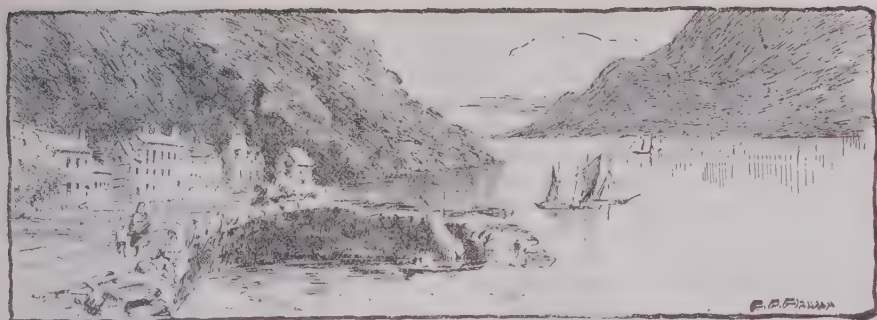
The powers of parliament in this age, and the external influences under which parliaments acted, cannot be better illustrated than by a comparison of the last two parliaments of Edward III. The parliament of 1376, which lived in men's memories by the name of the Good Parliament, had the full support of the prince of Wales. It was able to overthrow the king's ministers,

[1399 A.D.]

to remove his favourite, Alice Perrers, from court, and to encumber him with a council. A crowd of petitions of various kinds were presented, some of them insisting on freedom of election. The houses separated; the prince died; all the acts of the parliament were set at nought; most of them were reversed by a packed parliament the next year. Yet even this packed parliament established some wholesome doctrines, and amongst others enacted that no statute should be made at the petition of the clergy without the consent of the commons. The same alternation of reforming and reactionary parliaments is found under Richard II. There is no surer witness to the importance of any assembly, or other institution, than the fact that the ruling powers find it convenient to corrupt or pervert it.<sup>h</sup>







## CHAPTER XIV

### HENRY IV AND HENRY V

[1399-1422 A.D.]

THE claim to the crown which Henry of Lancaster made "in his mother tongue," was a well considered form of words. The averment that "the realm was on the point to be undone for default of government and undoing of the good laws," was the true foundation of the deposition which the parliament had pronounced upon Richard. But the legal advisers of Henry took care to introduce a statement of hereditary right. He took the same great seal as Richard, with the single alteration of the name on the legend. The badges of the house of Lancaster—the crowned and chained antelope, the swan, the red rose, and the columbine—decorate the illuminated manuscripts of the Lancastrian period. The claim of Henry was equivocally put. Richard being deposed, Henry was not the next in the line of inheritance as the grandson of Edward III. The posterity of Lionel, duke of Clarence, the second son of Edward III, had a prior claim to that of the heir of John of Gaunt, the third son.

At the time of Richard's deposition, the hereditary claim of the Clarence branch was vested in Edmund Mortimer, earl of March, who was the grandson of Philippa, the daughter of Lionel. But he was only ten years of age. In the sermon which the archbishop of Canterbury preached when the parliament deposed Richard and chose Henry, he took for his text, "A man shall reign over my people"; and he descanted on the theme that when the King of kings threatened his people, he said, "I will make children to rule over them." Nothing could more distinctly point to the young earl of March. The claim by blood from "the good king Henry III," would have stood Henry of Lancaster in little avail, had he not been known as a man of vigour and ability, at the head of a powerful army, supported by the chief nobles, the favourite of the people. Edmund Mortimer, set aside by the revolution of 1399, died without issue in 1424. He had a sister, Anne, who married the second son of Edmund Langley, duke of York; and in her son arose the pretension to the crown of the house of York. The chronicler, Hall,<sup>b</sup> quaintly but most justly said, "What misery, what murder, and what execrable plagues this famous region hath suffered by the division and dissension of the renowned houses of Lan-

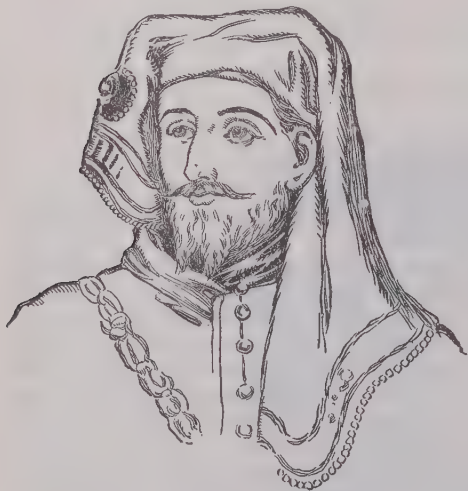
caster and York, my wit cannot comprehend, nor my tongue declare, neither yet my pen fully set forth." This is the tragical story that arises out of the deposition of Richard II. It is a story well known to the English people, for it has been told in the dramatic form by a great historical teacher.

When the deposed Richard hoped that his cousin would be "good lord to him," he hoped for an impossibility. To retain some portion of his state, to be served by an expensive household, to appear in public would have been fatal to the quiet rule of the house of Lancaster. To permit him to reside abroad would have been dangerous to the safety of the kingdom. The lords in parliament attempted to meet the difficulty by a resolution, which was to be kept secret, that it seemed advisable to them that the late king should be put under a safe and secret guard, in a place where no concourse of people might resort to him, and with no attendant who had been familiar to him

about his person. When the question was put to the lords, the earl of Northumberland said, "The king would have his life saved." Four days afterwards the king came to parliament; and it was determined that Richard, late king of England, should be adjudged to perpetual imprisonment, in safe and secret ward. Froissart truly says, "Every man might well consider that he should never come out of prison alive." In the parliament of October, 1399, all the old hatreds and jealousies were revived, in the discussion of the conduct of the lords who had appealed Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick of treason.

The most violent disputes took place. The terms, so odious to honourable ears, of "liar" and "traitor," were freely exchanged,

and gauntlets were thrown on the floor of the house. The lords appellants lost the honours and the lands which Richard had bestowed on them for their subserviency. But they escaped all other punishment. The duke of Aumale sank down to earl of Rutland; and the dukes of Exeter and Surrey, Richard's half-brothers, to earls of Huntingdon and Kent. Violent as this parliament was, it wisely sought to restrain future violence. It limited treason to the offences enumerated in the act of Edward III, in which that chief crime against civil government was taken out of the hands of the king's justices, and "what are treasons" was declared in parliament. It referred the accuser in a case of treason to the courts of law, abolishing those appeals of treason which had been productive of such evil effects. It forbade any delegation of the powers of parliament to a committee. It tried to restrain the quarrels of great nobles, by forbidding any person, except the king, to give liveries to his retainers. All this was indicative that the reign of justice was come back. In less than three months, in a confederacy of nobles, it was determined to attempt the restoration of Richard, and to drive Henry from power.



HENRY IV  
(1367-1413)

[1399-1401 A.D.]

The plot became known to the vigilant king, disclosed to him unwillingly by Rutland, who was one of the confederates. Windsor castle was surprised; but the forewarned Henry was in London levying an army. The conspirators marched to the west, proclaiming King Richard. At Cirencester they were attacked in their quarters by the burghers, and the earls of Kent and Salisbury were seized and beheaded. The citizens of Bristol, in the same way, secured and executed Lord Lumley and Lord Despenser. Huntingdon was put to death by the tenants of the duke of Gloucester at Plashey. The popular attachment to Henry was thus signally manifested. There were a few executions under the legal judgment of the courts of law. The insurrection was at the beginning of January. Before the expiration of a month it was stated that the late king had died at Pontefract. The body was conveyed to London, and there shown, with the face exposed, so that those who knew Richard might identify him. The obsequies of the deposed king were performed in St. Paul's, Henry being present, and the corpse was subsequently interred at Langley. Henry V, upon coming to the throne, caused it to be removed to Westminster Abbey.

#### THE WELSH REVOLT. THE FATE OF RICHARD

During the later years of the reign of Richard, however distasteful his rule might have been in England, there was a strong attachment to him in Wales. When he sailed from Ireland to meet his enemy, he landed in Wales, confident that he should there find a powerful army. His procrastination alone caused the dispersion of that army. The statute book shows how obnoxious was the revolution of 1399 to the Welsh borderers. A parliament was held at Westminster in the second year of Henry's reign, 1400-1401, when the commons complained of the ravages of the Welsh in the countries joining upon the marches of Wales by carrying off cattle and arresting merchants. Various strong measures were then enacted, quite sufficient in their severe injustice to produce a general revolt. It was not enough to sanction reprisals upon Welsh property and persons; but it was ordained that no Welshman should be permitted to purchase land in England, and that no "whole Englishman" should be convicted at the suit of any Welshman within Wales, except by the judgment of English justices. To make the separation of the two nations complete, it was also ordained that no Welshman should be thenceforth chosen to be citizen or burgess in any English city or town. The next year, another parliament passed more stringent measures, amongst which it was enacted that no Welshman should bear arms nor defensible armour. The country was in insurrection; the Welsh had found a leader. "It is ordained and stablished that no Englishman married to any Welshwoman of the amity and alliance of Owen of Gleindour, traitor to our sovereign lord, or to any other Welshwoman after the rebellion of the said Owen, shall be put in any office in Wales, or in the marches of the same."

Owen of Gleindour—or as we now write, Owen Glendower—was one of the most remarkable men of this period. Claiming descent from the ancient British princes, being the great-grandson of the famous Llewelyn, he might still have remained a peaceful landowner in Wales, but for the deposition of the master whom he had served as an esquire of his household. Educated at one of the inns of court in London, he possessed an amount of knowledge which made him regarded as a necromancer by his simple countrymen. His property was contiguous to that of Lord Grey de Ruthyn, and the Anglo-Norman baron claimed and seized some portion of it. Glendower petitioned



the parliament of 1400 for redress. His petition was dismissed by the peers, with the scornful answer that they "cared not for barefooted rascals." He took arms, made Lord Grey his prisoner, and wasted his barony.

But the private feud became a national revolt. The mountains again heard the bardic songs, which were applied to the new hero who had arisen to restore the glory of the ancient Britons. Henry thought to stop the popular voice by decreeing that "no waster, rhymers, minstrel, nor vagabond be any wise sustained in the land of Wales." The Welsh scholars of Oxford and Cambridge departed to their own country, in 1401, to aid the rebellion, and the Welsh labourers employed in England escaped to join their countrymen. Owen Glendower, by the general voice of the people, was declared prince of Wales. Before the rebellion had attained any very extensive organisation, Harry Percy (Hotspur) and Prince Henry were engaged in different parts of the country against the insurgents. Henry of Monmouth, in 1401, was in his fourteenth year. His command in Wales could have been only nominal; and we are glad, therefore, to believe that a letter of this period, addressed in his name to the council, was a mere official communication. The boy is made to say, describing his triumphal progress, "We caused the whole place to be set on fire: we laid waste a fine and populous country." This is learning the lessons of chivalry at a very early age. He continued, however, in authority, but was much straitened in his slaughter and burnings for want of money to pay his archers and men-at-arms. In 1402, Sir Edmund Mortimer, uncle to the young earl of March, went against Glendower; and, his army being utterly routed in Radnorshire, he was taken prisoner.

The king now determined to go in person, "to check the insolences and malice of Owen Glendower and other rebels." His expedition was fruitless. The royal army, in the month of August, was exposed to storms of rain, snow, and hail, and Glendower was alleged to have raised them by his wicked sorcery. That autumn the sagacious Welshman defied all the power of England in his mountain fastnesses. In the succeeding winter, his prisoner, Edmund Mortimer, became his friend and ally. Henry, with that jealousy which formed a part of his character, refused to ransom his "beloved cousin"; and Mortimer consoled himself by marrying the great Welsh chieftain's daughter. On the 13th of December, 1402, he writes thus to his tenants: "Very dear and well-beloved, I greet you much, and make known to you that Owen Glyndor has raised a quarrel, of which the object is, if King Richard be alive, to restore him to his crown; and if not, that my honoured nephew, who is the right heir to the said crown, shall be king of England, and that the said Owen will assert his right in Wales. And I, seeing and considering that the said quarrel is good and reasonable, have consented to join in it, and to aid and maintain it, and, by the grace of God, to a good end. Amen!"

"If King Richard be alive"! It is nearly three years since King Richard's body was exposed in St. Paul's Church—a public act known to all the kingdom, and especially known to all such as Sir Edmund Mortimer. How can a doubt now be raised, "if King Richard be alive"? In six months from the date of this letter, a great host, headed by the Percys, will be looking for Glendower to fight with them against King Henry; and before they meet him in Hateley Field near Shrewsbury, they will denounce the usurping king as a murderer in the following words: "Thou hast caused our sovereign lord and thine, traitorously within the castle of Pomfret [Pontefract], without the consent or judgment of the lords of the realm, by the space of fifteen days and so many nights, with hunger, thirst, and cold, to perish." How are these contradictions to be solved? For years, Henry had to struggle against two

[1402 A.D.]

popular beliefs. The first, and the most natural, was, that he had put Richard to death.

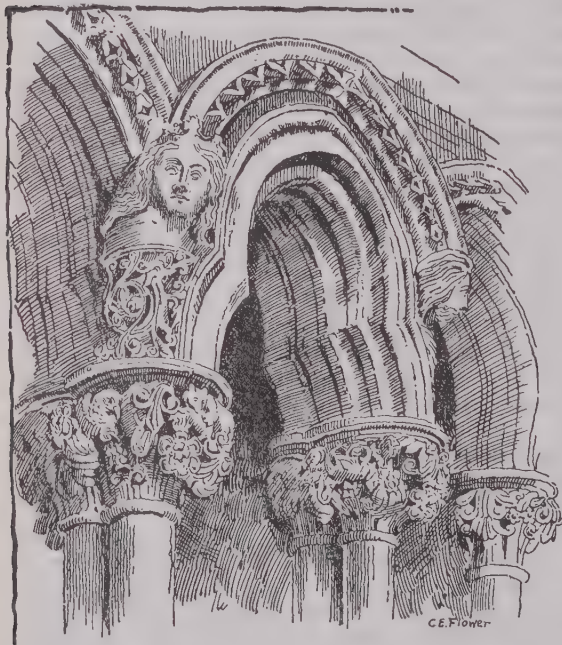
That he died by violence is highly probable. His removal would add much to the safety of his successor, and every opportunity was afforded by his secret imprisonment to effect this removal by the foulest means. Thus Henry was publicly accused by the Percys of having procured Richard's death by starvation. The duke of Orleans, in 1403, in a letter to Henry, insinuated that he was guilty of the murder, and the king replied: "With regard to that passage in your letter where you speak of the death of our very dear cousin and lord, whom God absolve, saying 'God knows how it happened, and by whom that death was done,' we know not with what intent such words are used; but if you mean and dare to say that his death was caused by our order, or with our consent, we say that is false, and you will say what is false as often as you shall say so; as the true God knows, whom we call to witness: offering our body against yours in single combat, if you will or dare to prove it." In an age when the appeals of kings to heaven were occasionally of no more value than "dicers' oaths," this will not go for much. An account from a contemporary states that Sir Pierce Exton, with a band of assassins, entered his prison at Pontefract, and that Richard, seizing a battle-axe, fell bravely fighting with unequal numbers. Some years ago Richard's tomb was opened in Westminster abbey, and no marks of violence appeared on his skull, on which the contemporary relates that he received his death-wound. Walsingham, the chronicler, affirms as common rumour that Richard died by voluntary starvation. Froissart says, "How Richard died, and by what means, I could not tell when I wrote this chronicle." The question is no nearer its solution after four centuries and a half.

The other popular belief, the most embarrassing to Henry, was that Richard had escaped from Pontefract and was living in Scotland. For several years there were proclamations against those who spread this rumour, and some were punished by death for this offence. The belief gradually passed away from the popular mind; and the chroniclers explain that a man named Serle, a servant to King Richard, having heard that his old master was alive in Scotland, came over from France, persuaded the court fool to personate the ex-king, and was eventually executed as a traitor for the deception which had entrapped many persons into the confidence that Richard was coming to claim his crown. The fondness for "historic doubts" has revived the belief in our own times. It is stated that Richard's escape from Pontefract is proved by documents in the Record Office; that this escape was effected in connection with the rising of 1400, in which he was proclaimed by the earls who afterwards suffered as traitors; that there are entries in the public accounts of Scotland of expenses for the custody of King Richard of England; and that Richard lived till 1419 in Stirling castle, in a state of imbecility. The vague and contradictory accounts of the manner of Richard's death by violence give some little sanction to the belief that he was not murdered at all. But if we even accept the explanation that another body was substituted for Richard's at St. Paul's on the 14th of March, 1400, and that Henry and his court went through the mummery of his false obsequies, we have still so many difficulties to reconcile that we have little hesitation in believing that the Richard of Stirling castle was an impostor. The French believed in Richard's death when the son of the duke of Orleans married Isabella in 1406. In the same year the lords addressed Henry, praying that those "might be put to prison who preach and publish that Richard, late king, who is dead, should be in full life"; or that "the fool in Scotland" is that King Richard who is dead.

*The Statute de Heretico Comburendo*

However defective may be the evidence upon which impartial history must condemn or acquit Henry IV of the murder of Richard II, he must bear the infamy of a political crime of broader and deeper significance. He was the first English king who put men to death by statute for their religious belief. He came to the throne with almost the unanimous support of

the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Archbishop Arundel was his great upholder; and this primate made Henry his instrument for the destruction of those who had assailed the corruptions of the church. Henry's father had been a supporter of Wycliffe. The son of John of Gaunt was to be the persecutor of Wycliffe's followers. Henry was carried to the throne with the avowal of popular principles. The lay barons and the commons were opposed to the pretensions of the church to be above all inquiry—a dominant and irresponsible power. But Henry knew the strength of a body that, according to an estimate of his time, possessed one third of the revenues of the kingdom. In the first year of his reign was passed the statute *De heretico com-*



DETAIL OF LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL

(Thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Besieged and greatly damaged by the Puritans in 1643)

*burendo*—"the first statute and butcherly knife," says Prynne, "that the impeaching prelates procured or had against the poor preachers of Christ's gospel."

The fiery persecution of Archbishop Arundel was grounded upon these charges: "Whereas it is showed to our sovereign lord the king on the behalf of the prelates and the clergy,<sup>1</sup> that divers false and perverse people of a certain new sect, of the faith, of the sacraments of the church, and the authority of the same damnably thinking, and against the law of God and of the church usurping the office of preaching, do perversely and maliciously in divers places within the said realm, under the colour of dissembled holiness, preach and teach these days openly and privily divers new doctrines, and wicked heretical

<sup>1</sup> "The petition and the statute are both in Latin, which is unusual in the laws of this time. In a subsequent petition of the commons this act is styled 'the statute made in the second year of your majesty's reign, at the request of the prelates and clergy of your kingdom'; which affords a presumption that it had no regular assent of parliament."—HALLAM.



[1401 A.D.]

and erroneous opinions, contrary to the same faith and blessed determinations of holy church; and of such sect and wicked doctrine and opinions they make unlawful conventicles and confederacies, they hold and exercise schools, they make and write books, they do wickedly instruct and inform people, and as much as they may excite and stir them to sedition and insurrection, and make great strife and division among the people, and other enormities horrible to be heard daily do perpetrate and commit." The "convenient remedy" for such "novelties and excesses" was that none should preach, write, or teach against the faith of holy church; that all having in their possession books or writings of such wicked doctrines and opinions should deliver them up, or be arrested and proceeded against by the diocesan; and, finally, that if any persons be before the diocesan charged with such wicked preachings and teachings, and should refuse to abjure, or after abjuration fall into relapse, they should be left to the secular court; and the sheriff of a county, or mayor or bailiffs of a city or borough, after sentence, shall receive the same persons, and every one of them, "and them, before the people, do (cause) to be burned, that such punishment may strike in fear to the minds of other."

Henry IV was no impassive tool of the persecuting churchmen. The first victim was William Salter, a London clergyman, who was burned on the 12th of February, 1401. The stake and the fagot were in full activity, till the commons shuddered at the atrocities which Englishmen had now first to endure. In the reign of Richard II the commons would not permit that the church should imprison heretics without the king's consent. Now heretics were to be burned upon the sole sentence of the ecclesiastical courts. A petition of the lords in 1406, which we have just referred to, mixes up the charges of heresy against certain preachers and teachers with the charge of publishing rumours that King Richard was alive. This alleged offence was a possible cause of the king's bitterness against them. But it was also set forth in that petition that they stirred and moved the people to take away their temporal possessions from the prelates; and, it was added, "in case that this evil purpose be not resisted by your royal majesty, it is very likely that in process of time they will also excite the people of your kingdom to take away from the lords temporal their possessions and heritages." The commons, who had also temporal possessions to lose, did not share this apprehension. They prayed Henry, in 1410, that the statute against the Lollards might be repealed, or even mitigated. He replied that he wished one more severe had been passed; and, to show how practical was his intolerance, he immediately signed a warrant for the burning of John Badby, a Lollard. The commons deeply resented the temper of the king, and refused to grant a subsidy to be levied yearly without their renewed assent.

#### FRANCE AND SCOTLAND

It was with no vague meaning that Shakespeare put into the mouth of Henry IV the aphorism, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." His reign was a period of continued assault and danger on every side. France and Scotland refused to recognise Henry as the sovereign of England. Their truces, they maintained, were with Richard, and not with a usurper. With France the king was anxiously desirous of peace. But the princes and nobles of France, considering the deposition of Richard as the act of the people, were craving to punish a nation which they held as the most dangerous on earth through its pride and insolence. The king of France, subject to partial

attacks of insanity, had received a terrible shock by the announcement of the events that had deprived his daughter of her queenly rank. Isabella was conducted back to Calais with ceremonies almost as magnificent as those which had attended her marriage five years before. But Henry, straitened in his finances, did not send back with her the dower which Richard had received. The duke of Orleans was for commencing hostilities against Henry. The duke of Burgundy was more cautious. These rival uncles of the insane king by their furious discords kept France in a state of disorder and terror which rendered the government incapable of any great enterprise. Bordeaux, and other parts of Gascony, were still retained by the English government, and these were attacked by the duke of Burgundy. But the people clung to the English rule.

In 1400 Henry invaded Scotland. He marched to Edinburgh, and left the usual mark of feudal royalty by burning the city. In 1402 the Scots invaded England. Henry was chasing Glendower in the land of the ancient Britons, and attributing to necromancy the ill success which courage and constancy had prepared for him. The Scottish earl of March, who had abjured his allegiance to his own sovereign, had defeated the invading Scots at Hepburn Moor. The earl Douglas came with a great army to revenge the loss. They advanced beyond the Tyne, devastating and plundering with more than usual fierceness and rapacity. But the earl of Northumberland, his son Henry Percy, and the earl of March had collected a large force in their rear, and awaited their return near Wooler. On Holyrood Day, the 14th of September, the Scots took up a strong position on Homildon Hill. The English army was placed on an opposite eminence. Percy commanded a descent into the valley; and as the Scots lined the sides of Homildon Hill, the English archers picked down their men with unerring aim, while Douglas gave no order for advance. At last the Scots charged down the steep, and the English retired a little. Again they halted, and again the deadly shafts flew so sharp and strong that few could stand up against the "iron sleet." The English men-at-arms in this battle drew not a sword. The victory was won by the terrible archers alone. Douglas and many nobles and knights were made prisoners, amongst whom was Murdoch Stewart, the son and heir of the duke of Albany, the regent of Scotland. The earl of Northumberland presented his illustrious prisoners to Henry, at Westminster, when the king exhorted Murdoch to be resigned to his captivity, for he had been taken on the battle-field like a true knight. The notion that Henry demanded the prisoners of Homildon Hill from the captors, that he might deprive them of ransom, is an error which Shakespeare derived from Hall<sup>b</sup> and Holinshed.<sup>h</sup> It is distinctly proved that Henry reserved to the captors all their rights.

#### THE REVOLT OF THE PERCYS

The revolt of the Percys was possibly accelerated by the refusal of Henry to ransom Sir Edmund Mortimer, whose sister had become the wife of Hotspur. But the probability is that no sudden impulses of passion excited their resistance to the authority of the man whom they had seated on the throne. The king was so unconscious of having provoked their resentment by any act of his own self-will that the very army which encountered them at Shrewsbury was led by him, "to give aid and support to his very dear and loyal cousins, the earl of Northumberland and his son Henry, in the expedition which they had honourably commenced for him and his realm against his

[1402-1403 A.D.]

enemies the Scotch." But the Percys had just cause of complaint against the government of Henry, in a matter which involved no jealousy of their power which had advanced him to the throne, as Hume describes the temper of the king. The Percys had incurred great expenses in their resistance to the Scots, and the government of Henry had been unable to reimburse them.

There are letters to the king and to the council from the earl of Northumberland, in the summer of 1403, bitterly complaining of the non-payment of large sums due to him. There is a letter of the same period from Henry's son, the prince of Wales, complaining that his soldiers would not remain with him unless they were promptly paid their wages; and an order is made by the king in council, on the 10th of July, 1403, that a thousand pounds should be sent to the prince, to enable him to keep his people together. It is clear that the king was surrounded by financial embarrassments, which affected his own son as much as the Percys. He satisfied the Percys as far as he could by small payments and large promises. They probably saw in these embarrassments a symptom of the weakness of Henry's government, and believed that the revolt of Glendower would enable them, in conjunction with him, to establish a government in which they should have a more supreme power than under the rule of the politic Lancaster. They managed their plans with such caution that whilst the king was marching towards the north, expecting to join them in Northumberland, Hotspur was marching through Lancashire and Cheshire, proclaiming that Richard was alive. At Burton-on-Trent Henry heard the news of the revolt. Within a week he had fought the battle of Shrewsbury.

The prince of Wales was on the Welsh borders, and joined his forces to those of his father before the army of Henry entered Shrewsbury, on the 20th of July. Hotspur had been joined by Douglas and his Scots, and by his uncle, the earl of Worcester, with a body of Cheshire archers. Glendower was on his march from Carmarthenshire; but the rapid movement of Henry to the west brought the royal troops in the presence of the northern army before the Welsh chieftain could unite his forces with those of his confederates. Under the walls of Shrewsbury lay the insurgents. They retired a short distance to Hateley Field. The solemn defiance of the confederates was sent to Henry during the night, denouncing him and his adherents as "traitors, and subverters of the commonwealth and kingdom, and invaders, oppressors, and usurpers of the rights of the true and direct heir of England and France."

Hateley Field is about three miles from Shrewsbury. It is a plain of no large extent, with a gentle range of hills rising towards the Welsh border. On that plain, where he had fought for his life and his crown, Henry afterwards caused a chapel to be built and endowed, wherein mass might be chanted for the souls of those who died in that battle and were there interred. The mass is no longer there sung, but there is the little chapel. As we stand upon that quiet plain—looking upon the eastern Haughmond hill, "the busky hill" of Shakespeare, and listen when "the southern wind doth play the trumpet"—the words of the chronicler and the poet linger in our memories; and we think of that terrible hour when, in the words of Hall,<sup>b</sup> "suddenly the trumpets blew, and the king's part cried Sainct George! and the adversaries cried Esperancé! Percy! and so, furiously, the armies joined." The Northumbrian archers, who had done such terrible execution at Homildon Hill, now drew their bow-strings against their English brothers. Walsingham tells us that the king's men "fell as the leaves fall on the ground after a frosty night at the approach of winter." The troops of Henry recoiled before their slaughtering arrows, and before the charge which Percy and Douglas led. The



prince of Wales was wounded by an arrow in the face; but the valiant youth continued to fight where the battle was strongest. For three hours the field was contested with an obstinacy that marked the breed of the men who were fighting against each other.

"At the last," says Hall,<sup>b</sup> "the king, crying, 'Saint George! Victory!' broke the array and entered into the battle of his enemies, and fought fiercely, and adventured so far into the battle that the earl Douglas struck him down, and slew Sir Walter Blunt and three others apparelled in the king's suit and clothing." The king was raised, and again "did that day many a valiant feat of arms." Hotspur at length fell; an arrow pierced his brain. His death struck a panic terror into the hearts of his brave followers. The straggling Welsh, who had joined the battle, fled to the woods and hills. The gallant Douglas was taken prisoner, and few or none of his Scots escaped alive. On that Hateley Field, where about fourteen thousand men were engaged on each side, one half were killed or wounded. The earl of Worcester, the baron of Kenderton, and Sir Richard Vernon were amongst the prisoners delivered to the king. At the market-cross of Shrewsbury, where, a hundred and twenty years before, Prince David of Wales had been executed as a traitor, Worcester, Kenderton, and Vernon paid the penalty of their revolt with the same horrible barbarities that were inflicted, for the first time, upon the brother of Llewelyn. The earl of Northumberland was marching his retainers through Durham, when he received the news of the death of his son and his brother, and of the fatal issue of the sudden revolt of his house. He hurried back to his castle of Warkworth and disbanded his men. The earl was commanded to appear before the king at York. Henry was too politic to be unnecessarily severe; and the elder Percy escaped, even without a forfeiture.

But, in the midst of this great success, the government of Henry had a constant fight to maintain against numerous enemies. The people of England were subjected to various miseries by the opposition that was raised to the Lancastrian rule. The French landed in Wales, and burned Tenby. Plymouth was burned by ships from Brittany. Devonshire was harassed by descents on the coast. Reprisals, of course, took place; and the dwellers on the French shores of the Channel had to endure the same sort of visitations. In 1404 Glendower had so successfully asserted his power that the French government concluded a treaty with him as "Owen, prince of Wales." Henry of Monmouth was doing his duty as the representative of his father in the Welsh borders. On the 11th of March, 1405, he obtained a considerable victory at Grosmont. But this success had no decisive result. The king was again about to enter Wales with a large force, when a new revolt broke out in the north of England. The earl of Northumberland, the earl of Nottingham, Lord Bardolf, and Scrope, archbishop of York, confederated to place the earl of March on the throne. He and his brother had been delivered from their honourable imprisonment at Windsor by the skilful device of the widow of Despenser, one of Richard's favourites. They were immediately retaken; and the duke of York—known by his plots and betrayal of others when Aumale and Rutland—was accused by the lady, his own sister, of being privy to the plot. The earl of Westmoreland entrapped two of the chief of the northern confederates into his hands—Scrope and Nottingham. The archbishop and the earl were beheaded. Northumberland and Bardolf escaped to Scotland.

The execution of the archbishop, which Gascoigne, the chief justice, refused to sanction—as the lay courts had no jurisdiction over a prelate—was an offence against the church, and the pope issued a temporary sentence of excom-

[1405-1408 A.D.]

munication against all who had been concerned in his death. That sentence was afterwards withdrawn. There is a story which, if it rested upon good evidence, would give us a notion that Henry, in addition to his other great talents, possessed a considerable fund of humour. He charged a messenger to deliver the armour of the archbishop to the pope, with these words of the brothers of Joseph: "Lo! this have we found; know now whether it be thy son's coat, or no."<sup>1</sup> After the execution of Scrope and Nottingham, Henry successfully besieged Prudhoe and Warkworth, the castles of the earl of Northumberland; and took Berwick, which had been delivered by Northumberland to the Scots. The unhappy Percy and Lord Bardolf wandered about for two years, endeavouring to organise resistance to Henry's consolidating power. In 1407 there was some discontent in England, through the king's demand for subsidies; and the Percy and Bardolf then ventured into Northumberland, raised their tenantry, and risked a battle with the sheriff of Yorkshire, Sir Thomas Rokeby, at Bramham Moor, near Tadcaster. Northumberland closed his unhappy career by falling in battle; and Bardolf, after being taken prisoner, died of his wounds.

## THE LAST YEARS OF HENRY IV

Thus came to an end the English insurrections against the sovereignty of Henry of Lancaster. He had held the throne for nine years against assaults that would quickly have destroyed one of mere ordinary talent and energy. His most obstinate enemy had been Owen Glendower, a man of proportionate ability and force of character. The great Welshman never yielded. In 1411 he was exempted from Henry IV's general pardon of the Welsh rebels. In 1416, Henry V, even after his great triumph of Agincourt, sought to make peace with the unconquered Owen, and to receive him into his allegiance. The circumstances of his death are not recorded. He probably sank into obscurity, and his memory was only preserved in the legends of his countrymen, which told of his wanderings on his native mountains and his hidings in sea-girt caverns. Owyn's Cave is still to be seen on the coast of Merioneth. The contest in which he was engaged was held to be a revival of the ancient feud of Briton and Saxon; for in 1431 the commons prayed that the forfeiture of the Glendower lands might be enforced, for that Owen Glendower was a traitor, whose success would have been "to the destruction of all English tongue for evermore."

The connection of the government of Henry with the quarrels and intrigues in France of the rival dukes of Orleans and Burgundy involves matters of state policy which have now but little interest. During the reign of the insane king, Charles VI, the kingdom was a prey to their rival factions. Orleans, the brother of the king, was murdered by his cousin of Burgundy in 1407, who justified the deed, and became master of the state. The revolt of his Flemish subjects required his presence, and then the Orleanists declared him a public enemy.

But John Sans-Peur was for a time too powerful to be put down. The young duke of Orleans, who had been married to Isabella, the widow of

[<sup>1</sup> It is amusing to notice how the same story persists in cropping out again and again in the course of history. This identical story of the coat-of-mail and the pope, it will be remembered, was related in the reign of Richard I as having occurred in connection with the revolt of the warlike bishop of Beauvais. Of course it is conceivable that Henry knew of the success of Richard's action, and profited by the example. But the story is good enough to bear two relations.]

Richard II, who died in 1409, took as a second wife the daughter of the count d'Armagnac. This count became the chief of the Orleanists, who thenceforward were called the Armagnacs. The young duke of Orleans demanded justice for the death of his father. The duke of Burgundy solicited aid from the king of England, who sent him eight hundred men-at-arms and a thousand bowmen. This assistance turned the scale in favor of Burgundy. But in 1412 the Armagnacs offered better terms to Henry, by agreeing to acknowledge him as duke of Aquitaine. The two factions at last began to consider that their quarrel had become complicated, by the intervention of one who would sacrifice both to regain the ancient power of the English in France. They agreed upon a peace. But Henry sent an army into Normandy under his second son, the duke of Clarence, who ravaged Maine and Anjou, and finally retired to Gascony, having received a large payment as the cost of his expedition.

The kingly and parental relations of Henry IV with the prince of Wales, during the latter years of this reign, have been variously described upon very imperfect information. It is extremely difficult to speak of the character of Henry of Monmouth without taking some colour from the most effective painter of character that all literature has produced. Hallam<sup>7</sup> says: "The virtues of the prince of Wales are almost invidiously eulogised by those parliaments who treat harshly his father; and these records afford a strong presumption that some early petulance or riot has been much exaggerated by the vulgar minds of our chroniclers." Shakespeare rescued the prince from the imputation of low debauchery by surrounding him with an atmosphere of wit, and by exhibiting his compunction for misspent hours in the midst of his revelries. Here we may leave the consideration of the prince's private character, without believing that it is much sullied even by the somewhat doubtful story of his having struck the chief justice of England.

But his public conduct, after he attained his majority in 1409, requires a brief notice. In 1410 he was made captain of Calais, and president of the council. In the capacity of president he is often found acting; and perhaps in his official position he witnessed the burning of John Badby for heresy, and offered him a yearly stipend if he would recant. But it would appear from some official records that the prince had an authority which was scarcely compatible with the jealous character of his father. Henry IV was in failing health, and the son was naturally at hand to assist in the public service. But records which state that certain business was transacted "in the presence of the king and of his son the prince" indicate a species of divided authority which might end in disunion. Hardyng,<sup>i</sup> the rhyming chronicler, says:

The king discharged the prince from his counsail,  
And set my lord Sir Thomas in his stead  
Chief of council, for the king's more avail.

Stow<sup>a</sup> says that the prince's great popularity induced the king to believe that he intended to usurp the crown; but that the prince, coming to his father with a large body of lords and gentlemen, whom he would not suffer to advance beyond the fire in the hall, declared that his life was not so desirable to him that he should wish to live one day under his father's displeasure. Then the king embraced him with tears, and said: "My right dear and heartily beloved son, it is of truth that I had you partly suspect, and, as I now perceive, undeserved on your part: I will have you no longer in distrust for any reports that shall be made unto me. And thereof I assure you, upon my honour." Henry IV died on the 20th of March, 1413, in his forty-seventh year.



[1413-1415 A.D.]

## HENRY V AND THE LOLLARDS

Henry V was proclaimed king on the 21st of March, 1413. He was crowned at Westminster on the 9th of April, being then in the twenty-fifth year of his age. A parliament, having been summoned by writ, met at Westminster on the 15th of May. There was nothing very noteworthy in its proceedings. The king met his lords and commons with an aspect of love and conciliation. He had taken not only the most generous, but the most prudent resolution towards those who had been considered dangerous to his house. He restored the son of Henry Percy to his family inheritance, and he liberated the earl of March from prison.

There were dangers, however, at home which the magnanimity of the king was not calculated to avert. The execrable laws against the preachers of the "new doctrines" had not prevented the tenets of Wycliffe from spreading through the nation and beyond the narrow bounds of the island. It was a period of alarm for popes and prelates, and for all those who considered that the church was properly built upon a foundation of worldly riches and dominion. John Huss, a Bohemian priest, had become acquainted with the writings of Wycliffe, and he boldly preached the same doctrines as early as 1405. In 1414 the council of Constance held its first sitting, and Huss was summoned before it to declare his opinions. The brave man knew that he went at the risk of his life. He died at the stake in 1415. The same council decreed that the body of Wycliffe should be "taken from the ground and thrown far away from the burial of any church." It was thirteen years before this miserable vengeance was carried into effect, by disinterring and burning the first English reformer's body and throwing his ashes into a brook. "The brook," says Fuller,<sup>n</sup> "did convey his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow seas; they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over."

But in the first year of Henry V the prelates sought to strike a more effectual terror into the followers of Wycliffe than could be accomplished by any insult to his memory. They resolved to take measures against one of the most powerful supporters of the Lollards, Sir John Oldcastle, called Lord Cobham. He had been the friend of the king when prince of Wales; and Henry, in the honest desire, as we may believe, to avert the consequences of ecclesiastical vengeance, tried to induce Oldcastle to recant. He was inflexible, and the king then caused him to be arrested. On the 25th of September the undaunted knight was brought before the synod, and there pleaded his cause with a vigour and ability which have made him memorable amongst the martyrs of the Reformation. He was condemned as a heretic, and was handed over to the secular power. The king granted his ancient friend a respite of fifty days from the fiery penalty which awaited him; and during that period Oldcastle escaped from his prison in the Tower. The danger to which their leader had been exposed, and the severities which appeared preparing for those who held to their conscientious opinions, precipitated the Lollards into a movement which made the state as anxious for their suppression as was the church. Rumours went forth of a fearful plot to destroy all religion and law in England, and, in the overthrow of king, lords, and clergy, to make all property in common. There can be little doubt that this rumoured plot was a gross exaggeration of some indiscreet assemblies for the purpose of petition.

It was stated that in the fields of St. Giles, stretching to the Hampstead and Highgate hills, twenty-five thousand insurgents were to meet under the command of Sir John Oldecastle. At midnight of the 7th of January, 1414, the king went forth from the city gates with a mighty array, to encounter this army of desperate rebels. He found about eighty persons. Others were surprised near Hornsey. Many of these unfortunate people were immediately executed; and Sir Roger Acton, a friend of Oldecastle, also suffered on the 10th of February. Henry proclaimed that the insurgents meant to destroy him and his brothers, to divide the realm into districts, and to elect Sir John Oldecastle president. These allegations appear too extravagant not to lead us to the belief that the conspiracy, if conspiracy there were, had for its sole object the mitigation of the penal laws against the preachers and receivers of Wycliffe's doctrines. Within a few months a pardon was proclaimed to all the Lollards for the conspiracy, excepting Oldecastle and eleven others. Still prosecutions went on; and it is remarkable that the king pardoned many so prosecuted, after they had been convicted. The general body of Lollards were grievously punished for the indiscretion of some of their number. A new statute was passed, giving all judges and magistrates power to arrest all persons suspected of Lollardism, binding them by oath to do their utmost to root up the heresy; and enacting that, in addition to capital punishment, the lands and goods of such convicted heretics should be forfeited to the king. It was three years before the vengeance of the church fell on Oldecastle. He was taken in 1418, while Henry was in France, and was burned, under the declaration of the archbishop and his provincial synod that he was an incorrigible heretic.

#### HENRY V AND FRANCE

The factions of the Burgundians and Armagnacs were carrying on their desolating contests in France, when Henry V came to the throne. Henry IV had endeavoured to avail himself of their distractions by siding with one or the other party as best suited his policy. His son adopted a bolder course. When the Treaty of Bretigny was violated by the French, Edward III reassumed the title of king of France, and went to war again to assert his pretended right. There had been several renewed truces between the two kingdoms, but no pacification, and no decided settlement of the contested claims. The unhappy condition of the French nation was an encouragement to the ambition of the young king of England, who had been trained from his earliest years in war and policy. An embassy was sent to Paris to negotiate for a prolongation of the truce.

Then was suggested a pacification, by the marriage of Henry of England with Catherine, the youngest daughter of the insane Charles VI. It was also proposed to the duke of Burgundy that his daughter should be queen of England. But the Orleanists were now supreme. Within a year from his accession Henry suddenly put in a claim to the crown of France, in renewal of the old claim of Edward III. Upon the rejection of this claim the king of England made demands far more unreasonable than were agreed to by his great-grandfather, when the Peace of Bretigny was concluded. The French government consented to give up all the ancient territories of the duchy of Aquitaine, and to marry the daughter of Charles VI to Henry, with a dowry of 600,000 crowns. An embassy was sent to France, when the amount of the proposed dowry was increased to 800,000 crowns; and the demand of Henry for the cession of Normandy, Maine, and Anjou was rejected. The French then sent an embassy to England, when Henry demanded Normandy and all

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the territories ceded by the Peace of Bretigny, under the threat that he would otherwise take arms to enforce his claim to the crown of France. On the 16th of April, 1415, he announced at a great council his determination to recover "his inheritance." He had previously obtained a supply from parliament "for the defence of the kingdom of England and the safety of the seas"; and the supply was thus limited, although the king had avowed his intention to that parliament of making a claim to the kingdom of France. Historians are of opinion that the lords spiritual, with the new archbishop, Chicheley, as their organ, had urged the king to this decision, to divert the attention of the people from those questions of the doctrine and discipline of the church which had become so formidable.

The probability is that, Henry having become an instrument in their hands for putting down by terror those new doctrines which had spread from England to the Continent, they were ready in return to gratify his personal ambition by advocating his designs upon France.

The character of Henry's enterprise is often misunderstood. It is said that, whatever claim Edward III might have had to the crown of France, Henry V could have none. It is said that according to Edward III's doctrine, by which the right to the crown might pass through females to the male representatives, the rights of Edward III had passed to Roger, earl of March. So, as a matter of genealogy, they certainly had, and as a matter of genealogy there was doubtless an inconsistency in the use of the French title by Henry IV and Henry V. But the true way of looking at the matter is

that both the Peace of Bretigny and the truce made in the latter years of Richard II had been broken by the French, that the war was going on at Henry's accession, and that all that Henry V did was to throw the whole national power, guided by his own genius, into its prosecution.<sup>k</sup>

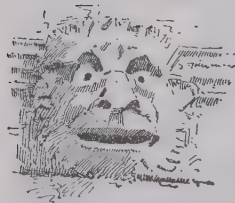
At a council on the 17th of April the king appointed his brother, the duke of Bedford, to be lieutenant of the kingdom during his absence. The next day he declared what should be the payment for the lords and knights who should be retained for his voyage to France, with the daily payment of each man-at-arms and each archer. The rate of pay was, for a duke, 13s. 4d. per day; for an earl, 6s. 8d.; for a baron, 4s.; for a knight, 2s.; for every other man-at-arms, 1s.; and for an archer, 6d. Great nobles and others contracted to furnish large bodies of troops at this rate, well and sufficiently mounted, armed, and arrayed. But the first quarter's wages were required to be paid in advance, and pledges were given for the payment of the second quarter. Contracts were made for carpenters and other artisans, for wagons, and bows and arrows. The king pledged jewels for the performance of some of these contracts, and he raised large sums as loans upon jewels and plate. Ships and sailors were impressed. Surgeons were provided. Many officers of the



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royal household were to attend upon the king, with no fewer than fifteen minstrels. On the 18th of June Henry set out for Westminster, going in procession to St. Paul's, accompanied by the mayor and citizens in their guilds. At Winchester he awaited the arrival of an embassy from France. According to one French historian, Laboureur, Henry haggled about terms in the spirit of a usurer. The archbishop of Bourges, who was of the embassy, is accused by our chroniclers of having replied to the king with improper boldness. Neither concession nor plain-speaking would avail. The ambassadors returned to Paris on the 26th of July, and reported that all Henry's peaceable professions covered malice and dissimulation.



CORBELS

(Eltham Palace. A favourite royal residence from Henry III to Henry VIII)

On the 24th of July the king made his will, concluding with these words in his own autograph: "This is my last will, subscribed with my own hand, R. H. Jesu Mercy and gremency Ladie Marie help." Within a day or two a conspiracy against him was discovered, which, according to some accounts, was instigated by the French court. The conspirators were the king's cousin, Richard earl of Cambridge, brother to the duke of York (Rutland); Lord Scrope, who was Henry's familiar friend; and Sir Thomas Grey of Heton. A jury was summoned for their trial by the sheriff of Southampton, who found Cambridge and Grey guilty of treason, and Scrope of having concealed the knowledge of their purposes. Cambridge and Scrope claimed to be tried by their peers. By the lords then at Southampton, who formed a court for their trial, they were convicted, and they suffered death on the 5th of August. Grey had been previously executed.

#### RENEWAL OF THE FRENCH WAR

The truce with France expired on the 2d of August (1415). On the beach of Southampton are collected men-at-arms, mounted archers, foot-archers, miners, gunners, armourers, and all the various attendants of a feudal army. There, under the walls of the old castle, shallow vessels float up to the river's banks, and with little preparation horses and men step on to the crowded decks. Fifteen hundred of such vessels are gathered together, and drift with the tide to the broader Solent. Fifteen hundred sails to bear an army slowly and insecurely to Normandy—an army that would have been carried with far greater speed and safety by thirty of such vessels as now steam from that Southampton river. The king is at Portchester castle. On the 10th of August, being Saturday, he goes on board his own ship, *The Trinity*, lying between Southampton and Portsmouth. On Sunday they put to sea. On Tuesday, about noon, the royal ship enters the mouth of the Seine, and the fleet casts anchor about three miles from Harfleur.

The army landed in small boats, and took up a position on the hill nearest Harfleur. No resistance was offered to the landing. The constable of France, D'Albret, was at Rouen, with a large number of troops. But he stirred not. The hardy people of the coast suffered the English to leap on their shores, as

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if they came in peace and friendship. The landing-place was rough with large stones, and there was a dike and wall between the shore and the marsh towards the town. The entrance into the marsh was very difficult, and "the resistance of the smallest number of people would have sufficed to drive back many thousands." The army rested in its position till Saturday, the 17th, and then moved to the siege of Harfleur. The town was surrounded with embattled walls, and with ditches filled to a great depth and breadth by the waters of the Seine. There were three gates, strongly defended by bulwarks. After the landing of Henry the garrison was reinforced on the side which the English had not then invested. But the town was very quickly encompassed on all sides, the duke of Clarence having made a circuitous march and taken a position on the hill opposite to that which the king occupied. The port was strictly blockaded towards the sea. After a demand for the surrender of the place, which was stoutly refused, the siege commenced. We now hear of guns as well as engines in an English siege. There is a belief that cannon had been employed at Crécy; and some sort of ordnance had certainly been occasionally in use in the middle of the fourteenth century. At Harfleur the king battered the bulwarks, and the walls and towers on every side, by the stones which his guns and engines cast. Two attempts were made to undermine the town; but there were counter-mines, and the miners met and fought underground.

The siege went on with varying fortune; but the besieged showed no symptom of surrender. Disease now began to make frightful ravages in the English camp. Henry's men were perishing around him by dysentery, and he resolved to storm the town. The garrison, however, agreed to surrender on the 22d of September, if they were not previously relieved. No relief came. The civil distractions of France had at first deprived the government of all energy. There was no preparation for resistance. There was no money in the royal treasury. Suddenly a tax was imposed, and the impost was collected from the clergy and the people by armed men. "What can the English do more to us?" exclaimed the unhappy victims of misrule. Harfleur was yielded up on that 22nd of September, with great ceremony. Henry sat upon a throne under a pavilion of silk, erected on the hill opposite the town. From the pavilion to Harfleur a line of English soldiers was formed; and through their ranks came the governor with a deputation, and he laid the keys of the town at the feet of the king. The siege had lasted thirty-six days. On the 23d Henry entered the town, and went barefoot to the church of St. Martin, to offer a solemn thanksgiving for his success. The bulk of the inhabitants—women, children, and poor—were compelled to depart, but without any indignity; and the principal burghers, with many knights and gentlemen, were allowed to leave the place, making oath to surrender themselves at Calais in the following November. Henry now sent a challenge to the dauphin of France to meet him in single combat—the old, unmeaning defiance of chivalry. On the 5th of October the king held a council. The success at Harfleur had been bought at a terrible cost. Besides a large number killed in the siege, a much greater number of the army had died of dysentery in that district of overflowing marshes. Five thousand more were so sick that they were unable to proceed. Many had deserted. Comparing the various accounts of contemporary chroniclers, it is "morally impossible to form any other conclusion," says Sir N. H. Nicolas,<sup>j</sup> "than that the English army which quitted Harfleur did not exceed nine thousand fighting men."<sup>1</sup>

[<sup>j</sup> All known documents relating to the battle of Agincourt and all contemporary narratives were collected in a volume entitled *History of the Battle of Agincourt*, by Sir N. Harris

At the council of the 5th of October Henry was strongly urged to return, with the remnant of his force, to England by sea. He was told that "the multitude of the French were continually increasing, and very likely might hem them in on every side, as sheep in pens." So writes the priest; and he adds that the king determined to march to Calais, "relying upon the divine grace and the righteousness of his cause, piously considering that victory consists not in multitudes."

It is easy to blame Henry for this determination; to call it "rashness, and total recklessness of consequences"; but it must not be forgotten that if the king had returned to England with the loss of two thirds of his army, and with no success but the capture of a town that could not long be held, he risked the loss of that popular support which the general belief in his intrepidity had won for him from his early years. He had set his life upon a cast, and he must play out the game. On the 8th of October he commenced his extraordinary march. With eight days' provisions the little army went forth from Harfleur, in three battalions, on the road to Calais. Henry's policy was an honourable exception to the devastation which accompanied the marches of the great Edward and the Black Prince. He published a proclamation that no one, under pain of death, should burn, lay waste, or take anything, excepting victuals and necessities." The line of march was at no great distance from the coast towards the Somme. Passing by Fécamp, the army reached Arques, near Dieppe, on the 11th. A few shots were fired from the castle, but the passage through the town was not contested. The English began to believe that they should reach Calais without molestation. "For some firmly asserted," says the observant priest, "that considering the civil discord and deadly hatred subsisting between the French princes and the duke of Burgundy, the French would not draw themselves out from the interior parts of the country and their strongholds, lest, while thus drawing themselves out, the forces of the duke of Burgundy should either follow them or against their will usurp the possession of their estates."

At Eu the English army was attacked, but the assailants were repulsed without difficulty. On Sunday, the 13th, they reached Abbeville. Now the imminent danger that was before this daring band was too manifest to be concealed. The chroniclers of his great-grandfather's exploits had made Henry familiar with the circumstances of his passage of the Somme. To the ford of Blanquetaque an English army was again led. The causeway leading to the ford was broken down, and a great body of French was said to be collected on the opposite bank of the river. Without any certain information, Henry directed his march by the Somme above Abbeville, seeking for another passage. The bridges and causeways were all destroyed, and broad marshes added to the difficulty of finding a ford. The slender stock of provisions was now becoming exhausted. After a march of seven days they passed Amiens, and slept that night at the village of Boves. It was the time of vintage, and there was abundance of wine in open casks and a little bread. The supply of wine was as dangerous to the safety of the army as its privations, and Henry forbade his men to fill their bottles. It was the 17th of October before they reached a plain near Corbie. Here the king executed a soldier who had stolen the pix out of a church—an incident which Shakespeare has not overlooked. Here, too, he gave the famous order that each archer should provide himself with a stake, sharpened at each end, to plant in the ground when about to be attacked by cavalry. On the 18th they were quartered

Nicolas (1827). The account of Knight here presented is based largely on the contemporary narrative of a priest, printed by Nicolas.]



[1415 A.D.]

near Nesle, a walled town about twenty-four miles above Amiens and four miles from the nearest part of the Somme. Here the welcome news was brought that a ford had been discovered. Before the river could be reached a marsh had to be crossed. The position was one of danger, and there was no choice but to make for the river at all hazards. There were two fords, approached by narrow causeways, partly destroyed. The damaged portions were filled up with broken doors and windows from the neighbouring houses. The king was indefatigable in his personal exertions, superintending the repair of the causeways, and the orderly passage of men and horses. It was dark before the whole army had crossed. "We passed a joyful night," says the priest, "in the next farm-houses, which had been left by the French on our first arrival over the water."

## THE BATTLE OF AGINCOURT (1415 A.D.)

The English army had been for a month investing Harfleur before the French government was roused from its inactivity. On the 10th of September the king of France took the Oriflamme at St. Denis, and departed for Normandy. He had arrived at Rouen with his son when the news of the fall of Harfleur reached the court. He was soon surrounded by princes and great lords with their men-at-arms. It was known that the constable of France was watching the passages of the Somme, and that the English, in ascending the left bank, were sustaining great privations. The weather was wet and tempestuous. The princes and nobles believed they had now nothing to dread from the presumption of King Henry. The citizens of Paris offered to send six thousand men well armed. The old duke de Berri, who had fought at Poitiers sixty years before, urged the acceptance of the offer. The duke of Alençon and the young chivalry would have nothing to do with these common people. "What do we want of these shopkeepers? We have already three times the number of the English."

The princes sent to Henry three officers of arms, to tell him that, being resolved to fight him, they desired him to name a day and a place for the battle. The king of England replied that, having set out from his town of Harfleur, he was on his way to England, and that, resting in no town or fortress, they might find him any day and hour in the open field. Onward marched Henry by Péronne, the roads being found trodden "as if the French had gone before him in many thousands." On the 24th—the fourth day after they had crossed the Somme—the English army arrived at Blangy, in perfect discipline. A branch of the Canche, the Ternoise, was here crossed without difficulty. The French army was on the rising ground about a league distant. From Blangy there is a gentle ascent towards the village of Maisoncelle. "When we reached the top of the hill," says the priest, "we saw three columns of the French emerge from the upper part of the valley, about a mile from us; who at length being formed into battalions, companies, and troops, in multitudes compared with us, halted a little more than half a mile opposite to us, filling a very wide field, as if with an innumerable host of locusts—a moderate-sized valley being betwixt us and them." Nothing can be more accurate than this description of the locality. We have stood upon this ascent, having left the little river and the bridge of Blangy about a mile distant. Looking back, there is a range of gentle hills to the east, in the direction of St. Pol, from which the French army marched. Emerging "from the upper part of the valley," the French army would fill "a very wide field"—the plain of Agin-

court. When Henry had crossed the river and ascended the hill, he expected instant battle. He formed his troops, and went about exhorting them to do their duty. Walter Hungerford, according to our good priest's account, regretted that they had not with them ten thousand English archers. The solemn answer of the king, relying upon God for victory, has been given by the priest. Other burning words—the version of the poet—have superseded the dialogue of the chroniclers.

The sun was setting, and there was no attack. At Maisoncelle, now a long straggling village amidst trees, about a mile and a half from Blangy, the king took up his quarters for the night. In the gloomy twilight “a white way” had been found to this village. The noise of the French was heard as they took up their quarters, each vociferating for his servant or his comrade. Henry commanded the strictest silence. It was a night of dread to those who knew how many thousand enemies were close at hand. There was little sleep. The armourers were at work; the priests were confessing their penitents. In the French camp the confident knights played at dice, the stakes being the ransoms of their expected prisoners.

The route to Calais lay through the plain of Agincourt. The village of Agincourt now consists of a number of straggling mud-built cottages, and a farm or two, with a church of the beginning of the last century. It is covered by a wood towards the plain. Opposite Agincourt is another village, Tramecourt, also covered by a wood. The plain of Agincourt is a considerable table-land, now fully cultivated, and expanding into an open country after we have passed between the two woods. The village of Maisoncelle is about a mile from this field. Henry rose with the dawn on that 25th of October, the feast of St. Crispin, and he heard three masses. He was fully armed, and he wore a crown on his head of extraordinary magnificence. He mounted a small gray horse, and drew up his men upon the open ground near Maisoncelle, then covered with young corn. His little band was formed in one line, the men-at-arms in the centre, with wings on the left and right, the archers being posted between the wings, with their stakes fixed before them. A party that went into the village of Agincourt found no armed men there. Another party of archers was concealed in the village of Tramecourt. The French army was in three lines, completely covering the route to Calais. The advanced guard of about eight thousand knights and esquires, and fifty-five hundred archers and cross-bowmen, was composed of the greater part of the French nobility. The main body was crowded in prodigious numbers, the lines, according to the lowest estimate, being twenty men in depth. The men-at-arms wore coats of steel reaching to their knees, and heavy leg-armour, with other encumbering panoply.

The contemporary chroniclers, both French and English, differ greatly as to the number of the French army. The lowest estimate is fifty thousand fighting men; the highest, one hundred and fifty thousand. The probability is that they were ten times as many as the English. Their position was between the two woods of Agincourt and Tramecourt, in a space much too confined for the movements of such a vast body. The woods as they at present exist show that the position was a disadvantageous one; and it was probably more disadvantageous if the woods were then more extensive. The two armies passed several hours without a movement on either side. According to Monstrelet,<sup>1</sup> Sir Thomas Erpingham, a knight grown gray with age and honour, at last flung his truncheon in the air, and called “*Nestrocque!*” (“Now strike!”) and then dismounted, as the king and others had done. The English then knelt down, invoking the protection of God; and each man put a small

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piece of earth into his mouth, in remembrance that they were formed of dust, and to dust should return. Shouting the national "Hurrah!" they kept advancing. The archers, without armour, in jackets and loose hose, some even barefoot, went boldly on to meet the mailed chivalry. Their bow-strings were drawn. The French stooped as the deadly shafts flew amongst them. Many were slain. Onward rushed the thousands of horsemen to break the line of the hardy yeomen. The sharpened stakes were planted in the earth, and the archers shrank not from the charge. The arrows again flew; and, the horses becoming unmanageable from their wounds, the knights were driven back upon the van, which they threw into confusion.

The king now advanced with his main body. A deadly conflict ensued. The archers threw away their bows, and fought with sword and bill. The second French line was soon reached; and here again the contest became more



RUSHEN CASTLE, ISLE OF MAN

(Thirteenth century)

a slaughter than a battle. The enormous numbers of the French were the chief cause of their destruction. Their heavy armour was an encumbrance instead of a defence. The rear division, after the overthrow of the first and second divisions, took to flight. In three hours this terrible fight was over. The priest, who was "sitting on horseback among the baggage, in the rear of the battle," thus describes the slaughter of the French on this day of Agincourt: "When some of them in the engagement had been killed, and fell in the front, so great was the undisciplined violence and pressure of the multitude behind that the living fell over the dead, and others also, falling on the living, were slain; so that, in three places, where the force and host of our standards were, so great grew the heap of the slain, and of those who were overthrown among them, that our people ascended the very heaps, which had increased higher than a man, and butchered the adversaries below with swords, axes, and other weapons. And when at length, in two or three hours,



that front battle was perforated and broken up, and the rest were driven to flight, our men began to pull down the heaps, and to separate the living from the dead, proposing to keep the living as slaves, to be ransomed."

Few were left alive for ransom. A clamour arose that the French, collecting in various parts of the field, were coming upon the wearied victors. The baggage, according to Monstrelet, was being plundered. In the momentary alarm Henry commanded a massacre of all the prisoners. The French chroniclers mention this horrible circumstance in terms of sorrow rather than of blame. The hasty instinct of self-preservation dictated the order. The day before the battle the king had discharged, upon their parole, all the prisoners he had brought with him. His nature was not cruel. He stopped the carnage when he found that the danger was imaginary.

On the part of the English, the duke of York and the earl of Oxford were slain, with some hundreds of inferior degree. The estimates of this loss are very conflicting. The English chronicles make it absurdly small. Monstrelet<sup>1</sup> says the loss of the English was sixteen hundred; and so Lefebvre de Saint Remy,<sup>m</sup> another French historian. Of the chivalry of France, the flower perished. Seven of the princes of the blood had fallen. With the duke of Alençon Henry had fought in person, and was beaten down, having a portion of his crown struck off. The king could not save his gallant enemy, who fell before Henry's guards. Eight thousand gentlemen of France perished in that field of carnage, of whom a hundred and twenty were nobles bearing banners.

The herald of France was taken in the battle. "Montjoie," said Henry, "to whom is the victory—to me or to the king of France?" "To you, and not to him," said Montjoie. "And how is this castle called?" "The castle of Agincourt." "Well," said the king, "they will long speak of the battle of Agincourt." They will speak of it as long as England's history endures, as one of the most wonderful examples of bravery, and fortitude, and heroic daring, of which a people may be justly proud. But they will also speak of it as a fearful sacrifice of human life to a false ambition, which had no object beyond the assertion of an indomitable will, and no permanent results beyond the perpetuation of hatred and jealousy between nation and nation. Henry slept that night of the 25th of October at Maisoncelle. On the next day he, with the duke of Orleans and many other noble prisoners, went his unmolested way to Calais.

#### THE SECOND FRENCH EXPEDITION

The great victory of Agincourt was publicly known in London on the 29th of October, the same day on which King Henry reached Calais. "Early in the morning," says a contemporary chronicle, "came tidings to London while that men were in their beds, that the king had fought and had the battle and the field aforesaid. And anon as they had tidings thereof, they went to all the churches of the city of London and rang all the bells of every church." Henry remained at Calais till the 17th of November. There was time for this news to go forth through the country before the arrival of the king; and the people warmed up into a fervour of joy which drowned the lament for the thousands that had perished during those past three months of sickness, want, and slaughter.

When the king's ship, after a boisterous passage, sailed into the port of Dover, the people rushed into the sea and bore their hero to the shore. At the royal manor of Eltham he rested on his way to London, which he entered

[1415-1417 A.D.]

in solemn procession on the 23d of November. From Blackheath to Westminster he was escorted by twenty thousand of the citizens, "with devices according to their crafts." The great highway of Cheap, after the cavalcade had passed London bridge, was so crowded by the people that the horsemen could scarcely pass through them. The city was gorgeous with arches, and towers, and pavilions, out of which innumerable virgins and youths showered laurel boughs and leaves of gold upon the conqueror's head, and sang English anthems with melodious voices, and with organs. The busy priest, as observant of the splendid pageant as of the terrible battle, says: "The lattices and windows on both sides were filled with the most noble ladies and women of the realm, and with honourable and honoured men, who flocked together to the pleasing sight, and were so very gracefully and elegantly dressed, in garments of gold, fine linen, and crimson, and various other apparel, that a greater assembly, or a nobler spectacle, was not recollected to have been ever before in London." He goes on to say: "The king himself, amidst these public expressions of praise, and the bravery of the citizens, passed along, clad in a purple robe, not with lofty looks, pompous horses, or great multitude, but with a solid aspect, a reverend demeanour, and a few of his faithful domestics attendant on him; the dukes, earls, and marshals, his captives, following him with a guard of soldiers."

In 1416 Henry was continuing to cherish his ambitious projects, and was preparing for their accomplishment. The attempted mediation of the emperor Sigismund, who visited England, had been unsuccessful. The war was carried on in Normandy, and the French made descents on the English shores of the Channel. Harfleur was besieged in June, and the English garrison was reduced to the greatest distress, when it was relieved from blockade by the capture of the large carracks and other vessels that kept the mouth of the Seine. Meanwhile, Henry had secured the alliance of the duke of Burgundy, who had laid aside his resentment for the death of his brother, the duke of Brabant, at Agincourt. It is unnecessary for us to attempt any minute description of the distractions of France, which presented the chief encouragement to the king of England to persevere in his design to claim the crown. The feuds of the Burgundians and the Armagnacs were as violent as ever, and were accompanied by the most intolerable oppression of the people by the reigning faction under the constable, Armagnac. The insane king passed his life in fatuous indifference to all around him; and the court of the queen exhibited a licentious profusion, the more disgusting from its contrast with the universal wretchedness. It is recorded that Henry, after the day of Agincourt, addressing his prisoner, the duke of Orleans, disclaimed any merit in his great victory, and expressed his belief that he was the instrument of God in punishing the crimes of the French nation—the public disorders, and the private wickedness. This was one of the ordinary delusions of ambition.

There was no improvement in the condition of France when, on the 23d of July, 1417, the king of England again embarked with a mighty army at Southampton. It was more numerous and more powerfully equipped than the force which two years before had landed in Normandy, consisting of forty thousand men, with miners and ordnance. At this crisis, the duke of Burgundy was marching upon Paris, resolved upon the extermination of the faction which held the government. Henry landed at Touques, near Harfleur, and shortly after went on to besiege Caen, which city was taken by assault on the 4th of September. Many other fortresses in Normandy speedily submitted, and Henry went into winter quarters. The French government,

distracted with the movements of the duke of Burgundy, made no effectual resistance to the English. Henry continued to secure one fortress after another, and, holding his court at Caen, confiscated the estates of Norman lords and bestowed them upon his English followers.

The summer of 1418 was a terrible season for France. The duke of Burgundy had retreated from before Paris in the previous year; for his partisans in the city had been expelled, and the count d'Armagnac had the young dauphin, Charles, in his hands, as well as the unhappy king. The queen had been deprived of her power as regent, and had been sent as a prisoner to Tours. Suddenly the duke of Burgundy appeared before Tours, delivered the queen from captivity, and received from her the appointment of governor-general of the kingdom. The rule of the count d'Armagnac had been one of severity and terror, and the Parisians had fallen off from his faction and now anxiously desired his overthrow. At the end of May there was a fearful massacre of the Armagnacs by an infuriated Paris mob, and many of them were held as prisoners. On the 12th of June there was a cry that the terrible duke was at the gates; but the people shouted for Burgundy, and, breaking open the prisons and private houses where the Armagnacs were confined, massacred fifteen hundred victims in one morning. Amongst them was the count d'Armagnac.

On the 14th of July the queen and the duke of Burgundy entered Paris in triumph. The appetite for blood was not yet sated, and for some days the new government made a profession of stopping the murders, but contrived to remove those persons who were most obnoxious to them. The duke of Orleans, whilst these horrible butcheries were perpetrated by a fickle multitude upon the party of which he was the real head, was shut up in the castle of Pontefract. He solaced his long captivity in England by the composition of verses which entitle him to rank amongst the best French poets of his age; and he also wrote *chansons* in English, with elegance and facility. Henry was not disposed to trust to the pacific occupations of his prisoner, as a guarantee that he would not be a troublesome enemy. There is a letter of this period in which the king enjoins his strict keeping, without going to any disport, "for it is better he lack his disport than we be deceived."

#### SIEGE OF ROUEN (1419 A.D.)

While these fearful scenes had been acted in Paris, King Henry sat down with the main body of his army before Rouen. In the previous winter terms of peace had been proposed to him by the French government at Paris, and also on the part of the dauphin, afterwards Charles VII. But these negotiations were unavailing. The siege of Rouen was as prolific in horrors as any other event of that sanguinary period. The rule of Henry in lower Normandy, which he had nearly conquered, was mild and conciliating. He abolished the odious tax on salt, and set a limit to illegal exactions. But the people of Rouen, into which city large numbers of armed men had been thrown under the command of chiefs who had retired before Henry, resolved to resist the progress of the invader. The king had crossed the Seine at Pont de l'Arche; but when he invested the city on the 30th of July, he found a garrison ready to make sorties upon his troops and compel them to fight for every position which they took up. He set about the reduction of the place upon a system far more efficacious than any sudden assault. On the land side he dug deep ditches, and he fortified his lines with towers and artillery. The land approach



[1418-1419 A.D.]

was completely blockaded. The islands of the Seine above Rouen were filled by him with troops. The stream was barricaded with iron chains, and immediately above the town he formed a bridge of boats manned with archers. He soon compelled the surrender of the castle on the hill of St. Catherine. Below Rouen he commanded the navigation of the Seine by his armed vessels, and the mouth of the river was guarded by a powerful fleet.

For twenty weeks the devoted people beheld the gradual approach of famine. The population consisted of a hundred and fifty thousand souls; some chroniclers say three hundred thousand. In that city of ancient narrow streets, where still remain many gloomy houses of the period, whose quaint gables and rude carvings are dear to the artist and the antiquary, was this wretched population, with all the resources of their accustomed industry cut off, shut up to starve. "And ever they of the town hoped to have been rescued, but it would not be: and many hundreds died for hunger, for they had eaten all their cats, horses, hounds, rats, mice, and all that might be eaten; and oftentimes the men-at-arms driving out the poor people at the gates of the city, for spending of victual, anon our men drove them in again; and young children lay dead in the streets, hanging on the dead mothers' paps, that pity was to see." At last the garrison surrendered on the 19th of January, 1419, and the soldiers marched forth without arms, engaging not to serve against the king for one year. One of the noblest cities of France thus came under the English rule, and here Henry built a palace, and held his court as duke of Normandy. The people of Rouen had been promised effectual relief both by the duke of Burgundy and by the dauphin, but no succour came. The French princes were more intent upon circumventing each other than of organising a national resistance; and Henry haughtily proclaimed that he was called to reign over France as a true king, and that it was the blessing of God which had inspired him to come into a distracted kingdom, that its sovereignty might be transferred to capable hands.

There were two authorities in France who refused to unite in repulsing their common enemy. The dauphin held a court and parliament at Poitiers; the duke of Burgundy ruled at Paris. In the mean time Henry continued to advance towards the capital. A truce was at length concluded by him with the duke of Burgundy, and it was agreed that the king of France and the king of England should have a meeting. In July, 1419, the queen, the princess Catherine, and the duke of Burgundy came, without the king, to Meulan on the Seine; and here Henry met them, with great state on either side. The queen expected that the beauty of her daughter would have disarmed the sternness of the English king; but although he professed himself anxious for an alliance with a lady so fair and gracious, he demanded the complete execution of the treaty of Bretigny, the cession of Normandy, and the absolute sovereignty of all the countries surrendered. The negotiations were again broken off. The dauphin and the duke of Burgundy now made some show of reconciliation, and within a week after the conference at Meulan they agreed to terms of union. With the same boldness as he displayed when met by divided counsels, Henry marched on towards Paris, now that he was assured that the two rival powers of France were united. The dauphin and the duke had parted with demonstrations of mutual respect—the dauphin to proceed to Touraine, the duke to join King Charles at Pontoise. On the 23d the king, the queen, and the duke went to Paris, which was completely undefended.

On the 29th news came that the English had taken Pontoise. The court removed from Paris, to which the troops of Henry were rapidly approaching. The dauphin solicited another interview with the duke of Burgundy, on mat-

ters of importance to the welfare of the kingdom. The courtiers of the duke urged him not to go, for the dauphin was surrounded by the servants of the duke of Orleans, who had been assassinated in 1407, and by men whose friends and relations had perished in the massacre of the Armagnacs. But the duke resolved to meet his cousin at the place appointed, the bridge of Montereau. At each end of the bridge there were barriers; but there was no barrier in the centre, as was usual in these interviews of princes, who most hated and suspected each other when professions of friendship were most abundant. The dauphin was in a sort of lodge in the centre of the bridge when the duke advanced. They had each taken oaths pledging the safety of the other. The duke of Burgundy had left his attendants a little behind him, and as he bent his knee to the dauphin he was struck down and quickly murdered, the servants of the duke being immediately surrounded by a large body of armed men. The dauphin gave out that the duke offered insult and violence to him; but there can be no doubt that the treacherous murder was premeditated, and the mode of accomplishment resolved upon. The heir of the crown of France was at this time seventeen years of age.

#### THE PEACE OF TROYES (1420 A.D.)

Philip, the son of the murdered duke of Burgundy, was at Ghent when he received the news of the tragedy at Montereau on the 12th of August. He was married to a daughter of the king of France. "Michelle," he said to his wife, "your brother has murdered my father." No time was wasted in idle complainings. Philip, known in history as the Good, immediately, with the advice of his Flemish subjects, sought an alliance with Henry of England. The people of Paris, adverse as they were to the impending rule of the English, were still more hostile to the Armagnacs, who were desolating the country, with the dauphin at their head. The young duke of Burgundy arranged the terms of a treaty with Henry, which was finally concluded at Troyes, on the 21st of May, 1420. The king of England was to receive the hand of the princess Catherine; to be immediate regent of the kingdom; and to be recognised as successor to the crown on the death of Charles VI.

When the terms of the treaty were announced to the parliament and other authorities of Paris, the highest eulogium was pronounced upon the king of England as a lover of peace and justice, a protector of the poor, a defender of the church. The people were encouraged by these statements to hope for some happy termination of their miseries. The marriage of Henry with the princess of France was celebrated at Troyes on the 2d of June. The next day was one of banqueting. A tournament was proposed as a prolongation of the festivities, but Henry said: "The enemies of the king are in the city of Sens. Let us be ready to-morrow morning to march to its siege, where every knight may show his prowess in doing justice upon the wicked, that the poor people may live." He gave the nobles the most solemn assurances that he would love and honour the king of France, and that the ocean should cease to flow and the sun no more give light before he should forget the duty which a prince owed to his subjects. The bridal month of Henry and his fair queen was passed in besieging Sens, and Montereau, and Villeneuve. When these were taken, Melun was besieged for four months. After its surrender, on the 18th of November, the kings of France and England made a triumphant entry into Paris, and the three estates of the kingdom gave a solemn approval of the Treaty of Troyes.

[1421 A.D.]

At the beginning of 1421 King Henry held a parliament at Rouen. The coinage which was then issued bore the inscription, "*Heres Francie.*" To Rouen came many English nobles and knights and did homage to their king for lands granted to them in France. Immediately after, Henry and his queen went to England, and on the 23d of February Catherine was crowned at Westminster. The feasts and pageants that welcomed Henry and his queen were of unusual magnificence; and the chronicler Hall,<sup>b</sup> in his pompous language, expresses the general sentiment of that period: "No doubt England had great cause to rejoice at the coming of such a noble prince and so mighty a conqueror, which in so small space and so brief time had brought under his obeisance the great and puissant realm and dominion of France." But there are other records which show that England herself was beginning to suffer from the operations of "so mighty a conqueror." The first statute of the parliament which the king convened in 1421, referring to the statute of Edward III that sheriffs and escheators should remain only one year in office, says: "Whereas, at the time of the making of the said statute, divers worthy and sufficient persons were in every county of England, to occupy and govern the same offices well towards the king and all his liege people; forasmuch that as well by divers pestilences within the realm of England, as by the wars without the realm, there is not now such sufficiency, it is ordained that the king, by authority of parliament, may make the sheriffs and escheators through the realm, at his will, until the end of four years." Barrington recites this statute to show that the laurels which Henry acquired were obtained at the dearest price, the depopulation of the country. There were other causes than the waste of war to account for the deficiency of "worthy and sufficient persons in every county of England."

In 1418 Henry was confiscating estates in Normandy and bestowing them on his English followers. In 1421 he was receiving homage from English lords for the lands of France. The same temptations which led the Norman barons under the first William to desert the pleasant valleys of the Seine for the ruder abodes of the Severn and the Trent, now sent back their descendants to Normandy to make new acquisitions in the country from which the English had been dispossessed for two centuries. The evil from which England had been saved by the weakness of John was about to be renewed in the strength of Henry. Fortunate was it that the conqueror did not long remain to perpetuate his conquests, and that in the feebleness of his successor and the distractions of a civil war France was again lost.

The Peace of Troyes was approved by the English parliament, and the commons granted a subsidy of a fifteenth, "to continue the war, that the dauphin and his party, who maintained some cities and provinces against the king, being subdued, France might be entirely annexed to the English crown." But even in this season of popular excitement there was a petition complaining of the intolerable burden of the war. In the previous year a petition had been presented to the duke of Gloucester, in a parliament which he had summoned as guardian of England, that he would move the king and queen to return, as speedily as might please them, in relief and comfort of the commons; and they also requested that their petitions might not be sent to the king beyond sea, but determined in England. They dreaded, says Hallam,<sup>c</sup> "that England might become a province of the French crown, which led them to obtain a renewal of the statute of Edward III, declaring the independence of this kingdom."

The king and his queen did not remain long "in relief and comfort of the commons." They were making a progress through the kingdom, and had



arrived at York when news came which speedily called back Henry to France. He had left his brother, the duke of Clarence, as his lieutenant in Normandy. Anjou, which recognised the authority of the dauphin, was invaded by the duke; and at Baugé, on the 22d of March, he was surprised in his work of wasting the country by a great force of Angevins, aided by several thousand Scottish auxiliaries under the earl of Buchan, the second son of the regent of Scotland. The duke was slain, and the greater number of his vanguard were killed or taken prisoners. The English archers, however, came up, and drove the French and Scots from the field.

Soon, however, Scot was to be opposed to Scot in the great contest for dominion. Murdoch, the regent of Scotland, had lent assistance to the dauphin at a time of peace with England, and many of the Scottish nobles disapproved of the measure. The king of Scotland, James I, had been sixteen years a captive in Windsor castle; and here, like that other illustrious prisoner the duke of Orleans, he found in the cultivation of literature a solace for the absence of liberty. In the garden of the keep of Windsor he first saw Jane Beaufort, walking amongst the hawthorn hedges and the juniper branches, and henceforth the cousin of King Henry was, in his mind, "the fairest and the freshest young flower." So the captive has recorded of his love in his charming poem of *The King's Quair*. Jane Beaufort's widowed mother had married the duke of Clarence, and this circumstance might have been some inducement to the captive king to accept the offer of Henry to accompany him to France, to redeem the great disaster of Baugé. Archibald, earl of Douglas, and other Scottish knights, joined Henry and their young king, and set sail from Dover, with four thousand men-at-arms and twenty-four thousand archers. Queen Catherine was left at Windsor. Henry and his army landed at Calais on the 12th of June.

After several minor successes, King Henry, at the earnest entreaty of the people of Paris, undertook the siege of the city of Meaux, about thirty miles from the capital. The commander of the place, known as the bastard De Vaurus, was a devoted adherent of the count d'Armagnac, who had been butchered by the Parisians; and, in revenge of his death, he massacred every Burgundian that he could encounter in the predatory excursions which he made to the very walls of Paris. He was a public enemy, carrying on a partisan warfare with a ferocity of which even those times of bloodshed furnished few examples. Henry undertook to subdue this brigand. But Meaux was a place of remarkable strength, and it was seven months before it was wholly taken. In this siege Henry lost several of his best captains, amongst whom were the earl of Worcester and Lord Clifford, and his men were swept away by an epidemic sickness. At last the garrison was starved out, and the commander was decapitated. By the surrender of Meaux the English became masters of the greater part of France to the north of the Loire. The queen of Henry had borne him a son, and she came back to France, with her infant, to join her husband in Paris. There was a short season of festivity at the Whitsuntide of 1422, and then the king set out to raise the siege of Caen.

#### DEATH AND CHARACTER OF HENRY V

He had for some time been labouring under a disease which he bore up against with the same iron will that made him face every danger and difficulty of warfare. At Corbeil he became too ill to proceed; and his brother, the duke of Bedford, took the command of the army, in concert with the duke

[1422 A.D.]

of Burgundy. Henry was carried back on a litter to the Bois de Vincennes. It soon became evident that his malady, whatever it might be, was beyond the medical skill of those days to arrest or cure. The English who surrounded the bed of the dying man saw the same composure which he had always shown on the battle-field. He commended his child to the care of his brother, the duke of Bedford, desiring the earl of Warwick to be his tutor. His brother of Gloucester he wished to be guardian of England. He advised that the regency of France should be offered to the duke of Burgundy, but in the event of his refusal, to the duke of Bedford. Above all, he urged that no peace should be concluded with the dauphin, unless Normandy were ceded in absolute sovereignty to the English crown.

Having delivered his last wishes, he asked the physicians how long he might expect to live. They said the Almighty had power to restore him to health. He repeated the question, requiring a direct answer. The answer was, "Not more than two hours." The ministers of religion then came to his bed and recited the penitential psalms. At the words, "Thou shalt build up the walls of Jerusalem," he said, "If I had finished the war in France, and established peace, I would have gone to Palestine, to redeem the holy city from the Saracens." The last dream of glory was sanctified by the aspirations of religion.

Henry V died on the 31st of August, 1422, in the tenth year of his reign, the thirty-fourth of his age. The devoted attachment to him of the English in France was expressed in funeral solemnities more than usually significant of real sorrow. Upon a car was shown a waxen figure of the king; and in a slow journey of many days a procession of heralds and priests, and knights and esquires in black armour, with all the dead king's household, traversed the country which had witnessed his painful marches—from Paris to Rouen, from Rouen to Abbeville, from Abbeville to Calais. Out of every town came the clergy and joined the cavalcade, and at night the body was placed in the principal church. The French people looked on with wonder, and even with pity, for the untimely fate of the great king; for they had seen the perfect discipline which he had preserved in his army, and how sternly he had repressed and punished the violence and exactions of their own lords. A fleet waited to convey the body and the English mourners to Dover. Slowly London was reached; and the funeral obsequies having been performed at St. Paul's in the presence of the lords and commons of the parliament, all that remained of the warrior and statesman was finally deposited in Westminster Abbey.

It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to form a just estimate of the character of Henry V, in regarding it from the modern point of view. To place before our eyes the social good that might have been accomplished by a prince of such eminent talents, of such strong will, of such firm self-reliance, of such fortitude under the most appalling difficulties, of such equanimity at the height of success, of such zealous though erring sense of religious obligation; to view him in a possible career of honest energy without the lust of conquest, and to blame him for not preferring a real usefulness to a blind ambition—this is to set aside the circumstances which gave a direction to the actions by which we must judge of his character. We can imagine a prince so endowed, despising the superstition of his times, determine to make a corrupted church tolerant, and to bestow liberty of conscience upon all his subjects. Such a conquest of bigotry would have been a wilder and a more dangerous undertaking than the conquest of France. We can imagine him looking beyond all the prejudices of his age, and discovering that a free commercial intercourse between nations is the true foundation of prosperous industry.

Such a theory has not been possible to be realised in England till the very times in which we live, and is even now rejected as impossible by nations far more advanced in understanding what belongs to real civilisation than the England of the fifteenth century. We can imagine him destroying the jealous factions which disturbed his father's doubtful authority, by calling forth the love of the great body of the people, and urging forward the rights of the burghess and the labourer to control the oppressions that still clung to the decaying system of feudality. It was long before the monarchical could extinguish the aristocratic tyranny; and then the rule of the one was, in many respects, a despotism more injurious than the grasping and turbulent power of the many. England had to pass through various stages of misrule before the universal good could be received as the great end of all government. Before Henry V there was opened the magnificent prospect of recovering the hereditary dominions of the Norman kings, which had slipped away from the feeble successors of the greatest of that valiant race; which had been partially won back by the third Edward; and which had again been surrendered to the growing power of France. His negotiations show that his real policy was to recover what had been lost after the Treaty of Bretigny; and that his demand of the French crown would have been soon abandoned had not the distractions of France offered an irresistible temptation to his enthusiastic ambition. For he was an enthusiast. He had an undoubting confidence in the justice of his claim; he had no apprehensions of its impolicy. His bravery, fortitude, and perseverance won the admiration of the English people, as such qualities will always command the applause of a military nation. In England every man was trained to arms, and the brilliant achievements of the great soldier were far more valued than the substantial merits of the just lawgiver. But the career of Henry V was not without its national benefit. From his time there was no false estimate in Europe of the prowess of the English; from his time there was no dream that the proud island might be subjugated. Even in the civil wars of the half century which succeeded Henry, England was unmolested from without. No king of France ever thought to avenge Agincourt by wearing the crown of England in right of conquest.<sup>c</sup>







## CHAPTER XV

### THE REIGN OF HENRY VI

[1422-1461 A.D.]

HENRY VI can hardly be said ever to have reigned; for his long minority passed into another kind of tutelage, during which the influence of his wife and favourites prepared the way for civil war. Ten years of anarchy culminated in his dethronement, and ten years more of wandering and imprisonment fill the interval between that and his death. The first interest of the first thirty years of his life lies in watching the decay of English power in France; that of the last twenty is to be found in the civil wars that resulted from the misgovernment of the preceding period.—  
PROTHERO.<sup>g</sup>

#### THE PROTECTORATE

THE French throne was preserved from ruin by the premature death of Henry V. The task of maintaining the ascendancy which he had gained devolved on an infant successor and a divided ministry; while the dauphin, in the vigour of youth and seconded by the wishes of the people, called the different factions under his banner, and directed their combined efforts against the invaders of their country. We shall see that prince recover in the course of a few years the crown of his ancestors, expel the English from their conquests, and seal a long series of successes with the subjugation of Gascony, the last fragment of the ancient patrimony belonging to the English monarchs in France.

The new king, the son of Henry and Catherine, was hardly nine months old. On the first advice of his father's decease, several spiritual and temporal peers, chiefly members of the old council, assembled at Westminster,

issued commissions in the name of Henry VI to the judges, sheriffs, and other officers, to continue in the exercise of their respective duties, and summoned a parliament to meet in the beginning of November. On the previous day a commission to open, conduct, and dissolve the parliament in the king's name, with the consent of the council, was offered by a meeting of peers to the duke of Gloucester. He objected to the words, "with the consent of the council," that they were prejudicial to his right, that they made him the servant of the council, and that they had never been introduced into similar commissions under his late brother. It was replied that the present king was an infant, and therefore without these words, or others equivalent, no man could act legally and safely. Each lord in his turn gave his opinion, and the duke was fain to submit.

The parliament was opened by him in the usual form. The first care of that assembly was to ratify all the acts of the authority by which it had been convened, as sufficiently justified by the necessity of the case; its second, to supply the defect in the exercise of the royal authority arising from the infancy of the king. The two preceding centuries furnished three instances of minorities—at the accession of Henry III, Edward III, and Richard II. But on none of these occasions had the powers of the executive government been intrusted to a guardian or regent, if we except the first two years of Henry III, when the appointment of such an officer was deemed requisite to oppose the pretensions of a foreign competitor at the head of a powerful army and in possession of the capital.

The duke of Gloucester, however, notwithstanding the decision of the preceding day, preferred a claim to the regency on two grounds: because in the absence of the duke of Bedford he was the nearest of kin to his nephew, and because the late king, when he lay on his death-bed, had appointed him to that charge. The lords (for such matters did not appertain to the cognisance of the commons) having searched the rolls, and consulted the judges, replied that his demand was not founded either on law or precedent, but was contrary to the constitution of the realm and the rights of the three estates; and that the appointment of the late king was of no force, because he could not alter the law of the land without the three estates, nor delegate the authority, which expired with his life, to be exercised by another after his death. To satisfy him, however, as far as was in their power, they would appoint him president of the council, in the absence of his brother the duke of Bedford, not with the title of regent, lieutenant, governor, or tutor (words which might be construed to import a delegation of the sovereign authority), but with that of "protector of the realm and church of England"—an appellation which could serve only to remind him of his duty.<sup>1</sup> Acting on these principles they named the chancellor, treasurer, and keeper of the privy seal, and sixteen members of the council, with the duke of Bedford, and in his absence the duke of Gloucester, for president; and by a deputation notified these nominations to the commons, who gave their assent. Regulations were then enacted for the direction of the council, the duties on wool with the tonnage and poundage were continued for two years, and the parliament was dissolved. England presented no cause of uneasiness, but every eye was most anxiously turned towards France.<sup>e</sup>

[<sup>1</sup> Hallam<sup>d</sup> emphasises the importance of this action, as showing the strict adherence to the constitutional principle that a king could not appoint a regent during the minority of his successor, and that only by parliamentary consent could anyone during a king's infancy exercise the royal prerogative. Parliament's control of a regent is an instance of its increasing strength.]

[1422-1423 A.D.]

## CONTINUATION OF THE WAR

In less than two months after the death of Henry V, Charles VI, king of France, also died. At the funeral solemnities at St. Denis the herald cried aloud, "Long life to Henry, king of France and England, our sovereign lord." France had been for forty-two years under the nominal rule of an incapable king, subject to accesses of insanity which delivered him, powerless, to one or other of the factions that distracted his kingdom. There were now two kings in France—an infant in Paris, with a regent who governed north of the Loire; and the dauphin, alike the object of party hatred and party adulation, who was crowned at Poitiers as Charles VII, and who ruled or influenced most of the provinces south of the Loire. Brittany at first remained neutral in this great quarrel. Burgundy was with the English. When, therefore, some are accustomed to say that Henry V conquered France, they speak with a very loose estimate of the territory that remained unconquered. As we have already said, in thirty years from the death of Henry V all that had been surrendered to his arms or his policy was utterly lost.

To follow through the various fortunes of this war in France would, with some striking exceptions, be only to repeat the monotonous details of sieges and battle-fields—wearisome even when told with a due comprehension of their peculiar aspects. The more important of the early contests between the regent Bedford and Charles VII were the battle of Crevant, in 1423, where the earl of Salisbury signally defeated the earl of Buchan, commanding an allied army of French and Scots; and the battle of Verneuil, where Bedford utterly routed the French army in an engagement which was recorded in the rolls of parliament as "the greatest deed done by Englishmen in our days, save the battle of Agincourt." The duke of Bedford had military talents; and his policy sought to strengthen his faction by powerful alliances. He married the sister of the duke of Burgundy, and he negotiated a marriage between another sister of that duke and the duke of Brittany. But these friendships were soon endangered by the rash passions of the duke of Gloucester, the protector and defender of England. The alliance with Burgundy had given stability to the power of Henry V. The personal ambition of his brother Gloucester weakened this support of the English rule. Jacqueline of Hainault was the sovereign lady of Holland, Zealand, Friesland, and Hainault. She was first married to the eldest son of Charles VI of France, who died whilst dauphin, and she was then wedded to the duke of Brabant, kinsman to the duke of Burgundy. Eloping from her husband, she went to England, and obtaining a divorce from the anti-pope, Benedict XIII, married the duke of Gloucester, who claimed her large territorial possessions, and landed five thousand men at Calais to support his claim. Hainault became the seat of a new war. The dukes of Burgundy and Bedford endeavoured to reconcile the disputants; but Gloucester was obstinate, and bitterly quarrelled with Burgundy. It was agreed that a single combat should decide this new hostility; but Bedford at Paris and the parliament in England saw to what national evils this rupture might lead. Gloucester, in spite of their joint remonstrances, led an army into Holland, and the English in France began to take the side of their rash countryman.

The question was finally settled by the pope declaring the marriage of Gloucester void; and he eventually consoled himself by marrying Eleanor Cobham, a lady of humble rank and spotted reputation. From that time the duke of Burgundy cooled towards the English alliance. Gloucester,



when he returned to England, engaged in a fierce quarrel with his uncle, Henry Beaufort, bishop of Winchester, and chancellor, who was one of the illegitimate brothers of Henry IV.<sup>1</sup> The people of London, in 1422, had seen their king, then two years old, "borne towards his mother's chare, and he shrieked, and cried, and sprang, and would not be carried." In 1424 they had seen him placed before the high altar of St. Paul's, and then seated upon a horse and paraded through the city. In 1425, with a view probably to diminish the influence of the protector by exhibiting the child Henry as a shadow of royalty, he was brought into the house of lords and seated on the throne on his mother's knee. "It was a strange sight," says Speed, the chronicler, "and the first time it was ever seen in England, an infant sitting in his mother's lap, and before it could tell what English meant to exercise the place of sovereign direction in open parliament." The people knew that the power was necessarily in other hands than those of this poor child and his mother, and they saw the natural guardians of the baby king quarrelling for supremacy. On an October night of 1426 Gloucester sent for the mayor of London, and directed him to have the city strictly watched. The next morning Beaufort came from his palace in Southwark, with archers and men-at-arms, and assaulted by shot and missiles the gate of London bridge, which was closed against him. The citizens were supporters of Gloucester; and, says an *English Chronicle*, "all the city of London was moved against the bishop, and would have destroyed him in his inn at Southwark, but the gates of London bridge were so surely kept that no man might pass out, and the Thames was also kept that no man might pass over."

In the dread of civil war the duke of Bedford came over to England, and a parliament was held at Leicester, where the members were ordered to appear without arms. Gloucester exhibited articles of accusation against the bishop, the principal of which were that he wanted to seize the young king's person, and that he sought to kill the protector and to excite a rebellion. A reconciliation was enforced by appointed arbitrators, who decided that Gloucester should be "good lord to the bishop, and have him in affection and love"; and that the bishop should bear to the protector "true and sad love and affection, and be ready to do him such service as pertaineth of honesty to my lord of Winchester, and to his estate, to do." The bishop was humiliated. He resigned the chancellorship and went abroad. But the pope bestowed upon him the red hat; and Cardinal Beaufort henceforth figures in English history—believed by some to have been a conscientious upholder of the church and an encourager of learning, and by others held as an unscrupulous and grasping politician, who "dies and makes no sign" of repentance for his avarice and cruelty.

<sup>1</sup> Beaufort was the second of the sons of John of Gaunt by his third wife Catherine Ruet, Roet, or Rowet, widow of Sir Otes Swynford, generally supposed to have been the sister of Philippa Rowet, who is said to have been the wife of the poet Chaucer. Catherine Rowet [or Swynford as she is more commonly called], who was the daughter of Sir Paine Rowet, a knight of Hainault, had long been the duke's mistress, having been originally brought over to wait upon his first wife Blanche of Lancaster. The children of John of Gaunt and Catherine—three sons and a daughter—were all born before their marriage, which took place in 1397, but were legitimated that year by a patent which is entered on the rolls of parliament. They took the name of Beaufort from the castle of Beaufort in France where they were born, a property that came into the possession of their father by his first wife. The patent of legitimation entitled them and their descendants to hold all honours and estates, such as duchies, principalities, earldoms, etc.; and in some copies of it there is an express reservation of the right of inheriting the crown. Henry VII descended from the eldest of these Beauforts, John, created (1397) earl of Somerset.

[1428-1429 A.D.]

## RICHARD BEAUCHAMP, EARL OF WARWICK

In accordance with the will of his dying father, the boy Henry, when six years old, was placed under the tutelage of the earl of Warwick. This companion-in-arms of Henry V was fitted to train his son in all knightly qualities, and thus to form a character the very opposite to that of Henry VI. Warwick had fought under Henry IV at Shrewsbury. He had been on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. He had travelled in Prussia, Poland, and Russia. He had challenged any three knights of France to joust with him at Guines, and on three successive days he was the victor in each encounter. His appointment as tutor to the king was made under the authority of the council; and he was to instruct his pupil in all things worthy to be known, nurturing him in the love and fear of his Creator and in hatred of all vice. Warwick held this office till the king was sixteen.

The system of education pursued by this chivalrous warrior might not have been the best fitted for a sensitive boy; for the tutor applied to the council for powers, which were granted, to hold the pupil under the strictest discipline, even after he had been crowned king in 1429. He was not to be spoken to, unless in the presence of Warwick and of the four knights appointed to be about his person, "as the king, by the speech of others private, has been stirred by some from his learning, and spoken to of divers matters not becomful." The council promised that they would firmly assist the earl in chastising the king for his defaults; and, "that for awe thereof he forbear the more to do amiss, and intend the more busily to virtue and to learning," they should come to the king and declare their assent to his chastisement. According to this curious entry in the rolls of parliament, Warwick applied for these articles as his protection against the young Henry's displeasure and indignation, "as the king is grown in years, in stature of his person, and in conceit and knowledge of his high authority." Severe corporal punishment was the accustomed instrument of good education in the fifteenth century. The scourge was recommended even by gentle mothers to be administered to their sons. One writes to beg that her son's tutor may be implored "that he will truly belash him till he will amend"; adding, "I had rather he were fairly buried than lost for default."

No doubt it was in this spirit of love that Warwick chastised the young king. At this age Henry appears not to have wanted the just sense of his own position which failed him in after life. It is difficult now distinctly to understand what were the deficiencies of his intellect. He probably inherited some portion of the malady of his maternal grandfather; but infirmity of purpose and fear of responsibility seem to have marked his character rather than that unsoundness of mind which exhibits itself in habitual delusions and fitful aberrations. His life was one long state of pupilage. All the wonderful energy of his race appears in him to have been extinguished in a calm indifference to good or evil fortune, and in patient submission to stronger wills than his own—to his uncles, to his preceptor, to his wife, to his wife's favourites. How much of the fire of the Plantagenets might have been trodden out of Henry VI by the severities of his early discipline cannot now be estimated. He was born to a most unhappy position; and it is satisfactory to believe that his hard lot was solaced by that religious trust which lightens the burdens of the wretched, whether on a throne or in a dungeon. The earl of Warwick, who, like many other leaders of chivalry, was an enthusiastic believer in the efficacy of vows and pilgrimages, may have inspired his pupil with that strong

feeling of ceremonial devotion which caused him long to be regarded as a saint. To a right direction of that piety we owe the noble foundations of Eton and King's College, Cambridge—worthy monuments which still call upon us to respect the memory of the most meek and most unfortunate of kings.

#### THE SIEGE OF ORLEANS (1429 A.D.)

The war in France had been conducted without any decided success on either side, after the victory at Verneuil in 1424, till 1427, when the forces of the duke of Bedford sustained a severe defeat and were compelled to raise the siege of Montargis. But the cause of Charles VII was little advanced by this partial good fortune. His adherents were quarrelling amongst themselves. Many of the nobles who had supported him now deserted a prince whose treasurer declared he had only four crowns in his coffer. Nearly all the fortresses on the right bank of the Loire had been surrendered without defence. The people were enduring famine and disease. Charles, whose character was a little improved by adversity, did not lose hope amidst the evils which surrounded him. He was of an easy nature, and in proportion as his great lords were faithless he addressed himself to the affection of the common people. Gradually a personal as well as a national feeling revived the patriotism which had been almost extinguished. Charles placed his chief reliance upon the possession of Orleans. If that city fell, the provinces beyond the Loire would be open to the English, and he would have to find a shelter in the mountains of Auvergne or the more remote Dauphiné.

The English, it was known, were approaching to besiege Orleans. The inhabitants prepared for its defence with unwonted zeal. They received aids of money from other cities, and a tax was voted for the same aid by the three estates assembled at Chinon. The citizens adopted the most effectual means to resist the besiegers. They destroyed their suburbs, with their vines and gardens and houses, that their enemy might have no lodgment; and they erected strong forts, particularly that of the Tournelles, which, defending the bridge, secured the communication of the city with the left bank of the Loire.

On the 12th of September, 1428, the earl of Salisbury pitched his camp to the south of Orleans, and within a week commenced an attack upon the bulwark of the Tournelles. The assault was resisted with more than usual popular enthusiasm. The experienced warriors discharged their arrows and missiles, and the citizens, male and female, showered down stones upon the assailants. But the fort of the Tournelles was finally taken. The inhabitants then raised another bulwark on an isle of the river and cannonaded the English camp. Dunois and La Hire, the bravest of the French chivalry, arrived with reinforcements. The English lost their best commander, Salisbury. He had mounted the ruined tower of the Tournelles to survey the city, when a stone ball struck him, and carried away his eye and a part of his face. He survived eight days. The duke of Suffolk now succeeded to the command, and the siege was pursued with a perseverance as remarkable as the defence. The great extent of Orleans prevented its complete blockade, and supplies were from time to time thrown in for the relief of the besieged. Reinforcements, too, continued to arrive. To meet the necessities of the besieging army, the duke of Bedford had despatched an immense convoy with provisions from Paris. It was determined to cut off this supply. The convoy, under the command of Sir John Fastolf, was attacked by a detachment from the garrison of Orleans, and by a body of French and Scots commanded by the count de Cler-



[1429 A.D.]

mont. Their force of eight thousand men was defeated by fifteen hundred English. This was called the battle of the Herrings, vast quantities of this lenten food forming part of the supplies. It was fought on the 12th of February, 1429. The line of English forts round the city was gradually extending. The lines now more effectually prevented the arrival of food or men. Famine was beginning to threaten more misery than the sword. The resolution which still remained to the unhappy people was that of despair. The fame of their gallant resistance had gone through France; and it was felt, even in districts far removed from the scene of warfare, that the time was approaching when it should be decided whether France should be governed by the English Plantagenets or by its own race of Valois.

The feudal lord of Orleans was in captivity in England, and it was proposed by the people, seeing resistance was unavailing, that their city should be placed in the keeping of the duke of Burgundy till the great contest for the crown of France was decided. Philip of Burgundy was pleased at the proposal, which was communicated to him by ambassadors from Orleans. The duke of Bedford gave no encouragement to the plan, when it was debated between these allied chiefs at Paris. An adviser of Bedford says, "We are not here to champ the morsels for Burgundy to swallow." Bedford rejoins, "No, no, we will not beat the bushes for another to take the birds." Bedford and Burgundy quarrelled about the expected prey, and Burgundy withdrew his troops, and left the English to continue the siege alone.

The fall of the city was rapidly approaching, when some wonder, not unmixed with contempt, was felt by the leaders of the besieging army, upon receiving a letter dictated in far different terms than those which usually proclaimed the challenges of chivalry: "King of England, and you, duke of Bedford, who call yourself regent of the kingdom of France; you, William de la Pole, count of Suffolk; you, John Lord Talbot, and you, Thomas Lord Scales, who call yourselves lieutenants of the said duke of Bedford, do ye right to the King of heaven; render to La Pucelle, who is sent hither by God, the King of heaven, the keys of the good cities you have taken and plundered in France. And you archers, companions in war, gentlemen and others, who are before the city of Orleans, go your ways into your own country, in the name of God. I am sent by the King of heaven to drive you out of all France." The English captains heard the common rumour that from the borders of Champagne a young woman had travelled to the court of Charles, at Chinon, asserting a divine mission, and that her pretensions had been examined before a solemn council of jurists and theologians at Poitiers. The dauphin must indeed be fallen low to depend upon such aid.



PART OF PENNILESS PORCH  
(GATEHOUSE)

(With arms of Bishop Beekington, 1443,  
from Cathedral Close, Wells)

In the hamlet of Domrémy, near Vaucouleurs, a pastoral country watered by the Maas, dwelt a petty cultivator named Jacques Dare, with his wife Isabella. They had a daughter, Joan, who was remarkable for her early piety. Joan saw the men of her own village violently disputing as to the merits of the Burgundians and Armagnacs, but mostly agreed in hatred of the English. She had herself looked upon the extreme misery of the people, and she attributed it, not without justice, to the invasion which had given the crown to an English king at Paris, whilst the true heir was in danger and difficulty. Her enthusiastic nature was stimulated by these united impulses of religion and patriotism, and in her solitary meditations she began to see visions and to hear voices. The first voice which she heard only exhorted her to be pious and discreet; but then came a figure with wings, and commanded her to go to the succour of the king, for that she should recover his kingdom. There was an ancient prophecy, known to the country people, that France should be lost by a woman and saved by a woman. The queen Isabella, who had brought in the English, was the one. The people now added to the prophecy that a virgin from the marches of Lorraine should be the other. Before 1429 Joan was entirely persuaded that she had a power given her to restore the kingdom to Charles VII. The voices which Joan heard disclosed to her the practical mode of carrying out her strong idea.

She forwarded a letter, which she dictated, to Charles, and at length received permission to proceed to Chinon, where she arrived after eleven days' travel. In the conviction of her sanctity, learned doctors, prudent counselors, and bold warriors agreed that the Maid should be confided in. A suit of armour was prepared for her, and at the head of a large force she set out for Orleans, having authority for its command over the best knights of France. At Blois she put on her armour. Marching on the right bank of the Loire, she desired to enter Orleans through the English lines on that side. She was overruled by Dunois, of which she bitterly complained. It was at length decided that boats loaded with supplies should proceed up the river. The day was stormy, and the vessels could make no way. "The wind will change," said the confident girl. It did change, and the supplies and the troops were landed safely about six miles below the city. Meanwhile, the garrison of Orleans made a sortie on the north, which diverted the attention of the besiegers. An hour after sunset Joan rode into Orleans at the eastern gate.

It was the 29th of April when this extraordinary aid, which was firmly believed to be supernatural, arrived to the beleaguered city. In the camp of the English the men would whisper their fears of impending misfortune; for it could not be concealed that a woman, said to be gifted with the spirit of prophecy, was coming to Orleans at the head of a great reinforcement. The shouts that came forth from the populous city on that April night would tell that she was come. The next day a herald from the Maid presented himself at the English camp. The respect paid to the messenger of princes was denied to the messenger of a reputed sorceress, and he was met by a threat to burn him as a heretic. Another herald came to defy Talbot, and to declare, from the commander of the French, that if the messenger of the Maid received any harm it should be visited upon the English prisoners.

These proceedings began to spread alarm amongst the brave yeomen of England, who had fronted so many dangers in the field, but who had a terror of witches and magicians, which was a characteristic of this period. The soldiers of Suffolk and Talbot looked on in terror and amazement, when, on a tower facing the Tournelles, a form appeared in shining armour and bade them depart if they would avoid misery and shame. William Glasdale, the

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commander of the Tournelles, reviled the maiden, and told her to go back to her cows. "Your men will be driven to retreat," she exclaimed, "but you will not live to fly with them." The French waited for succours from other garrisons before they attempted any great operations against the besiegers. Joan was invariably for instant attack, without heeding disparity of numbers or disadvantages of position. Some of the knights were indignant at her assumed authority, but by her resistless force of will she conquered all opposition.

The succours at length were at hand. There was no attempt to bring them into the city under cover of darkness, or while the English were engaged in another quarter. At the head of the French knights and soldiers, followed by the people of the town, Joan rode forth with her banner, between the towers of the besiegers. They looked on with wonder, but there was no resistance. When she returned at night, she threw herself exhausted on a bed. Awakened by a noise, she cried out, "My arms! my horse!" She rushed into the street, mounted with her banner, and rode alone to the spot where she heard the clamour. A rash sortie had been made, and the assailants were driven back. When they saw the white horse and the banner of the Maid, they shouted for joy, and followed her out of the gate into the besiegers' lines. After an engagement of three hours, the English fort was taken and set on fire. It was Joan's first battle. She had fought with the courage and address of the most accomplished knight.

The terror of the English after this sortie from the Burgundy gate became more universal. The next day the Maid and the chiefs crossed the Loire in a boat, and led an attack upon a fortification on the left bank. She was slightly wounded, and passed the night in the field. The great force of the besiegers was on the right bank of the river; and the sire de Gaucourt, the governor of Orleans, was opposed to this leading forth of the garrison, to leave the city defenceless, while the English were attacked on the left bank. But the daring and confident girl had completely won the real leadership of the soldiers and the citizens. She had returned to Orleans, and had told the chiefs that she had much to do on the morrow. Without any concert with the French leaders, she rose early in the morning and went forth with a tumultuous crowd to the Burgundy gate. It was shut against her egress. The governor was compelled to open it, and she rode out, followed by soldiers and a great multitude. Their counsel being thus rejected, the French knights, with their men-at-arms, reluctantly followed. But their prudence was soon laid aside in the din of battle. The river had been crossed by Joan, and she had commenced an assault on the Tournelles, the great fort held to be impregnable. The artillery from its walls thinned the ranks of the assailants, but the wonderful Maid was always ready with her rallying cry. She was the first to mount the rampart by a ladder. An arrow struck her, and she fell into the ditch. She was carried off, and after a few natural tears drew the shaft out of her shoulder and knelt in prayer. The attack had lasted four hours, and nothing had been gained. The retreat was sounded. Joan implored Dunois not to move. "Let our people rest, and eat and drink." Her standard-bearer had remained near the spot whence the Maid was borne away. The lord of Daubon, who was against a retreat, took the standard, and with another descended into the ditch, and, waving the well-known sign of victory, the French rallied round him.

Seeing what was taking place, Joan went forward to claim her standard. The English, who had seen her borne off wounded, felt a new alarm. The French advanced again to the attack of the fort, under their marvellous leader.



From the other bank the people of Orleans were storming the Tournelles, having crossed the broken arches of the bridge by beams placed on the buttresses. The English were now between two assaults. The soldiers were filled with a superstitious awe. The maiden was on the battlement of the second tower of the works, the first having been taken. The soldiers, with Glasdale, their commander, thus surrounded, were retreating into the main defence upon a wooden bridge, when a cannon-ball struck it, and the commander and his men fell into the stream and were drowned. The prophetic words of the Maid, when Glasdale reviled her, were accomplished. There was now no chance of resistance to the impassioned assaults of the French. The English threw down their arms, and were slaughtered, drowned, or taken prisoners, to the number of seven thousand. No aid came from the panic-stricken camp; and the Maid passed over the repaired bridge into the city amidst the shouts of the multitude, whilst every steeple sent forth its peals of gratulating bells, and at every church *Te Deum* was sung on that night of victory. The next morning, at break of day, the English marched out from their forts and formed in order of battle to the north and west of the city. They stood in an attitude of defiance before the walls. Joan had hastily risen, and was soon at the northern gate. "Attack them not," she said. "If they attack you, defend yourselves." It was Sunday, the 8th of May. An altar was brought to the gate, and the priests chanted a solemn service. The English standards were displayed; the trumpets sounded; but they turned their faces from Orleans. The siege was at an end.

It is not necessary to assign any miraculous powers to Joan of Arc in accounting for her wonderful success. She honestly believed herself inspired by heaven, and she infused into others that belief. An enthusiast herself, she filled a dispirited soldiery and a despairing people with enthusiasm. The great secret of her success was the boldness of her attacks, when military science reposed upon its cautious strategy. In the eyes of the experienced tacticians she risked the safety of the city when she led her excited multitudes to the assault of the Tournelles. In her own self-reliance she would hear of no other counsels but the most daring, and to that contempt of danger she owed her triumphs. In every desperate struggle between individuals and nations boldness is generally the most certain winner. Boldness was the principle which the peasant girl of Domremy maintained to the end of her wonderful career. In eleven days she had stricken terror into an army which had been the terror of France for eleven years. The government of Charles VII would have rested inactive under the triumph of Orleans. She unceasingly urged the dauphin's progress to Rheims, for she held him not as a king till he was crowned in that city, where all the kings of France for three centuries had been consecrated. The way thither was filled with their enemies. They held the keys of the cities between the Loire and the Seine. But the bold counsels at last prevailed, and Joan's standard was again floating at the head of a French army.

On the 11th of June the duke of Alençon and the chiefs who had defended Orleans arrived before Jargeau, which Suffolk occupied. The English earl had come out with his garrison to offer battle. The French had arrived in haste, and they were driven back. But at the command of the Maid they returned to the attack, and Suffolk retired within his walls. The bombardment of the town continued for three days, when, a breach having been made, Joan led the assault. Jargeau fell, and Suffolk was a prisoner. On the 18th of June was fought the battle of Patay. The English fled from the terrible banner that had been first seen at Orleans, and the lords Talbot and Scales were

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made prisoners. The hasty retreat of Fastolf brought upon him the undeserved imputation of cowardice, and when he came to the duke of Bedford, at Corbeil, he was deprived of the riband of the garter. The triumph of the victory of the Herrings did not save the good knight from the disgrace of the flight of Patay.

But Bedford himself, though a man of great ability, believed, or affected to believe, in a miraculous cause for these reverses of the English. A letter was sent by him, at this period, to the council at London, in which, according to rule, he addresses the young king: "All things here prospered for you till the time of the siege of Orleans, undertaken of whose advice God only knows. Since the death of my cousin of Salisbury, whom God absolve, who fell by the hand of God, as it seemeth, your people, who were assembled in great number at this siege, have received a terrible check. This has been caused in part, as we trow, by the confidence our enemies have in a disciple and limb of the devil, called La Pucelle [the Maid], that used false enchantments and sorcery. The which stroke and discomfiture has not only lessened the number of your people here, but also sunk the courage of the remainder in a wonderful manner, and encouraged your enemies to assemble themselves forthwith in great numbers."

## THE CORONATION AT RHEIMS, AND BURNING OF JOAN

It was a false policy of the English chiefs to deery Joan as a sorceress. It was the ready mode to spread the greatest terror of her exploits amongst their own adherents. The French, with equal confidence, proclaimed her as the favoured of heaven, who exhibited as much courage as piety. At this juncture the duke of Bedford secured the doubtful co-operation of the duke of Burgundy; and the cardinal Beaufort, who had raised an army in England for a crusade against the heretics of Bohemia, turned over his troops to the regent of France, to war against the Armagnacs, and to make new efforts against the enchantments which had given them power to resist the long triumphant bravery of the English. They took the field with new hopes. Onward went the Maid upon her resolved design that Charles VII should be crowned at Rheims. On the 28th of June, twelve thousand Frenchmen marched out of Gien, to traverse a country whose towns and fortresses were held by English and Burgundians. They reached Troyes, and encamped before the town.

Six days of inactivity were passed, and the French army wanted food; they were without artillery; and it was proposed to retreat to the Loire. Joan was sent for by the king and his council. "Shall I be believed?" she asked. "Whatever you say," replied the king, "we will attend to." "Then, noble dauphin, assault the town, and you shall enter there to-morrow." On the morrow the famous standard was displayed, and the terrified garrison of Troyes surrendered the place. They went on, and took Châlons without resistance. As they approached Rheims the peasants of her native district came out to look upon the wonderful girl, whom they knew as the shepherdess by wise men accounted mad. After some debate within the town, and great apprehensions of failure in the French camp, Joan urged the king on, and the gates of Rheims were opened. On the 17th of July Charles was crowned in its ancient church. There were few nobles present. The Maiden stood with her standard before the altar. The expense of the coronation amounted only to twenty-four Parisian livres. Never was king so inaugurated. All the accustomed pomp was absent; but when the enthusiastic girl kissed the feet of her monarch, her tears were a holier consecration than the mystic oil with which, as the legends

told, Clovis had been there baptised. Charles then went on towards Paris, receiving the submission of many towns on his march.

Joan thought her mission accomplished, and earnestly desired to return to her father and mother, to keep their herds and flocks. Her counsels now became vacillating. Sometimes Charles retreated and sometimes marched forward. Bedford was moving rapidly to bring the French to an engagement. The two armies suddenly met at Senlis, and for three days a battle was vainly expected. Each army then took its own way—Bedford for Normandy, which had been entered by a hostile force under the constable De Richemont; Charles marched on to Paris. On the 12th of September an assault was made at the faubourg St. Honoré. The intrepid Joan, though she had lost confidence in her miraculous voices, displayed her wonted courage. She scaled the walls, but was wounded, and fell into the fosse. Crawling out from the heaps of dead and dying, she again waved her standard. The old confidence in her powers had deserted the French; and when the attack was repulsed, they reproached her that she had said they should sleep that night in Paris. "You would have slept there," she replied, "if you had fought as I fought." Charles retreated to the Loire. The succeeding winter was passed by the king at Bourges. In the spring the army moved to the relief of Compiègne, which was besieged by the duke of Burgundy. Joan got into the town, and the same day headed a sortie. She was taken prisoner, and was carried to the Burgundian quarters. Her wars were over.

For four months Joan was confined in the castle of Beaurevoir, near Cambray. She was a prisoner of war to the Burgundians. She was afterwards conveyed to Arras and to Crotoy, and was finally delivered to the English in their city of Rouen. The University of Paris urged her trial before an ecclesiastical tribunal, and there are letters from that body full of reproach to the English for not delivering up their prisoner to the justice of the church. At length letters patent were issued in the name of Henry VI, in which it was stated that, in accordance with the public opinion, and at the especial request of the bishop of Beauvais and the University of Paris, she was to be given up to the bishop, to be examined and proceeded against under his authority. She was subjected for several months to the most searching interrogatories.

Heresy and schism, meriting the punishment of fire, were declared to be found against her. The University of Paris ratified the articles of accusation. On a public scaffold at Rouen the sentence of condemnation was read to her by the bishop of Beauvais. Her courage deserted her, and she expressed her contrition and submission. Her sentence of burning at the stake was then to be commuted to perpetual imprisonment. She was taken back to prison, but after two days her confidence returned, and she reaffirmed her belief that her voices came from God; and that, not understanding what the abjuration was that she had been called upon to sign, she had signed in the fear of being burned. She was now a relapsed heretic, in the terms of the cruel zeal of the persecuting ecclesiastics, and her fate was no longer a matter of doubt. In the old market-place of Rouen a pile of wood was built up, and round it a scaffold was erected, where prelates and nobles might sit to behold the death of the heroic girl. There sat Cardinal Beaufort and the bishop of Beauvais; and as Joan stood before them, a sermon was preached, setting forth her atrocities; and the preacher concluded with, "Joan, go in peace; the church can no longer protect thee, and delivers thee into secular hands."

She was immediately dragged to the pile; the fatal cap of the Inquisition, with the words *hérétique, relapse, apostate, idolatre*, was placed on her head; the fire was kindled. Her last word was "Jesus." On the spot where this



[1431-1440 A.D.]

deed of infamy was perpetrated stands one of the monuments by which the French of later times have sought to redeem their share of the disgrace of this murder of the 30th of May, 1431. French historians attempt to fix the greater blame upon the English. It is clear that, although the vengeance of those who had been driven from Orleans and vanquished at Patay was the main cause of this tragedy, it would not have been accomplished except through that terrible power which, under the name of religion, had no quality of mercy when a heretic was to be hunted to the death. The bishop of Beauvais and the cardinal of Winchester knew no distinction of nation when they sat on the scaffold at Rouen to do the work of the Holy Inquisition.

## THE DREAM OF CONQUEST ENDS

The coronation of Charles VII at Rheims was to be rivalled by the more gorgeous ceremony of crowning Henry VI at Paris. On St. George's day of 1430 the boy who had been crowned at Westminster came, with Beaufort, to Calais. They remained there a month. On the 17th of December Henry made his public entry into Paris, and was crowned at Notre Dame. He returned to England in February, 1431, and rode into London amidst as profuse and laboured pageantry as had welcomed his father from Agincourt. He came under very different auspices. Dressed up with the mantle of royalty and the crown on his head, the boy of ten years of age was to perform the character of king, that the exhibition might strengthen one of the parties in the state that was aiming at supremacy.

Whilst these follies were enacted in England, Harfleur was recaptured by the French. The first trophy of Henry V was for a while lost. The alliance of the duke of Burgundy was fast slipping away. Every year added to the strength of the national party in France. At every conference for peace the demands of Charles VII became enlarged. At the congress of Arras, in 1435, the French would only agree to cede Normandy and Guienne, to be held as fiefs, all other possessions and all claim to the crown being surrendered. The conditions were refused, and the duke of Burgundy abandoned the English alliance. He made a separate treaty with Charles VII, swearing that he would forget his father's death and be at perpetual peace with France. Monstrelet<sup>1</sup> says that the young king Henry wept at the news of this peace of 1435. The people of England manifested their indignation by seeking out the subjects of the duke of Burgundy, Flemings and others, to maltreat and murder them. The duke of Bedford, who had steadily upheld the will of his heroic brother, died at this critical period.

There was no union in the English councils. The duke of Gloucester would have called up the old heart of England to redeem the losses and disgraces of the six years that were passed. The cardinal of Winchester, perhaps more wisely, advocated peace. In the quarrels between these rival leaders in the council all opportunity for a successful struggle passed away. Paris was retaken by Charles in 1436, and the English were expelled. "When they should pass upon their journey," says Fabyan,<sup>2</sup> "they were derided and scorned of the French nation out of all measure." Successes in Normandy, under the duke of York and Talbot, only prolonged the final issue; and when the duke of Burgundy's possessions were devastated by Talbot in 1437, when Picardy was ravaged in 1440 and Harfleur was once again captured by the English, when York was superseded as regent by Warwick and Warwick again replaced by York, each making new attempts to recover the lost ascendancy—it was

still manifest to the French that the time was approaching when the spirit of nationality would successfully maintain itself against the pretensions of alien rulers.

After twenty-five years' captivity the duke of Orleans was released from his prison in the Tower of London. There is a private contemporary record, *The Paston Letters*,<sup>k</sup> which shows the interest that the English took in the passing events connected with France: "Tidings: the duke of Orleans hath made his oath upon the sacrament, and used it, never for to bear arms against England, in the presence of the king and all the lords except my lord of Gloucester; and in proof that my said lord of Gloucester agreed never to his deliverance, when the mass began he took his barge. God give grace the said lord of Orleans be true, for this same week shall he towards France."

The war is continued a few years longer, and then a truce. England is anxious about the terms of pacification. Agnes Paston writes to her son on the 14th of February, 1445: "I pray you to send me tidings from beyond sea, for here they are afraid to tell such as be reported." The people were reluctant to believe, and thought it dangerous to say that their weak young king was to marry a daughter of the duke of Anjou, with the approbation of the French king, whose consent would be bought by the surrender of all that remained of the lands which English treasure and blood had won in that war of twenty years. Their fears were accomplished. Henry was married to Margaret of Anjou in 1445, and one of the conditions of the marriage and the consequent truce was the surrender of Anjou and Maine. Normandy was soon conquered, when Maine, the key to its possession, was gone. Gascony yielded to the French in 1451; and after the last of the great English captains, the dreaded Talbot, fell at Castillon in 1458, Bordeaux was taken. The dream of conquest,<sup>l</sup> which had lasted for more than a century, was at an end.<sup>b</sup>

The conclusion of the Hundred Years' War coincides with the period when the two parties that divided England were just about to appeal to arms. The civil war was in great measure the result of defeats abroad, as these defeats themselves were in part the consequence of discord at home. Quarrels between the chief members of the reigning house were the origin of its weakness; financial embarrassment, a divided foreign policy, and a feeble administration brought disgrace on the king and his advisers; family feuds and a long tale of mutual injuries added bitterness to political differences. Eventually an outburst of popular discontent kindled the train so long prepared, and the champion of order and good government began a struggle in which the original objects were soon lost sight of, and which ended only with the death of the king, whose innocent imbecility had caused the disorder.<sup>g</sup>

#### SOCIETY DURING THE WAR OF THE ROSES

In the progress of our narrative we have arrived at one of the most remarkable epochs of England's eventful history. We have arrived at that period when we may turn aside from that great contest between England and France—"two so invincible nations," says Hall,<sup>f</sup> "which never would yield or bow the one to the other, neither yet once hear of abstinence of fighting or refusing from war,

[<sup>f</sup> "Had the Plantagenets, as at one time seemed likely, succeeded in uniting all France under their government, it is probable that England would never have had an independent existence. Her princes, her lords, her prelates would have been men differing in race and language from the artisans and tillers of the earth. The revenues of her great proprietors would have been spent in festivities and diversions on the banks of the Seine. The noble language of Milton and

[1450-1471 A.D.]

so much were their hearts hardened, and so princely were their stomachs." In this war, and in previous French wars, Comines<sup>m</sup> tells us that the English "carried over a considerable booty into England, not only in plunder which they had taken in the several towns, but in the richness and quality of their prisoners, who paid them great ransoms for their liberty."

A different war was at hand—a war in which the English lords would fight at intervals for thirty-five years upon their native soil, and only end this work of mutual destruction when one half of the old nobility of England was swept away. During these wars of York and Lancaster, of which the seeds were sown in the distracted councils of the minority of Henry VI, we have many scattered but authentic materials for viewing the social condition of the country. The first division of this extraordinary period opens with the insurrections of 1450, and then proceeds in showing the duke of York taking up arms in 1452, and his son Edward seated on the throne in 1461. The second embraces the perilous fortunes of Henry and his intrepid wife, and the overthrow of the Lancastrian party after that gleam of triumph, which was destroyed by the fatal battles of Barnet and Tewkesbury in 1471. Edward sits on the throne for thirteen years longer, in comparative tranquillity; then two more years of mysterious murder and fierce war; and then a dynasty with which the feudal system has practically come to an end. This is one great epic which requires to be told without any material interruption to the relation of events, of which the links are welded in one continuous chain.

During this troubled time, when we might naturally expect that the whole framework of society would be thrown into disorder, we find the internal administration of England proceeding with the same regularity as if the struggle for supremacy were raging on the banks of the Seine instead of the banks of the Thames. The uniform course of justice is uninterrupted. Men are litigating for disputed rights, as if there were no general peril of property. They are electing knights of the shire and burgesses, under aristocratical or popular influences, as if the real arbitrament of these contentions was to be in the parliament-house and not in the battle-field. They are buying and selling, growing and exporting, as if the producers looked on with indifference whilst the Warwicks and Somersets were slaying or being slain. They wear richer apparel, and strive more for outward distinctions, and build better houses than when their fathers were fighting in France; and they are really prospering in an increase of material wealth, though they greatly lack the instrument of exchange, for the want of money is grievously felt from the peer to the huckster. They pursue their accustomed diversions; they hunt and they hawk; they gamble in public gardens; they gape at the players of interludes; they go on pilgrimage to Canterbury, and Walsingham, and Santiago: they take life easily, as if no danger were around them, when truly they might be in trouble for shouting for the White Rose on one day and for the Red on the next. Their marriages go forward, with the keenest avidity amongst the gentry and the burgesses to make the best bargains for their sons and daughters; and whilst we know how many great houses were rendered desolate by these troubles, we have no satisfactory evidence that during their existence population had decreased.

These appearances on the surface of things involve many important points of national character and social progress. During the period in and near the

Burke would have remained a rustic dialect without a literature, a fixed grammar, or a fixed orthography, and would have been contemptuously abandoned to the use of boors. No man of English extraction would have risen to eminence, except by becoming, in speech and habits, a Frenchman."—MACAULAY.<sup>q</sup>



stormy era which commenced with the beginning of the second half of the fifteenth century, and lasted till the quarrels of York and Lancaster came to an end upon Bosworth Field, the condition of society appears to have undergone very slight change; for in whatever regarded the civil administration of the country there was no revolutionary action connected with the sudden changes in the supreme power. It was of this period that Comines,<sup>m</sup> one of the most accomplished statesmen of his age, thus wrote: "In my opinion, of all the countries in Europe where I was ever acquainted the government is nowhere so well managed, the people nowhere less obnoxious to violence and oppression, nor their houses less liable to the desolations of war than in England, for there the calamities fall only upon their authors." In another part of the same chapter he says: "England has this peculiar grace, that neither



FIFTEENTH CENTURY HOUSE

the country, nor the people, nor the houses are wasted, destroyed, or demolished; but the calamities and misfortunes of the war fall only upon the soldiers, and especially the nobility." [Knight furthermore alludes to an actual increase of population during this period.]

But we might still hesitate to believe that the government was well administered, and the people little disturbed by violence, if we were to regard the wars of the Roses as one continued series of exterminating slaughters. Comines,<sup>m</sup> still speaking of these wars, says: "In England, when any disputes arise and proceed to a war, the controversy is generally decided in eight or ten days, and one party or other gains the victory." After the first battle, that of St. Albans, in 1455, there was outward peace for four years. York was in arms in 1459, gained the battle of Northampton in 1460, and was killed on the last day of that year. Within three months his son Edward was on the throne, and had gained the decisive victory of Towton. With the exception of the Lancastrian rising of 1464, the kingdom was at peace till 1470. The attempt then to restore Henry VI was defeated in the fighting of two months. Warwick landed on the 13th of September; Edward fled on the 3d of October; on the 14th of March, 1471, he was again in England; and after the great battle of Barnet, that of Tewkesbury decided the contest on the 4th of May. The remaining thirteen years of Edward saw no civil warfare. The landing of Richmond and the fall of Richard III proved the affair of a fortnight. The actual warfare in England, from 1455 to 1485, included an aggregate space of time of something less than two years.<sup>b</sup>

[1437-1445 A.D.]

## DISSENSIONS AT HOME

It had long been apparent that no increase of years would bring Henry VI the spirit of a man or the capability of managing his own affairs. Gentle, timid, submissive, and superstitious, he would have made a tolerably good monk, but he had not one of the qualities which constitute a good king. Parliament, which settled the regency, and apportioned and nicely limited the power and authority of its members, gave no authority whatever to the queen-mother, Catherine of France, the youthful widow of Henry V. This lady appears to have had little ambition, as three or four years after the death of the hero of Agincourt she married Owen Tudor, an obscure gentleman of Wales, who, however, boasted a most ancient and even a royal descent; but what, perhaps, had more influence over Catherine's choice was the circumstance of his being one of the handsomest men in England, besides being "garnished with many godly gifts." In her affection for her promising family by this second marriage, from which sprung the royal line of Tudor, she may have somewhat neglected the care of the sickly and unpromising Henry. But all her cares ceased in 1437, and she had been buried seven years in Westminster abbey, by the side of her first husband,<sup>1</sup> when Henry married.

As soon as William de la Pole, earl of Suffolk, had returned to England with Margaret of Anjou, the bride whom he had chosen for the king, he was elevated to the rank of a marquis, and from that moment he and the queen began to monopolise and divide between them the whole authority of government. They were constantly together, and people said that Suffolk looked more like her husband and king of England than the unfortunate Henry. There was a strong popular prejudice against French queens of any kind, nor did Margaret's conduct at all tend to remove it. She applied doctrines of government which she had learned in France to a country wholly different, and incensed the people by her arrogant, despotic conduct.

The friends and admirers of the duke of Gloucester, among whom the citizens of London were very conspicuous, said everywhere that he would have taken better measures for the preservation of the English conquests; but the duke, either from fear of the prevalent faction at court, or from some other motive, gave his approval in a very marked manner in parliament to all the negotiations concluded by Suffolk. It is quite clear, however, that there was no sincerity in these outward demonstrations, and that "the good duke Humphrey," as he was called by the people, would, on account of his great popularity, be a formidable obstacle in the way of the queen and her favourite. Besides, the passionate and vindictive Margaret was not likely to forget that Gloucester had at first strongly opposed the

<sup>1</sup> By an *ex post facto* law, passed in the sixth year of Henry VI, though not now found on the rolls of parliament, having apparently been torn out, such marriages as those of Catherine with Owen Tudor were declared presumptuous, derogatory to the royal dignity, and illegal, without the express consent of the sovereign. After Catherine's death Tudor was apprehended and put in ward, but he was allowed to escape from the Tower. He was afterwards beheaded for his adherence to Henry VI. Jacquetta of Luxemburg, the widow of the great duke of Bedford, followed Catherine's example, and married, to the great annoyance of the English court, Sir Richard Woodville, who was only a knight. She and her husband, however, after some persecution and payment of a fine of £1,000, were allowed to live in peace. Catherine, besides a daughter, had three sons by Owen Tudor. During the reign of their half-brother Henry VI, Edmund, the eldest, was created earl of Richmond; and Jasper, the second, was made earl of Pembroke. The first of these, by his marriage with the only daughter of John, duke of Somerset, had Henry, who succeeded to the earldom of Richmond, and who afterwards ascended the throne as Henry VII.

measures which made her a queen and gave to her father a respectable existence.

In 1441, after an altercation with the cardinal, in which the duke was defeated and humiliated,<sup>1</sup> a strange prosecution was got up against his wife the duchess, Eleanor Cobham, who had the misfortune of being Gloucester's mistress before she became his wife, and could never wholly efface the unfavourable impression made by this circumstance. She is represented as an avaricious, grasping, ambitious, and dissolute woman; but her enemies drew this portrait, and whatever she might be she was dear to the duke, although he was not the most faithful of husbands.

The duke was much devoted to all the learning then in vogue, and exceedingly fond of the society of learned men. Among other doctors and clerks whom he entertained was one Roger Bolingbroke, whom he kept constantly

in his house as chaplain. This Bolingbroke was much given to the sciences, especially to astronomy, and astronomy in those days was generally made to include astrology. Gloucester's wife, aware that Henry was sickly and that her husband stood next in succession, was probably anxious to know whether the stars would tell when the king would die, and she had frequent consultations with the chaplain and others. On a sudden, soon after her husband's last violent quarrel with Cardinal Beaufort,<sup>2</sup> she was accused of treason, "for that she, by sorcery and enchantment, intended to destroy the king; to the intent to advance and to promote her husband to the crown." The duchess and Bolingbroke were arrested, together with Southwell, priest and canon of St. Stephen's, Westminster; John Hum, priest; and Margery Jourdayn, commonly called the Witch of Eye. The duchess was examined in St. Stephen's chapel before the archbishop of



QUEEN MARGARET  
(1430-1482)

Canterbury: she was condemned to do public penance in three places within the city of London, and afterwards to pass her life a prisoner in the Isle of Man, under charge of Sir John Stanley.

Roger Bolingbroke, the learned astronomer, who died protesting his innocence of all evil intentions, was drawn and quartered at Tyburn; Margery Jourdayn was burned in Smithfield; Southwell died in prison before the time of execution; and John Hum received the royal pardon. The worst thing proved against the duchess was that she had sought for love-philters to secure the constancy of her husband. The worst thing attempted to be proved against her was that she kept by her a wax figure, made by the "cunning necromancers," and endowed with this remarkable quality, that, in pro-

<sup>1</sup> The subject of the quarrel was the liberation (upon ransom) of the duke of Orleans and other prisoners taken at Agincourt. Gloucester opposed their liberation.

<sup>2</sup> In the common purpose of the encomiasts of the church in its most corrupted state, it is sought to free Beaufort from the imputation of being the moving cause of these hateful proceedings.<sup>b</sup> "Some writers," says Lingard,<sup>c</sup> "have attributed the prosecution of Dame Eleanor to Beaufort's enmity to her husband. But their assertion stands on the slightest foundation; a mere conjecture of Fox that it might be so, because the Witch (of Eye) lived, according to Fabyan,<sup>d</sup> in the neighbourhood of Winchester, of which Beaufort was bishop."<sup>e</sup>



[1447 A.D.]

portion as it was sweated and melted before a fire, it would, by magical sympathy, cause the flesh and substance of the king to wither and melt away, and his marrow to be dried up in his bones. "The duke of Gloucester," says the chronicler, Hall,<sup>f</sup> "bore these things patiently and said little." But his enemies were now preparing for him the safe silence of the grave.

*Death of Gloucester (1447 A.D.)*

A parliament was summoned to meet in February, 1447, not in the usual place at Westminster, because the Londoners were devoted to the erring but generous-hearted victim, but at Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk, where the favourite was in the midst of his dependents. Orders were given to the knights of the shire to come armed, and the men of Suffolk were collected and crowded in the town and neighbourhood. The king was conveyed to the town, and, as if his sacred person was in danger, a numerous guard was placed round the house he occupied. Gloucester, who was at his strong castle of Devizes, went to attend this parliament, and fell unsuspectingly into the snare.

On the 11th of February, the day after the opening of the session, he was arrested on a charge of high treason, and on the 28th day of the same month he was found dead in his bed. The whole nation believed that the duke was foully murdered, and, with a single but striking exception,<sup>1</sup> all the writers living at or near the time hint, more or less openly, that this was the case. The body of the duke was shown to the people at Bury St. Edmunds, and there were no marks of violence upon it; but all men remembered that the bodies of Edward II, of Richard II, and of the other great duke of Gloucester, who had been taken off at Calais during the reign of Richard II, had been exposed to view in the same manner, and bore no signs of the murderous hands of their enemies. Suffolk's party wished it to be believed that he had died of apoplexy. Some said he had died of a broken heart; but, even in the latter case, Suffolk and the queen were his murderers. Humphrey, however, was not a man likely to die of grief and despair, for he knew his great popularity, which in all probability must have assured him that the parliament, however composed, would not venture to proceed to extremities against him.

Hall<sup>f</sup> has a reflection upon the event which exhibits more of the character of philosophical history than belongs to the old annalists: "There is an old said saw that a man intending to avoid the smoke falleth into the fire: so here the queen, minding to preserve her husband in honour and herself in authority, procured and consented to the death of this noble man, whose death only brought to pass that thing which she would most fain have eschewed, and took from her that jewel which she most desired: for if this duke had lived, the duke of York durst not have made title to the crown; if this duke had lived, the nobles had not conspired against the king, nor yet the commons had not rebelled; if this duke had lived, the house of Lancaster had not been defaced and destroyed—which things happened all contrary by the destruction of this good man."

What followed was a miserable show designed to furnish a plausible justification of his arrest. Five of his retainers were seized, and accused of plotting to release the duchess of Gloucester from her confinement, to come to the par-

<sup>1</sup> This is Whethamstede,<sup>p</sup> who was abbot of St. Albans at the time, a warm friend of Gloucester, and a declared enemy of the Suffolk party, whom he calls "dogs, scorpions, and impious noisers." He asserts that the duke died of grief and sickness. It appears that the abbot could have no motive for concealing the truth if he knew it.

liament in arms, to murder the king, and proclaim the duke their master in his stead. They were convicted and condemned to die the horrible death of traitors; but when they were only half hanged they were cut down, and, before the executioner could proceed in the bloody task of cutting up their bodies, Suffolk produced the royal pardon, and the men were easily restored to animation.

As if he had not already created odium enough, the marquis of Suffolk seized all the estates of the deceased duke, and, after keeping what best suited him, divided nearly all the remainder among his own family and most devoted partisans. The good duke Humphrey left no legitimate children, and, on account of her conviction, Dame Eleanor could not claim any part of his property. The duke's friends in parliament boldly asserted his perfect innocence of treason, and laboured, session after session, to clear his memory from the imputation of his enemies. His old rival, his uncle Cardinal Beaufort, did not long survive him. He had for some time withdrawn from political affairs to his see of Winchester, where, however, in spite of his age and infirmities, he was still cherishing projects of ecclesiastical ambition, and dreaming of the triple crown of Rome which had so long eluded his grasp, but which he fancied was at last within his reach. He died in his palace of Walvesey on the 11th day of April,<sup>1</sup> and bequeathed the mass of his property to charitable purposes.

#### THE FALL OF SUFFOLK (1450 A.D.)

The tables had been turned: the English began, under Henry V, to make their conquest of France when that country was cursed with a mad king, an intriguing and vindictive queen, and a factious nobility; and they finished losing all they gained, and a great deal more, when the same curses fell upon their own country. But the shame of those losses was not to be borne patiently by a high-spirited people, and before the final closing of the account of defeat and expulsion they took a terrible vengeance on the duke of Suffolk—for such was the title which this minister, rising as his country sank, had now taken to himself.

Bitter complaints had been repeatedly made in parliament by a spirited minority, and as misfortunes thickened this minority became a majority, whose indignation was overwhelming. Towards the end of 1449, while the public mind was exasperated by the recent loss of Rouen, Suffolk was attacked in both houses. He had a short breathing-time during the Christmas recess,<sup>2</sup> but the popular clamour rose louder and louder; and when parliament met, early in January, 1450, he complained of the accusations made against him, defended his loyalty and patriotism, and challenged his accusers to the proof.

[<sup>1</sup> His death-bed scene has been depicted by Shakespeare with a terrible power, and has left an impression that it is almost impossible to remove, although its historical accuracy may be well doubted:

Lord Cardinal, if thou thinkest on heaven's bliss,  
Hold up thy hand; make signal of thy hope:  
He dies and makes no sign.

HENRY VI, Part II.

The chronicler Hall,<sup>f</sup> on the authority of the cardinal's chaplain, sets forth his dying speech as follows: "Why should I die having so much riches? If the whole realm would save my life, I am able by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it. Fie, will not death be hired, nor will money do nothing?"

<sup>2</sup> During this interval the bishop of Chichester, a friend of Suffolk and keeper of the privy seal, was massacred by the people of Portsmouth for the part he had taken in the negotiations about Maine and Anjou.

[1450 A.D.]

This challenge was readily accepted. Four days later, the commons requested the lords to commit him to the Tower. The lords replied that they could not commit a peer without some specific charge. The commons took only two days to get up a direct charge, and when they produced it, it was neither honest nor ingenious. It simply charged the duke with having furnished the castle of Wallingford with provisions and military stores, with the object of assisting the king of France, who, they asserted, was preparing to invade England. The lords, however, without hesitation, ordered the arrest of the obnoxious minister, and he was seized and conveyed to the Tower. The bill of impeachment, which the commons prepared in ten days, contained several additional charges. For example, they charged Suffolk with the design of destroying both Henry and Margaret and placing the crown on the head of his own son; and they said that he had contracted engagements with the French, in the view of obtaining their assistance for these ends. To the charges of liberating the duke of Orleans and of ceding Maine and Anjou he was certainly amenable as a minister, and these charges were now preferred against him. But the commons were still wavering and uncertain as to their proofs; and on the 7th of March, a month after laying their first impeachment of eight articles, they presented a new impeachment of a very different kind, which contained sixteen articles, some of which seem probable enough, but none of them amounted to absolute treason.

On the 13th of March Suffolk was brought to the bar of the lords, and falling on his knees before the king, he vowed that he was innocent of any treason. In pleading, he kept to the absurd impeachment in eight articles, never alluding to the charges of waste of money, improvidence, and corruption, nor indeed to any other of the sixteen charges contained in the second bill of impeachment. As to the article relating to his project to secure the crown for his own son, he maintained that it was absurd, and the project impossible. He could not deny the cession of Maine and Anjou; but he urged that he was not alone in that guilt (if guilt it were), for the other lords of the council had authorised that measure, and the peers in parliament had afterwards sanctioned it. The whole proceeding ended, as it began, in irregularity.

On the 17th of March Suffolk was again called up to the lords, the king being present. The chancellor<sup>1</sup> observed to the duke that he had not claimed the privilege of a peer, and asked him whether he had more to say in defence of his conduct. Suffolk said that he thought he had said enough to establish his innocence, and he threw himself upon the will of the king, his master. The scene had been arranged beforehand; the chancellor instantly rejoined, saying that, as the duke did not put himself upon his peerage for trial, the king would not declare him either innocent or guilty; but with respect to the second impeachment (to which Suffolk had given no answer), the king, not as a judge taking counsel of the lords, but as one to whose authority the prisoner had submitted of his own free will, commanded him to quit England before the 1st of May, and to remain in banishment for the space of five years.

If parliament had entered into this compromise, and were satisfied with it, it was far otherwise with the people of London. These were furious that the traitor, the cause of all the disgrace abroad, as they considered him, should be allowed to escape so easily, and on the day of his enlargement upwards of two thousand persons collected to take his life. Suffolk, however, evaded

<sup>1</sup> This was the archbishop of York. Suffolk's chancellor, the archbishop of Canterbury, resigned the seals at the first blush of the prosecution. According to some accounts, the present scene passed in the king's apartment, to which all the lords, spiritual and temporal, were summoned.



the rage of this mob, and went to his estates, where he summoned his relatives, friends, and dependents. In their presence he swore upon the host that he was a wronged and innocent man, and then he went to Ipswich and embarked for the Continent.

On the 2d of May, as they were sailing between Dover and Calais, the two small vessels which carried the exile and his retinue were brought-to by the *Nicholas of the Tower*, a great ship of war. The duke was ordered on board the *Nicholas*, the captain of which said to him, as he stepped upon the deck, "Welcome, traitor!" He was kept on board two days, during which the ship stood off and on, probably communicating with some great movers in the business on shore, and the duke employed himself with his confessor. On the third day a cock-boat came alongside, and in the boat were a block, an axe, and an executioner. Suffolk was handed over to the latter, who cut off his head. A general cry had been raised that Suffolk still retained the confidence of Margaret, and that it was insupportable to see the "queen's darling" escape with a certainty of being soon recalled to power and to vengeance; but who were the great directors of his assassination was never clearly proved. No investigation took place; the people rejoiced at the death, and their minds were soon excited by other events which were the faint prelude to the wars of the Roses.

#### JACK CADE'S REBELLION (1450 A.D.)

John Cade was a native of Ireland, who had passed some time in France as a soldier of the English, or, according to other authorities, as an outlaw. It appears, however, that he had returned to his own country, and that he came from Ireland, then governed by the duke of York, into England, at the moment when the excitement against the government was at the highest. Insurrections had broken out in several parts of the kingdom before Suffolk's fall, and Cade put himself at the head of a popular movement immediately after that event. He assumed the noble name of Mortimer, and claimed a descent which made him a relation (though illegitimately) of the duke of York.

None but very questionable evidence was ever brought to show that this prince had employed him, yet it is certain that Cade, or rather the peculiar circumstances of the times, without which Cade would have been nothing, played the game of the duke, and encouraged the hopes which York had long entertained of grasping the royal power. The men of Kent<sup>1</sup> had long been noted for their determined spirit; they were the boldest and least vicious of the insurgents who, under Wat Tyler, nearly overturned a former weak government; they were probably better informed than the people of the inland counties of what was passing in France; and they were now more violent in their complaints than the rest of the nation. It was said that the queen held them guilty of the recent murder of her favourite, whose headless body lay for some time exposed on the beach near Dover, and that she had threatened to take a sanguinary vengeance.

Cade threw himself among these men, who selected him to be their captain. He led them towards the capital; and about the middle of June a great multitude, estimated at fifteen or twenty thousand, encamped at Blackheath,

<sup>1</sup>Thierry<sup>h</sup> ascribes the readiness of the men of Kent to take the lead in popular insurrections to their having preserved some remembrance of their fathers having made terms with William the Conqueror. A much more likely cause lay in the law of gavelkind prevailing in that country. This "incensate custome of gavelkind," as it is called in the *Glory of Generosity*, "tendeth to the destruction of auncient and gentle houses," and hence also to the multiplication of small democratic proprietors.

[1450 A.D.]

from which point Cade kept up a correspondence with the Londoners. The court sent to demand why the 'good men of Kent had quitted their homes. Cade gave their reasons in a paper entitled *The complaint of the commons of Kent*. After alluding to the report that Kent was to be destroyed by a royal power, and made a hunting forest, "for the death of the duke of Suffolk, of which the commons of Kent were never guilty," Cade, or the pens that wrote for him, went on to complain that justice and prosperity had been put out of the land by misgovernment; that the king was stirred to live only on the substance of the commons, while other men fattened on the lands and revenues of the crown; that the people of the realm were not paid for stuff and purveyance forcibly taken for the king's use; that the princes of the royal blood were excluded from the court and government, which were filled exclusively by mean and corrupt persons, who plundered and oppressed the people; that it was noised that the king's lands in France had been alienated and put away from the crown, and the lords and people there destroyed with untrue means of treason; that the commons of Kent had been especially overtaxed and ill-treated; that their sheriffs and collectors had been guilty of infamous extortion; and that the free election of knights of the shire had been hindered. The court pretended to be preparing a proper answer to this startling list of grievances, but it employed the time thus gained in collecting troops in London.

In this interval Cade sent in another paper, headed *The requests by the captain of the great assembly in Kent*. This document, though conceived in respectful language, went more directly to the point. It required that the king should resume the grants of the crown, so that he might reign like a king royal; that he should instantly dismiss all the false progeny and affinity of the duke of Suffolk, and take about his noble person the true lords of his royal blood, namely the high and mighty prince the duke of York, long exiled from the king's presence, and the mighty princes the dukes of Exeter, Buckingham, and Norfolk; that he should punish the false traitors who had contrived and imagined the death of that excellent prince the duke of Gloucester, of their holy father the cardinal,<sup>1</sup> and others, and who had promoted and caused the loss of Anjou, Maine, Normandy, and other parts of France.

The court had now levied a considerable army, and this force was sent out to give the rebels their answer. Cade fell back from Blackheath to Sevenoaks, where, in a good position, he halted, and waited the attack of a detachment of the royal army. This detachment was defeated on the 24th of June, and the commander, Sir Humphrey Stafford, was slain. The soldiers had not fought with good will at Sevenoaks; and when their main body, still at Blackheath, got intelligence of that affair, they began to say that they liked not to fight against their own countrymen, who only called for a reasonable redress of grievances. The court now found that concession was expedient: and they sent Lord Saye, a very obnoxious minister, and some other individuals who had been closely connected with the duke of Suffolk, to the Tower, which Lord Scyles undertook to maintain for the king. The army was disbanded, and the king was conveyed for safety to the strong castle of Kenilworth. While this was doing, Cade reappeared at Blackheath, and by the end of June he had made himself master of all the right bank of the Thames, from Lambeth and Southwark to Greenwich. From Southwark he sent to demand entrance into the city of London; and this, after a debate in the common council, was freely granted to him by the lord-mayor.

<sup>1</sup> This murder of old Beaufort was the most absurd statement in these documents. Surely it was natural enough for a man to die at the age of eighty; and the cardinal died almost in public.

On the 3d of July Cade led his followers into the heart of the capital. He seemed anxious to preserve the strictest discipline; he issued proclamations forbidding plunder, and in the evening he led his host back to the borough. The next day he returned in the same good order; but he forced the mayor and judges to sit in Guildhall and pass judgment upon Lord Saye, of whose person he had, by some means, obtained possession. Saye demanded a trial by his peers, but Cade's men hurried him to the standard at Cheapside and cut off his head. Soon after they did the same by Saye's son-in-law, Cromer, the sheriff of Kent.<sup>1</sup> When this was over, they retired quietly to the borough for the night. In the course of the following day a few houses were pillaged. The citizens now took counsel with Lord Scales, who had one thousand soldiers

in the Tower; and it was resolved that they should prevent Cade from entering the city on the morrow. The insurgents got news of this intention in the night, and instantly made an attack on the bridge. The citizens resolutely defended it, and, after a nocturnal fight, which lasted six hours and cost many lives, they remained masters of the passage.

The insurgents retired into Southwark, and, in concert with the irritated citizens, it was resolved to delude them by promises of pardon, as had been practised with the followers of Wat Tyler. Both the chancellor and the ex-chancellor, the archbishops of York and Canterbury, had taken refuge in the Tower, whence they despatched the bishop of Winchester with a general pardon, under the great seal, to all such as should return to their homes. It appears that the prelate also promised a redress of grievances. His mission



HURSTMONCEAUX CASTLE

(Fifteenth century)

had the immediate effect of creating a division among the insurgents—one party being of opinion that they ought to accept the conditions; the other, that there was no faith to be put in them. Some began to retire into Kent: Cade accepted the pardon, and then the whole force began to disperse. But in two days Cade was again in Southwark, with a considerable host, who maintained that it would be folly to lay down their arms until they had obtained some security from government for the performance of its promises. Dissension, however, broke out afresh, and being awed by the warlike attitude of the Londoners they retreated to Blackheath, and thence marched to Rochester, where their feuds terrified their leader. Cade, who expected to be

<sup>1</sup> Bills of indictment were also found against the duchess of Suffolk, the bishop of Salisbury, Thomas Daniel, and several other friends of the deceased minister, who, fortunately, were out of reach of the insurgents.



[1450 A.D.]

murdered or delivered up to government, which had proclaimed him a traitor and offered one thousand marks for his apprehension, got secretly to horse and galloped across the country towards the Sussex coast.

He was closely followed by one Alexander Iden, an esquire, who overtook him and attacked him sword in hand. After a desperate fight, the squire proved the better man. The head of Cade was stuck upon London bridge, with the face turned towards the pleasant hills of Kent; and Iden was made happy with the one thousand marks. Pursuit was then made after Cade's companions, and many were taken and executed as traitors.<sup>1</sup> It was stated in a subsequent act of attainder that some of these men confessed that their object had been to place Richard, duke of York, on the throne: but this evidence is open to suspicion; and, moreover, it was not affirmed that the insurgents had been employed by the duke. But whatever may have been the caution, prudence, and patience of the duke of York, that prince's name was certainly put prominently forward at this time; and it is equally certain, if the question was to be decided by descent and birth, that York had a preferable right to the throne.

#### THE HOUSE OF YORK

We have shown in what manner the claims of the old line of the Plantagenets rested in Edmund Mortimer, earl of March. This Edmund, after faithfully serving the house of Lancaster in peace and in war, died in 1424; upon which, as he left no issue, and as his brother Roger and his sister Eleanor had died childless, his rights passed to his sister Anne, married to the earl of Cambridge, who had been condemned and executed for treason in the beginning of the reign of Henry V. Anne Mortimer had a son, the present Prince Richard, who succeeded to the titles of his paternal uncle the duke of York, as also to the lineal rights of his maternal uncle Edmund Mortimer, earl of March. But notwithstanding the growth of the doctrine of hereditary right—a doctrine which had gradually made way in Europe—it may be questioned whether the nation would have paid much attention to the genealogy of the duke of York, if the notorious and still increasing incapacity of Henry and the odium which his wife incurred had not forced the subject upon their attention.

The duke had been recalled from the command in France through the influence of Queen Margaret, and his post in Ireland was considered by his friends as a kind of exile. He had, however, acquired great popularity among the English and the descendants of the English in that country; and recently

<sup>1</sup> Thierry<sup>h</sup> contrasts this insurrection with that under Wat Tyler, seventy years before. The latter he considers as chiefly one of the Anglo-Saxon race, represented by the serfs, against the Anglo-Norman, represented by the *gentilshommes*—the gentry—and to have been the final term of the series of Saxon revolts, and the first of a new order of political movements. Had it succeeded, as an historian of that period expresses himself, all nobility and gentry might have disappeared from England. Thierry says: "Jack Cade, who in 1448 played the same part as Wat Tyler in 1381, did not, like the latter, make himself the representative of the rights of the common people in opposition to the gentlemen; but, connecting his own and the popular cause with the aristocratical factions which then divided England, he went so far as to announce himself as one of the royal family, unjustly excluded from the succession to the throne. The influence which this imposture had on the minds of the people in the northern provinces, and in that very county of Kent which, seventy years before, had chosen tilers, bakers, and carters for its leaders, proves that a rapid amalgamation was in progress between the political interests and passions of the different classes of men in England, and that a certain order of ideas and sympathies was no longer attached, in a fixed and invariable manner, to a certain descent or social condition."

The act here alluded to was an act of attainder passed against the Yorkists in November, 1459, when their enemies were triumphant.

(in the year 1449) he had gained much credit by the ability he displayed in the suppression of an insurrection of the native Irish. Resigning his command there, he suddenly appeared in England in the end of August, 1451. After paying a short visit to the king in London, he retired to his castle of Fotheringay. He was mute as to his intentions, but the court took the alarm, and sought to oppose him by the duke of Somerset, the nearest male relation to King Henry, and the head of the younger branch of the house of Lancaster.

But it was under Somerset's government in France that the loss of Normandy was completed; and this circumstance, added to that of his being in high favour with the queen, rendered him almost as unpopular as the duke of Suffolk had been. Two years were spent in noisy discontent and silent intrigues. Each party stood in awe of the other, and measured its ground before proceeding to extremities. Some dark deeds were committed by both factions, but the scale of guilt seemed rather to incline to the side of the court. Tresham, the speaker of the house of commons which had prosecuted the duke of Suffolk, was assassinated by some friends of the queen.

A member of the commons boldly proposed that, as Henry had no children, and was not likely to have any, the duke of York ought to be declared heir to the throne; but the proposer was committed to the Tower. The commons, however, passed a bill of attainder against the deceased duke of Suffolk, and agreed in a request that the king would be pleased to dismiss from office and from the court the new minister the duke of Somerset, and several lords and ladies related to Suffolk. The court resisted or evaded both measures. Violent quarrels arose between the adherents of government and the Yorkists; the former asserting that there was treason afloat, the latter that there were projects for depriving Duke Richard of his liberty, and treating him as the duke of Gloucester had been treated at Bury St. Edmunds.

In the beginning of the year 1452 the duke of York repaired to his castle of Ludlow, in Shropshire, the neighbourhood of which was devoted to the Mortimer family. He collected a considerable armed force, but, by proclamation, declared that he had no evil intentions against the king, to whom he offered to swear fealty upon the sacrament. A royal army was sent against him; but while that force went westward by one road, York marched eastward by another, and appeared before the gates of London, which were shut in his face. He then marched to the borders of Kent, where he probably expected to be joined by the malcontents who had been out with Cade. It appears, however, that few joined him, and when Henry came up with him, at Dartford, he agreed to a peaceful negotiation. Two bishops were the negotiators on the part of the king; and when they asked why York was in arms, he asserted that it was for his own safety, seeing that repeated attempts had been made to work his ruin.

Henry said that he cleared York of all treason, and esteemed him as a true man and his own well-beloved cousin. Notwithstanding the coyness of the men of Kent, it may be presumed, from the high tone maintained by the duke, that his force was considerable. He insisted that all persons who had trespassed and offended against the laws, especially such as were indicted of treason, should be arrested and put upon their trial. The king, or those who directed him, promised all this, and more. A mock order was given for the apprehension of the minister, the duke of Somerset, and York was assured that a new council, in which he should have a seat, should be appointed forthwith. Upon this Duke Richard disbanded his army, and agreed to a personal interview. With singular confidence he went unarmed and almost alone to the king's tent. One of the first persons he saw there was the duke of Somerset, who called

[1452-1455 A.D.]

him felon and traitor, epithets which were retorted with interest. When York turned to depart, he was told that he was the king's prisoner.

Somerset, it is said, would have proceeded to a summary trial and execution, but this was prevented by the fears of the other ministers and courtiers. York was then sent to London and held partly as a prisoner, and, says Stow,<sup>i</sup> "straighter would have been kept, but it was noised that Sir Edward, earl of March, son to the said duke of York, was coming towards London with a strong power of Welshmen, which feared so the queen and council that the duke was set at full liberty; and on the 10th of March he made his submission, and took his oath in St. Paul's to be a true, faithful, and obedient subject to the king, there being present King Henry and most of the nobility." York retired to his castle of Wigmore, and remained perfectly quiet till he was brought forward by the movements in parliament.

#### PROTECTORATE OF YORK AND FIRST BATTLE OF ST. ALBANS

The uneasiness shown by parliament at the increasing incapacity of the king, and at the power of the queen and the duke of Somerset, brought about the recall of the duke of York to the council; and this measure was soon followed by the committal of Somerset, who was sent to the Tower at the end of the year 1453. On the 14th of February, 1454, parliament was opened by the duke of York, as lieutenant or commissioner of the king. For some time the court had endeavoured to conceal Henry's real condition; but the lords were now resolved to ascertain it, and an accidental circumstance afforded them a good reason for forcing the privacy of Windsor castle. Kemp, archbishop of Canterbury and chancellor of the kingdom, died; and as it was usual for the house of lords to confer personally with the sovereign on such high occasions, a deputation of twelve peers went to Windsor, and would not be refused entry into the castle.

They found Henry incapable of answering them or understanding them: in the words of their report to the house, "they could get no answer nor sign from him, for no prayer nor desire," though they presented themselves to him three several times. This report of the deputation was, at their prayer, entered on record in parliament, and was reasonably considered as authentic a testimony as could be procured of their sovereign's infirmity (of which there was no kind of doubt in the country); and after adjourning two days, they "elected and nominated Richard, duke of York, to be protector and defender of the realm of England." York, still advancing no hereditary claim to the crown, accepted of the humbler office, with all the limitations put upon it by parliament; but a weighty circumstance probably this time contributed to his moderation. Queen Margaret had been delivered of a son about a year before, and, though the outcry seems to have been almost universal that this was no child of Henry, the legislature could not entertain the popular clamour, but recognised the infant Edward by creating him prince of Wales and earl of Chester. In accepting this post as protector York took care to obtain the most explicit declarations from the peers that he only followed their "noble commandments."

In about nine months Henry recovered his memory and some degree of reason—perhaps as much as he had usually possessed. The court instantly claimed for him the full exercise of royalty, and York at once gave up the protectorate. The first use made of this resumed authority by the king was to liberate the duke of Somerset. This step and some others, which showed



that it was the intention of the court to restore the unpopular minister, irritated a great part of the nation, and induced York once more to take up arms. He retired again to Ludlow, where he was joined by the duke of Norfolk, the earls of Warwick and Salisbury, and other men of rank. Again Henry went, or was carried, with an army, towards Ludlow; but this time the duke, instead of avoiding him by taking a different road, anticipated his movements, and met him near the capital with an army equal to his own.

On the 22d of May, as the royalists were about to continue their march from St. Albans, they saw the hills in their front covered with armed men, who were moving forward, and who did not stop till they came near to the barriers of the town. The duke sent a herald into the town, professing great loyalty and affection for the king, but demanding the person of the duke of Somerset. It was replied by or for the king that he would rather perish in battle than abandon his friends. Upon this, battle was joined. York was kept in check at the barriers, but another way into the town was pointed out; and, winding round part of the hill on which it stands, and crossing some gardens, the earl of Warwick entered St. Albans and attacked the royalists in the streets. York then forced the barriers, and after a very short contest the royalists gave way, rushed out of the town, and fled in the greatest disorder.<sup>1</sup> The duke of Somerset, the earl of Northumberland, and the lord Clifford were slain; the duke of Buckingham, Lord Sudeley, the earl of Stafford, and the unfortunate king were wounded—all by arrows. The duke of York found Henry concealed in the house of a tanner; his wound, though in the neck, was not serious. He was treated with mildness and outward respect; his conqueror conducted him to the noble abbey of St. Albans, where they prayed together before the shrine of England's first martyr.



HALBERD AND  
SWORD

(Fifteenth century)

When parliament met in the month of July, it did little else than renew the protestations of allegiance to Henry and his son. After a prorogation, parliament met again on the 12th of November, when the duke of York was appointed by commission to open the proceedings as lieutenant of the king. The commons thereupon sent up a message to the lords, stating that, as the duke of York had been appointed to represent the king on this occasion, so "it was thought by the commons that if the king hereafter could not attend to the protection of the country, an able person should be appointed protector, to whom they might have recourse for redress of injuries, especially as great disturbances had lately arisen in the west through the feuds of the earl of Devonshire and Lord Bonville." The new archbishop of Canterbury, in his quality of chancellor, said that the subject would be taken into consideration by the lords.

Two days later, the commons repeated their request—refusing to proceed with any other business until it should be granted. York therefore was again declared protector; and he was to hold his authority till discharged of

<sup>1</sup> The number of the Lancastrians killed in this affair has been absurdly exaggerated in most of our old histories. One of the *Paston Letters*,<sup>k</sup> written immediately after the fight, says that only six score were slain.

[1455-1457 A.D.]

it by the lords in parliament. Still, however, parliament respected the rights of the infant prince, and it was declared in this session, as in the preceding year, that the protectorate should cease, in all cases, as soon as Prince Edward attained his majority. The ostensible reason for superseding Henry was his mental derangement. There is no positive proof that he was worse than he had been a few months before; but if he were no better, the step need not surprise us. It happened to him as to his reputed grandfather, the unhappy Charles VI; being known to suffer fits of insanity, people could never count with any certainty on his lucid intervals, nor put any trust in a king who was alternately declared to be sane or insane according to the rise or fall of a party. The house of commons and the people would certainly have gone further in the way of revolution; but the prelates, with one or two exceptions, and most of the lay lords were still averse to a change of dynasty. The duke gave some of the most important offices to his tried friends. No acts of vengeance were committed: it was considered that the Somerset faction had suffered sufficiently in the deaths of the lords in the affair of St. Albans. Not a drop of blood was spilled, not a single attainder passed.

Queen Margaret was not idle during this second short protectorate, and the powerful party of the court was put in motion. When parliament met, after the Christmas recess, in 1456, Henry, to the surprise of most people, attended, and demanded back, and received from the lords, all his authority as king. No doubt was raised touching his malady, and York resigned the protectorate without a struggle—apparently without a murmur. All the officers he had appointed were dismissed and replaced by persons devoted to the queen. Then York thought it time to look after the personal safety of himself, his sons, and adherents. He retired to his estates, where he kept his vassals on the alert, and most of the great lords of his party did the same. This was the more necessary, as the families and friends of Somerset and Northumberland, and the other lords who had fallen at St. Albans, openly expressed their determination to take a sanguinary vengeance.

In the end of February (1457) a great council was held at Coventry, and a sort of pacification was there effected between the Yorkists and the court party, the duke and his friend Warwick being compelled to give fresh assurances and oaths of fidelity. The king, who was no doubt sincere, whatever may have been the feelings of his wife and the courtiers, then endeavoured to reconcile York and his friends with the avengers of Somerset and Northumberland. London was chosen, by mutual consent, to be the scene of this great peace-making. After some days spent in deliberation, the king, who had assumed the character of umpire, gave his award, signifying that the duke of York and the earls of Warwick and Salisbury should build a chapel for the good of the souls of the lords they had killed at St. Albans; that both those who were killed there and those who had killed them should be held loyal subjects; that the duke of York should pay to the widow and children of the duke of Somerset the sum of 5,000 marks; that the earl of Warwick should pay to Lord Clifford the sum of 1,000 marks, and that the earl of Salisbury should release Percy Lord Egremont from the damages he had obtained against him for an assault, upon condition of Percy's giving securities to keep the peace for ten years. This award was accepted; the court came into the city; and king, queen, duke of York, and all, walked lovingly together in procession to St. Paul's.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Long accounts of the procession to St. Paul's are given in Hall, *f* Stow, *i* and Holinshed, *o*. The duke of York and the queen walked hand in hand. The great quarrel was between these two.

## THE BATTLE OF BLORE HEATH (1459 A.D.)

This was on the 25th day of March. In the month of May, Warwick, who had been allowed to retain the command at Calais, engaged, with great bravery, but without a due regard to the laws of nations, a strong fleet belonging to the Hanse Towns, captured five or six ships, and carried them into Calais. The powerful Hanseatic League complained to the English court, which called upon Warwick for explanations. Warwick presented himself at Westminster; but in a few days he fled, alleging that his life was aimed at by the malice of the courtiers, who had set on men wearing the king's livery to assassinate him.<sup>1</sup> He joined his father, the earl of Salisbury, and soon after they had a conference with the duke of York and his friends. He then hastened over to Calais, where he was so popular that his recall or dismissal by the government of Henry would have been but an idle ceremony. During the winter months he collected some veteran troops who had served in the French wars.

In England the Yorkists were not less active; and as the court was raising an army as fast as the embarrassment of its finances would permit, it became evident that a fierce conflict was inevitable. The Yorkists asserted, as before, that they only armed for their own security. In the month of September, 1459, the earl of Salisbury moved from Middleham castle in Yorkshire, to join his forces to those of Duke Richard, who lay in the Welsh marches. At Blore Heath, near Drayton, in Shropshire, he found himself in presence of a Lancastrian army, commanded by Lord Audley, who had thrown himself between the earl and the duke with the view of preventing their junction. The Lancastrians were far superior in number; but Salisbury, by superior generalship and the better discipline of his troops, gained a complete victory. Two thousand of the Lancastrians were slain, and Lord Audley himself was included in the number.

Salisbury joined the duke at Ludlow castle, and Warwick, the true hero of these unhappy times, appeared there soon after with the fine troops he had raised at Calais. The Lancastrians were not unprepared: sixty thousand men had been collected from different parts, and Henry was at Worcester with this force. After some fruitless negotiations, the Lancastrians advanced from Worcester against their enemies, who, notwithstanding the comparative smallness of their numbers, boldly awaited their attack. The positions occupied by the Yorkists showed the military science of Warwick and his father Salisbury.

As the Lancastrians approached, they were cannonaded with some effect; the lines of the enemy were imposing, and it was resolved to put off the battle for that day. During the night, Sir Andrew Trollop, who was marshal of the Yorkist camp, and who had the immediate command of most of the men brought from Calais, deserted with all his veterans to the standard of Henry. This defection was so important that it finished the campaign: the Yorkists broke up from the intrenched camp near Ludlow, and retreated in different directions without being followed.

All this happened on the 13th and 14th of October, 1459. On the 20th of November a parliament met at Coventry and attainted the duke of York, his duchess, his sons, the earl and countess of Salisbury, their son the earl of War-

<sup>1</sup> As Warwick was leaving the court, one of his retinue was struck by a servant of the royal household, and a dreadful affray followed. It is not proved that there was a design to murder the earl, but it is quite clear that the parties were in such a state that any accident must bring them to a collision.



[1459-1460 A.D.]

wick, the lord Clinton, and many others. The duke of York had got safely to Ireland, where he was still popular. The earl of Warwick had retired to his sure asylum of Calais, conducting with him his father, the earl of Salisbury, and Edward the young earl of March, Duke Richard's heir. The court appointed the duke of Somerset to the command of Calais; but when that obnoxious nobleman appeared before the port, the batteries opened upon him and he was glad to escape to Guines.

While he lay there, the mariners of his fleet deserted to a man, and went over to their great favourite, Warwick, carrying all the ships with them. This gave the King-maker the command of the Channel, and after taking two small fleets, fitted out by the Lancastrians, he sailed to Dublin. From Ireland he returned to Calais, and then, crossing the Channel, he landed in Kent towards the end of June, 1460. He only brought fifteen hundred men with him; but manifestoes had been previously circulated, and the men of Kent crowded to his banner. As he approached Canterbury, the archbishop, who had been promoted during the first protectorate of the duke of York, went out to meet him and welcome him. The lord Cobham and all the knights and gentlemen in the neighbourhood soon joined his army, which was swelled to thirty thousand men before he reached Blackheath. On the 2d of July the city of London welcomed him as a friend and deliverer; and he rode through the city accompanied by his father and Edward the heir of York, to whose beautiful person and promising appearance all eyes were turned. Five bishops followed in the train of Warwick, who, without losing time, continued his march into the midland counties.

## BATTLE OF NORTHAMPTON (1460 A.D.)

He found the Lancastrians at Northampton occupying an intrenched camp, not unlike that which he and his friends had formed at Ludlow in the preceding year. There were other points of resemblance between these two affairs, for Lord Grey de Ruthyn now deserted the Lancastrians as Sir Andrew Trollop had deserted the Yorkists. The former, however, were not so fortunate in their retreat: they lost three hundred knights and gentlemen, besides the duke of Buckingham, the earl of Shrewsbury, and the lords Beaumont and Egremont. The unhappy Henry was taken prisoner a second time, but Margaret escaped with her son Edward, and, after many adventures, got into Scotland.

The victors marched back to the capital and summoned a new parliament, to meet at Westminster. This parliament repealed all the acts passed at Coventry the year before, alleging that that parliament had not been duly and freely elected. Then Richard, the duke of York, who had come over from Ireland, entered London with a splendid retinue. From the city he rode to Westminster, where he dismounted and entered the house of lords. It was an exciting moment: he walked straight to the throne and laid his hand upon the gold cloth which covered it; but there he paused—looked round—and did not seat himself on the throne. He had, however, at last made up his mind to claim it. His friend, the archbishop of Canterbury, asked him if he would not visit the king, who was in the palace hard by. The duke replied that Henry ought rather to wait upon him—that he was subject to no man in that realm, but under God was entitled to all sovereignty and respect. The peers maintained a dead silence, and the duke, leaving the house, took possession of the royal palace as his own.

In less than a week—on the 16th of October—the duke sent a formal demand of the crown to the lords, requiring their immediate answer. The lords told him that they refused justice to no man, but that they could give no answer without the advice and consent of the king. They, however, were forced to attend to the duke's paper, in which he traced his descent, and claimed as the representative of Roger Mortimer, whose right he maintained was according to all law preferable to that of a descendant of Henry of Bolingbroke, who had entered upon the thrones of England and France against all manner of right. Many of the great lords had attained to their greatness under Henry of Bolingbroke, his son, and grandson, whom it was now proposed to declare usurpers; and the Yorkists had irritated the tenderest susceptibilities of many of the lords by their repeated threats of resuming the estates and grants of the crown. At the same time, no doubt, they felt some sympathy for the inoffensive king, who, now that the queen was away, was pitied by the people at large. Indeed, a notion had gone forth that Henry was very likely to become a saint, and to be canonised, like his predecessor Edward the Confessor, whom he resembled in many respects.

As the duke of York would not brook delay, the lords waited upon Henry on the following morning. The captive king, or those who advised him, made a spirited reply, reminding the lords that he, as an infant, had inherited the crown which had been worn with honour by his father and his father's father—that he himself had been permitted to wear it without challenge for nearly forty years, and that the lords and princes had repeatedly sworn fealty to him. The lords were then requested to make search for arguments and proofs against the duke's right. The lords, greatly embarrassed, wished to have the opinion of the judges, but the judges asserted that such high matters could be decided only by the princes of the blood and the parliament, and refused to attend. The upper house then summoned the king's sergeants and attorneys, who were obliged to attend against their will, the lords holding them as bound by their office to give advice to the house. The lords deliberated and voted with an appearance of perfect freedom, just as if Warwick had not been nigh at the head of a victorious army; and on the 23d of October they presented their objections to Richard's title. These were (1) the duke's oaths of fealty and the oaths they had all taken to Henry; (2) many acts of parliament passed since the accession of the house of Lancaster; (3) that entails had been made of the crown on the male line only, whereas he claimed through a female. The other two objections were thoroughly ridiculous; they referred to York not having borne his proper coat-of-arms, and to a declaration made by Henry IV which everybody knew to be utterly false.

The duke's counsel had an easy task in replying to these objections. Nothing was of much weight except the oaths, and these the duke offered to refer to the consideration of the highest spiritual court. The lords were compelled to acknowledge that the hereditary law was wholly in favour of York. At the end of this curious inquiry they suggested a compromise, which York had the moderation to accept. Henry was to retain the crown during his life, but at his death it was to devolve to Richard, and to be vested in him and his heirs, to the exclusion of Prince Edward, the son of Margaret of Anjou.

But there was a powerful party whose voices were not heard in these deliberations, and the energetic Margaret was at large exciting them to take up arms for her son. Soon the gentle hills of England glittered again with hostile lances; and hostile bands, collecting from all quarters, advanced to meet in two great armies, the one under the duke of Somerset, the earls of Northumberland and Devon, and the lords Clifford, Dacres, and Nevil; the other under

[1460-1461 A.D.]

the duke of York, the earl of Salisbury, and other lords. They met, on the last day but one of the year, at Wakefield, in Yorkshire, where Richard imprudently gave battle with forces very inferior in number. The onslaught was terrific; the men on both sides fought with savage fury, for the people had entered into the delicate questions of right and legitimacy, and their passions were worked up to frenzy. For a time the Yorkists maintained the conflict with a good hope of victory, but a sudden charge in their rear, made by some troops of borderers who had been brought up by Queen Margaret, proved fatal to them. The duke of York himself was slain; and of five thousand men who had followed him to Wakefield, two thousand remained upon the field. The earl of Salisbury was pursued and taken during the night: he was carried to Pontefract castle, where he lost his head.

York's second son, the earl of Rutland, a beautiful boy only twelve or thirteen years old, was stopped at Wakefield bridge as he was fleeing with a priest "called Sir Robert Aspull, who was chaplain and schoolmaster to the young earl." The poor boy fell on his knees to pray for mercy, but as soon as he was known, Lord Clifford, whose father had been killed by the Yorkists at St. Albans, plunged his dagger into his heart, vowing, by God's blood, that he would do the like to all of kin to York; and then the savage bade Aspull go on and tell his mother, the duchess, what had happened. England was not yet accustomed to such deeds, and a cry of horror ran through the land. Margaret vented what spite she could upon the lifeless body of Duke Richard; by her orders his head was stuck over a gate of the city of York, and a paper crown was put upon it in cruel mockery. Nearly all the officers and persons of note died fighting at Wakefield, where no quarter was given; but a few knights and esquires who escaped from the field were taken and executed by order of the queen at Pontefract and other places. This vindictive woman was mad for blood, and her fury was but too well seconded by such of the Lancastrians as had lost friends and relations in the war.

#### BATTLE OF MORTIMER'S CROSS AND RELEASE OF HENRY

Edward, earl of March, now duke of York, was lying at Gloucester when he received news of the death of his father, brother, and friends; he had raised a body of troops to reinforce the army in the north, but, being too late for that operation, he moved towards the southeast, with the intention of throwing himself between the queen's army and the capital, within the walls of which was the main strength of his party. The fate of Duke Richard, which was proclaimed in manifestoes, greatly irritated the vassals of the house of Mortimer, and thousands who had not moved before now left the Welsh marches and followed the standard of his son. Upon this Edward was encouraged to proceed directly towards the queen; but he found an enemy sooner than he expected, for a great force of Welsh and Irish had been detached under Jasper Tudor, King Henry's half-brother, and a dreadful conflict took place on the 1st of February at Mortimer's Cross, near Hereford. Edward gained a complete victory: thirty-six hundred of his enemies were left on the field; Owen Tudor, the second husband of Catherine of France, was taken, and, with eight other Lancastrians of rank, was beheaded at Hereford a few days after, as a retaliation for the queen's executions at Wakefield, Pontefract, and other parts in Yorkshire. Jasper, Owen Tudor's son, had the good fortune to escape out of the battle.



Before Edward could join him in the east the earl of Warwick was attacked and routed by the queen, who had followed the high northern road with good hopes of reaching London. At the town of St. Albans, which was held by the Yorkists, she experienced a severe check; but turning that position, she fell upon the army of Warwick, which occupied the hills to the south-east of the town. The combat was prolonged over the undulating country that lies between St. Albans and Barnet, and the last stand was made by the men of Kent upon Barnet common. At nightfall Warwick found himself beaten at all points, and so precipitate was his retreat that he left King Henry behind him at Barnet. The queen and her son found this helpless man in his tent, attended only by the lord Montague, his chamberlain. In this running fight the Yorkists lost nearly two thousand men, and on the following day Lord Bonville and the brave Sir Thomas Kyriell, who had been made prisoners, were executed in retaliation for the beheading of Owen Tudor and his companions at Hereford. On the 17th of February King Henry was freed again from the hands of his enemies; five days later, a proclamation was issued in his name, stating that he had consented to the late arrangement respecting the succession to the crown only through force and fear. Edward, "late earl of March," was declared a traitor anew, and rewards were offered for his apprehension.

But Edward was now in a situation to proclaim traitors, and to put a price upon other men's heads himself. His victory at Mortimer's Cross produced a great effect. As he marched eastward every town and every village reinforced him, and when he joined the earl of Warwick and collected that nobleman's scattered forces he had an army more than equal to that of the queen. The favour of the Londoners, the cruelties of the queen, and the conduct of the undisciplined troops which she had brought from the north made the balance incline wholly to the side of the Yorkists. It appears that Margaret and her party had no money, and that their troops subsisted by plunder. Wherever they stopped they laid the country bare, making free by the way with whatever they could carry off. After the battle they not only plundered the town of St. Albans but also stripped the rich abbey.<sup>1</sup>

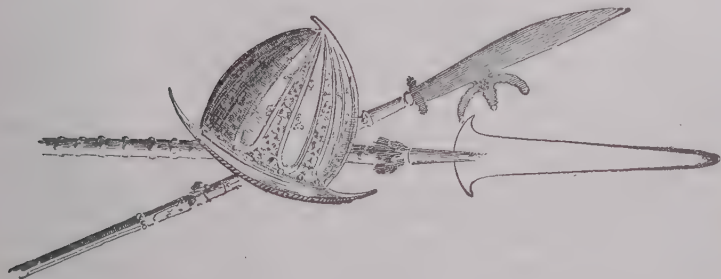
At the same time the Londoners were told that Margaret had threatened to wreak her vengeance upon them for the favour they had so constantly shown to her enemies. She sent from Barnet to the city, demanding supplies of provisions; and the mayor, not knowing as yet that Edward was at hand, loaded some carts with "leuten stuff" for the refreshing of her army; but the people would not suffer them to pass, and, after an affray, stopped them at Cripplegate. During this disturbance some four hundred of the queen's horse, who had ridden from Barnet, plundered the northern suburbs of the city, and would have entered one of the gates, had they not been stoutly met and repulsed by the common people. A day or two after, on the 25th of February, the united forces of Edward and Warwick appeared in view, and were received as friends and deliverers. The northern army was in full retreat from St. Albans, and Edward, who was a stranger to the scruples and indecision of his more amiable father, was fully resolved to seize the throne at once. He rode through the city like a king and a conqueror; and he was carried forward to his object by a high stream of popularity and the enthusiastic feelings of the people, who could not sufficiently admire his youth, beauty, and spirit, or pity his family misfortunes.

<sup>1</sup> The plunder of the abbey entirely changed the worthy abbot's politics, and, from a zealous Lancastrian, Whethamstede became a Yorkist.

[1461 A.D.]

The lord Falconberg got up a grand review of part of the army in St. John's Field, and a great number of the substantial citizens assembled with the multitude to witness this sight. Of a sudden, Falconberg and the bishop of Exeter, one of Warwick's brothers, addressed the multitude thus assembled touching the offences, crimes, and deceits of the late government—the long-proved incapacity of Henry—the usurpation and false title through which he had obtained the throne; and then the orators asked if they would have this Henry to reign over them any longer. The people with one voice cried "Nay, nay."

Falconberg, or the bishop, then expounded the just title of Edward, formerly earl of March, and drew a flattering but not untrue picture of his valour, activity, and abilities. Then they asked the people if they would serve, love, and obey Edward; and the people of course shouted, "Yea, yea!" crying, "King Edward! King Edward!" with much shouting and clapping of hands. On the following day, the 2d of March, a great council, consisting of lords spiritual and temporal, deliberated and declared, without any reference to the authority of parliament, which never met till eight months after, that Henry of Lancaster, by joining the queen's forces, had broken faith and violated the award of the preceding year, and thereby forfeited the crown to the heir of the late duke of York, whose rights by birth had been proved and established. On the 4th of March Edward rode royally to Westminster, followed by an immense procession. There he at once mounted the throne which his father had only touched with a faltering hand; and from that vantage-ground he explained to a favourable audience the doctrine of hereditary right and the claims of his family. The people frequently interrupted him with their acclamations. He then proceeded to the abbey church, where he repeated the same discourse, and where he was again interrupted by shouts of "Long live King Edward!" On the same day he was proclaimed in the usual manner in different parts of the city. At the time he took these bold steps Edward was not twenty-one years old.<sup>c</sup>





QUEEN MARGARET'S ENCAMPMENT ON THE BATTLE-FIELD OF TEWKESBURY

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE REIGN OF EDWARD IV

[1461-1483 A.D.]

#### BATTLE OF TOWTON (1461 A.D.)

INSTEAD of staying in London to enjoy the pageant and festivity of a coronation, Edward was obliged to take the field instantly and face the horrors of a war which became more and more merciless. The Lancastrians, after their retreat from St. Albans, had gathered in greater force than ever behind the Trent and the Humber; and by the middle of March they took up ground in the neighbourhood of the city of York, being, horse and foot together, sixty thousand strong. Their chief commander was the duke of Somerset, who acted in concert with Queen Margaret; for Henry still lay helpless at York, and Prince Edward, Margaret's son, was only eight years old. Instead of awaiting their attack in the southern counties, the Yorkists determined to meet them on their own ground in the north. This resolution was adopted by the advice of the earl of Warwick, who set out at once with the van of the army. Edward closely followed him; and, partly through goodwill to him and his cause, and still more from an anxious wish to prevent a second visit from the northern army, the men of the south flocked to his advancing banner, and by the time he reached Pontefract castle he was at the head of an army of forty-nine thousand men.

England had never before witnessed such a campaign as this. There was no generalship displayed;<sup>1</sup> the ordinary precautions and manœuvres of war were despised, and Yorkists and Lancastrians moved on in furious masses, with no other plan than to meet and strike. They met in full force at Towton on the 28th of March, and began a general combat in the midst of a terrible snow-storm. They fought from nine o'clock in the morning till three in the afternoon, when the Lancastrians, who were more numerous than their adversaries but not so well armed and equipped, were driven from the field, upon

[<sup>1</sup>The rapid concentration of the Yorkist forces, the prompt advance, the unhesitating attack, but above all the determined onslaught, by which the Lancastrian centre was shattered, were so characteristic of Edward IV's generalship that we cannot hesitate to ascribe to his presence the victory of Towton Field.—RAMSAY.c]



[1461 A.D.]

which they left twenty-eight thousand dead—a far greater number than had fallen in battle on the side of the English during the whole French war.

Edward, who had none of the generous or merciful feelings of youth, had ordered that no quarter should be given. The earl of Northumberland and six northern barons died fighting; the earls of Devonshire and Wiltshire were taken prisoners and beheaded as traitors. The duke of Somerset, the commander-in-chief, escaped with the duke of Exeter to York, whence they fled rapidly to the Scottish borders, carrying with them Queen Margaret, her son, and her husband. The previous battles of the Roses sink into insignificance when compared with this mighty slaughter: the loss on both sides had hitherto usually ranged between the moderate numbers of three hundred and five or six thousand; but at Towton there perished, between Yorkists and Lancastrians, thirty-eight thousand men.<sup>a</sup>

Edward entered York a very short time after the flight of Henry, and having decapitated some of his prisoners and stuck their heads upon the walls, from which he took down the heads of his father and young brother, he continued his march as far north as Newcastle. The people submitted to the conqueror, whose hands were yet reeking with the blood shed at Towton; but the Scots, who had contracted a close alliance with Henry, were disposed to give him further trouble. But Edward, confident in his officers, and impatient for his coronation, soon left the army and returned to London. On the 29th of June he was crowned at Westminster with the usual solemnities; and he then created his brother George duke of Clarence, and his brother Richard duke of Gloucester.

The Scots, who had been gratified by the gift of their old town of Berwick, laid siege to Carlisle, and assisted Margaret in making an incursion into the county of Durham; but both these operations were unsuccessful. Henry, who was carried about by the Lancastrians, had a narrow escape from being made prisoner near Durham; and the Scottish army before Carlisle was defeated with great loss by Lord Montague, one of Edward's commanders. By the time the new king assembled his first parliament, which was not till the 4th of November, all opposition had disappeared, and there was no armed force on foot in England, except such bands of his victorious army as he could afford to keep embodied. As the chiefs of the Lancastrian party were all proscribed, or about to be so, as some of the peers were absent and others intimidated, and as the house of commons and the city of London were declared and enthusiastic Yorkists, no opposition was to be apprehended.

An act was passed to declare Edward's just title. No allusion was made to the mental derangement or incapacity of Henry, or to any of those demerits in the late government which might have justified this revolution. The position assumed was the high ground of legitimacy. After stating Edward's right by descent, the act proceeded to declare the three kings of the Lancastrian line tyrants and usurpers, and to recite how, upon the 4th day of the month of March last past, Edward had "taken upon him the realm of England and lordship of Ireland, and entered into the exercise of the royal estate, dignity, and pre-eminence, having on the same 4th day of March removed Henry, late called Henry VI, son to Henry, son to the said Henry, late

[<sup>a</sup> Ramsay,<sup>c</sup> who has made a particular study of the number of men engaged in battles, while agreeing that the combined forces at Towton "clearly exceeded those of any domestic battle" during the wars of the Roses, is still very conservative, and declares that the statements which placed the number at sixty thousand, thirty thousand, or even twenty thousand must be utterly rejected. On the same principle the thirty-eight thousand slain will shrink to thirty-five hundred.]

earl of Derby, son to John of Gaunt, from the occupation, intrusion, reign, and government of the realm." The act thus confirmed Edward's title, and fixed the commencement of his reign from the 4th of March, the day on which he had been proclaimed. The other proceedings of the parliament were in keeping with this act: the grants made by the three Henrys were resumed, with certain exceptions, and bills of attainder were passed against the expelled king, the queen, Prince Edward, the dukes of Somerset and Exeter, the earls of Northumberland, Devonshire, Wiltshire, and Pembroke, the lords Beaumont, De Roos, Nevil, Rougemont, Dacre, and Hungerford, and 150 knights, esquires, and priests. Considering the fearful thinning the party had undergone on the bloody field of Towton, this proscription must have included most of the great heads of the Lancastrian faction. As usual in such cases, the loyalty of the Yorkists was gratified and enlivened with gifts of the forfeited estates. Before the dissolution Edward made a gracious speech to the commons, thanking them for the "tender and true hearts" they had shown unto him, and promising to be unto them a "very right wise and loving lord."

#### THE REVOLTS IN THE NORTH (1462-1464 A.D.)

If the deposed Henry had been left to himself he would have found peace, and as much happiness as he was susceptible of, within the walls of some religious house; but Margaret was as resolute and as active as ever, and nothing was left to the proscribed nobles but their desperate swords. The queen, on finding her intrigues in Scotland counteracted by the money and the large promises of Edward, passed over to France. The duke of Brittany, pitying her forlorn condition, gave her a little money; but Louis XI, who had succeeded in the preceding year to his father Charles VII, was a most cunning, cautious prince—one that never gave anything without an equivalent, immediate or prospective, and who had even less family affection than the generality of kings. Louis explained how poor he was, how distracted the state of his kingdom; but when Margaret spoke of delivering up Calais as the price of his aid, he turned a more ready ear. He was not, however, in a condition to do much; and all that the fugitive queen obtained from him was the sum of 20,000 crowns, and about two thousand men under the command of Pierre de Brézé, seneschal of Normandy, who, it appears, raised most of the men at his own expense.

Such a reinforcement was not likely to turn the tide of victory. Margaret, however, returned to England and threw herself into Northumberland, where she was joined by the English exiles and some troops from the borders of Scotland. But she was obliged to flee when the earl of Warwick advanced with twenty thousand men: the French got back to their ships. A storm assailed her flying ships; the vessels that bore her money and stores were wrecked on the coast, and she and De Brézé reached Berwick in a wretched fishing-boat. This was in the month of November. In December, Bamborough and Dunstanburgh surrendered, on condition that the duke of Somerset, Sir Richard Percy, and some others should be restored to their estates and honours upon taking oaths of allegiance to Edward; and that the earl of Pembroke, the lord De Roos, and the rest of the garrisons of the two places should be allowed to retire in safety to Scotland. Alnwick castle was garrisoned by more determined men, but Warwick got possession of it by capitulation early in January.

Edward gave Alnwick to Sir John Ashley, and this circumstance converted Sir Ralph Grey from a very violent Yorkist into a very violent Lancastrian,



THE DUKE OF EXETER IN EXILE, BEGGING FROM DOOR TO DOOR AFTER  
THE DEFEAT OF THE LANCASTRIANS AT HEXHAM

(Drawn for THE HISTORIANS' HISTORY OF THE WORLD by H. D. Nichols)





[1463-1464 A.D.]

for Grey had expected to get Alnwick for himself. This kind of sudden political conversion became very prevalent. Somerset and Percy got back their lands, and their attainders were reversed in parliament. King Henry was now conveyed for safety to one of the strongest castles in Wales. Margaret sailed once more from Scotland, to solicit foreign aid. She landed at Sluys, in Flanders, attended by De Brézé, the duke of Exeter, and a small body of English exiles. Philip, duke of Burgundy and lord of Flanders, with all the adjoining country, was the same Duke Philip that had so long been the ally of the Lancastrians, and that had repeatedly sworn oaths of fealty to Henry; but in his old age he had become cautious and reserved. He had no wish to quarrel with the predominant faction in England; his subjects of Flanders were intolerant of all measures likely to interrupt their trade with the English; the duke therefore gave Margaret some money to supply her immediate wants, and sent her with an honourable escort to her father in Lorraine. But patience was a virtue little known to Margaret of Anjou, who, though she remained some years on the Continent, never remitted her endeavours to raise up enemies against Edward, and stir the people of England to fresh revolts.

As early as the month of April (1464) the Lancastrians were again in the field. The duke of Somerset, in spite of his recent submission, flew to the north, where Percy had raised the banner of King Henry, who had been brought from Wales to give the sanction of his presence to this ill-arranged insurrection. Lord Montague, brother to the earl of Warwick, scattered their forces or prevented their joining: he defeated Percy on the 25th of April, at Hedgeley Moor, near Wooler; he surprised Somerset on the 15th of May, at Hexham. Percy died fighting; the duke of Somerset and the lords De Roos and Hungerford were taken and beheaded, and their deaths were followed by a series of executions at Newcastle, Durham, and York. Sir Ralph Grey, who had been out in this affair with the Lancastrians, was taken by the earl of Warwick in the castle of Bamborough some weeks later. Edward treated Grey with the utmost severity; his knightly spurs were stricken off by the king's cook: his coat-of-arms was torn from his body, and another coat, reversed, put upon his back; he was sent barefoot to the town's end, and then he was laid down on a hurdle and drawn to a scaffold, where his head was struck off.

King Henry lurked for a long time among the moors of Lancashire and Westmoreland. About a year after the battle of Hexham he removed into Yorkshire, where he was recognised by some persons of the opposite faction, or, as some say, betrayed by a monk. In the month of July he was seized in Waddington Hall, as he was sitting at dinner, by the servants of Sir James Harrington, who forwarded the royal prisoner to the capital. As the captive king rode through Islington he was met by the earl of Warwick, who lodged him safely in the Tower.

## KING EDWARD'S MARRIAGE (1464 A.D.)

The destruction of the greatest of his enemies, the flight of Queen Margaret, the captivity of her husband, the truces and treaties he had concluded with Scotland, with the king of France, with the duke of Burgundy, the duke of Brittany, the kings of Denmark, Poland, Castile, and Aragon, and the congratulations of the pope on his accession, seemed to prove that Edward's throne was safe and unassailable; but a sudden passion for a beautiful woman—the least dishonourable and ungenerous passion he ever indulged in—shook the throne until it fell; and he, in his turn, became for a season a fugitive in foreign lands.

Jacquetta, once duchess of Bedford, was still living with her second husband, Sir Richard Woodville, or Wydeville. One day Edward paid this lady a visit at her manor of Grafton, near Stony-Stratford. By accident or design Jacquetta had with her at the time of this visit her beautiful daughter Elizabeth, who was widow of Sir John Grey, a Lancastrian who had been slain in the second battle of St. Albans and whose estates had been forfeited. This young widow threw herself at the feet of the young and amorous sovereign, imploring him to reverse the attainder of Sir John Grey in favour of her innocent and helpless children. Whether the effect of this touching appeal was foreseen or not, it seems quite certain that the experienced Jacquetta contrived to turn it to the best account for the advantage of her daughter, and that it was through her ingenious manœuvres that the impetuous Edward was induced to contract a private marriage with Elizabeth at Grafton on the morning of the 1st of May, 1464. The fears of Edward induced him to keep this union a profound secret for some months; but on the 29th of September, having prepared his friends and gathered around him the relations and connections of his wife, who, notwithstanding their having been all of them Lancastrians, were not slow in changing their politics when Elizabeth became queen, he summoned a great council of the prelates and lay lords to meet in the royal abbey of Reading. There the king's brother, the duke of Clarence, and the earl of Warwick, who are generally supposed to have been incensed at the unequal and impolitic marriage, took the fair Elizabeth by the hand and introduced her to the august assembly, by which she was welcomed as their good and right queen.

In the month of December following Edward summoned another great council at Westminster; which settled upon his wife 4,000 marks a year. Early in the following year he began to make preparations for her coronation; Jacquetta, who was come of a princely line, suggested or seconded an invitation which Edward sent to her brother James of Luxemburg; and James came over with a retinue of one hundred knights and esquires to do honour to the coronation of his niece. On Saturday, the 25th of May, Elizabeth was paraded in a horse-litter through the streets of London, being most richly attired, and escorted by thirty-eight new-made knights of the Bath, four of whom were citizens of London; and on Sunday she was crowned at Westminster. The feasts, the tournaments, and public rejoicings which followed were unusually magnificent.

Up to this time Edward had left most of the offices and emoluments of government to the great family of the Nevils, to whom he indisputably owed his crown. Warwick, the eldest brother, was chief minister, general, and admiral; he held, besides, the post of warden of the West Marches, chamberlain, and governor of Calais—the last the most profitable of all. The second brother, the lord Montague, after his victories at Hedgeley Moor and Hexham, had received the title and forfeited estates of the Percys, earls of Northumberland, and he had the wardenship of the East Marches besides. The youngest brother, whom Edward had found bishop of Exeter, had received the seals as chancellor on the 10th of March, 1461, six days after Edward's accession, and he had very recently been raised to the archiepiscopal see of York. Other members of the family had found most liberal provisions in the spoil and estates of the Lancastrian families; and while Edward had employed himself in the pursuit of pleasure, the Nevils had had their own way in the council.

But now the Woodvilles, the Greys, all the relations and connections of the new queen, rushed to the table with an enormous and indiscriminating appetite, every man, in right of consanguinity, seeking a title, an estate, a



[1465-1467 A.D.]

place, or a rich wife. The court had great influence in such matters; and as the fortunes of the family had taken a turn by an unexpected marriage, they seem to have determined to pursue the system, and actually contracted five or six profitable alliances in a very short time. In one of these matches they clashed with the Nevils. Warwick had solicited the hand of the heiress of the duke of Exeter for his own nephew; but by the superior influence of Elizabeth, this young lady was contracted to Thomas Grey, her eldest son by her former marriage. The Nevils were incensed at this measure, and other things trenching on their monopoly soon followed. The queen's father, now created Earl Rivers, was made treasurer in the place of their friend Lord Mountjoy; and, shortly after, the hitherto insignificant husband of Jacquetta was made lord high constable, in lieu of the earl of Worcester. Other great families were irritated by the queen's absorbing five heirs of dukes or earls for her five unmarried sisters. For a time the history of this reign is nothing but a scandalous chronicle of match-making and match-breaking, and selfish family intrigues.

#### THE FRENCH AND FLEMISH MARRIAGE NEGOTIATIONS

In 1467 a marriage was negotiated for Edward's sister, Margaret of York, whose hand was solicited by Charles, count of Charolais, heir to Philip, duke of Burgundy, and by Louis XI of France, Charles' deadly enemy, for one of his sons. This count of Charolais, who in a very few months succeeded to his father, and who obtained the name of Charles the Rash [or the Bold], had always been the declared friend of Henry VI and the Lancastrians; but he changed, like other men, on seeing Edward firmly established, and courted his alliance in the hope that he would assist him against Louis. Edward inclined to these proposals, and was in this probably seconded by the nation, which considered the trade with Flanders as a primary object, and which never was well disposed to French marriages and alliances; but Warwick, who hated the count of Charolais, insisted that it would be more honourable and advantageous to marry Margaret to the French prince.

Edward yielded, or pretended to yield, to his arguments, and commissioned the great earl himself to go over to France and negotiate the alliance. Warwick went with his usual magnificence; and the astute Louis, who beat all his contemporaries in king-craft, received him with the honours usually paid to a sovereign prince. The first interview took place at La Bouille, on the Seine, five leagues from Rouen, on the 7th of June. Warwick then proceeded to the capital of Normandy. "The queen and princesses came likewise to Rouen; and the king remained there with the earl of Warwick the space of twelve days, when the earl returned to England." During the whole or the greater part of the time that Warwick stayed at Rouen the king of France lodged in the next house, and he visited the earl at all hours, passing through a private door with a great air of mystery. This looks like one of the usual mischievous tricks of Louis, who must have known that the best way to weaken and distract the English government was to provoke suspicions and a rupture between Edward and Warwick. The earl arrived in London on the 5th of July, and he was soon followed by the French king's ambassadors, the archbishop of Narbonne and the bastard of Bourbon, who, it appears, were charged to put the finishing hand to the treaty of alliance.

But another more prevailing bastard had been before them. Under pretence of performing a joust with Edward's wife's brother, Anthony Woodville, who,

by marrying the heiress of the late lord, had become Lord Scales, Anthony, bastard of Burgundy, had crossed over to England while Warwick was absent in France. According to the chronicler, this visitor performed his deeds of arms much to his credit; but the encounter did not last long—"for," says Monstrelet,<sup>e</sup> "as it was done to pleasure the king of England, he would not suffer the combat to continue fierce any time, so that it seemed rather for pastime." Indeed, Messire Anthony had come on another errand than to get his bones broken in Smithfield, where the joust was held. He was commissioned by the count of Charolais to press the match with Margaret, and he had obtained the promise of Edward, who overlooked the commission he had given Warwick to treat with King Louis. If afterwards any obstacle arose, it was removed by the sudden death of Duke Philip, which happened at Bruges on the 15th of July, and which left to the count, his heir, the succession of states and territories which exceeded in wealth, if not in extent, the whole kingdom of France as then possessed by Louis. Such a suitor was sure to prevail over a weak young French prince with nothing but a narrow and uncertain appanage.

But weighty as were these considerations, they did not prevent the proud earl of Warwick from considering himself juggled, insulted, and disgraced; and as the king, who had resigned himself to the counsels of the queen's relations, took no steps to soothe his irritation, he soon retired, in the worst of humours, to his castle of Middleham. Edward, upon this, pretended to be in danger from treasonable attempts: he no longer moved anywhere without a strong body-guard of archers, and he, or his court, circulated reports that Warwick had been won by Louis, and that that king considered him secretly disposed to restore the line of Lancaster. The Nevils were now expelled from court; but the youngest of the brothers, George, archbishop of York and chancellor, notwithstanding the family resentment, put himself forward as an arbitrator and peacemaker; and chiefly by his means a reconciliation was effected in the beginning of the following year (1468).

#### WARWICK AND CLARENCE

Warwick presented himself again at court and in the capital, where he was hailed by the people. He appeared with the king and queen in some public pageants, but he could not tolerate the abridgment of his influence. The Woodvilles and the Greys, on the other hand, thought that he was still too powerful; and Edward, who desired a life of ease and pleasure, was annoyed by the stern interference of the man who had made him a king. It was soon understood that all this was likely to end in another field of Towton.

The duke of Clarence, second brother to King Edward, was considered next male heir to the throne; for Edward as yet had only daughters by his marriage with Elizabeth. The duke's position probably made him an object of suspicion and dislike to the queen, and at the same time of ambitious speculation to Warwick, whose society he much affected. The earl had a daughter, the fair Isabella, who, it appears, inspired the young prince with a sincere and, for a time, uncalculating passion. Edward and the queen's party endeavoured to prevent the union; but, in spite of all opposition, the duke of Clarence married the lady Isabella at Calais, in the month of July, 1469.

While the earl of Warwick and his brother, the archbishop of York, were engaged abroad with this ceremony, an insurrection of the farmers and

[1469 A.D.]

peasants of Yorkshire broke out, and assumed a very alarming character; and it appears that Warwick's other brother, the earl of Northumberland, who was on the spot, did little to crush it. The rallying words of the insurgents varied several times; but at last they fixed in a general cry for the removal of the queen's relations—the taxers and oppressors—from the council. Edward advanced as far as Newark; but his army was weak and unsteady, and he fled, rather than retreated, to Nottingham. From Nottingham castle he wrote letters with his own hand to Calais, beseeching his brother Clarence, Warwick, and the archbishop to come immediately to his assistance. These personages did not appear for some weeks, and in the interval a royal army, under the command of the earl of Pembroke, was defeated at Edgecote on the 26th of July. Pembroke fell in the battle, and it is said that five thousand of his men perished with him. The insurgents, in a hot pursuit, overtook and captured in the forest of Dean the earl Rivers, the father, and Sir John Woodville, one of the brothers of the queen; they carried these victims to Northampton, and there cut off both their heads. The earl of Devon, whose folly and pride had been the real cause of the wretched defeat at Edgecote, was also taken and beheaded.

The court believed that the insurgents in these executions acted under orders received from Clarence and his father-in-law Warwick.<sup>1</sup> These great personages, with the archbishop of York, now arrived in England, and being joined by the archbishop of Canterbury, they repaired in a very friendly manner to Olney, where they found Edward in a most unhappy condition: his friends were dead or scattered, fleeing for their lives or hiding themselves in remote places; the insurgents were almost upon him. A word from Warwick sent the rebels quietly back to the north; but the king was scarcely

freed from that danger ere he found that he was a prisoner in the hands of his pretended liberators, who presently carried him to the strong castle of Middleham. Thus England had two kings, and both prisoners.

At this remarkable crisis the Lancastrians rose in arms in the marches of Scotland, and after some trifling successes in those parts meditated an advance into the south. Warwick had at this moment no notion of restoring Henry. In conjunction with the parliament, he summoned all loyal subjects to the standard of King Edward, and immediately marched northward to meet these new insurgents. The murmurs of the army compelled him to release his captive, and at York Edward was presented to the troops as a free and happy king. Warwick then went on and dispersed the Lancastrians: he took their leader prisoner, and brought him to Edward, who ordered his

<sup>1</sup> It seems, however, probable that the unfortunate men were sacrificed by the spontaneous fury of the people. The earl of Devon was beheaded at Bridgewater.



MONT ORGUEIL CASTLE, JERSEY

(Captured by Maulevrier, Seneschal of Normandy during the wars of the Roses. In 1467 recaptured by the English)



immediate execution. Soon after—but not before Warwick and his associates had exacted sundry grants and places—Edward was allowed to return to London, where, for the first time since his leaving Olney, he became really free. Then family treaties were signed, pledges given, and the most solemn oaths interchanged—each party binding itself to forgive and forget all that had passed. Edward was to love his brother Clarence as before; and even the insurgents of Yorkshire and other parts were included in an amnesty.

In the month of February, 1470, when this family peace had lasted about twelve weeks, the archbishop of York gave an entertainment to the king, the duke of Clarence, and the earl of Warwick, at his manor of the Moor, in Hertfordshire. As Edward was washing his hands previous to supper, an attendant whispered in his ear that an armed band was lurking near the house. Without his supper, and without any examination as to the correctness of this report, the king got secretly to horse, and, riding all night, reached Windsor castle. The duchess of York, the mother of the king and the friend of Warwick, laboured to dispel these jealousies and animosities, and another hollow reconciliation was brought about. But then there broke out an insurrection among the commons of Lincolnshire, who complained of the extortions and oppressions of the purveyors and other officers of the royal household. Although he believed that this new disorder was their own work, the king was obliged to permit the duke of Clarence and the earl of Warwick to take the command of some forces destined for its suppression. Edward, however, marched from a different point with a more numerous army; and, after some faithless and savage deeds, he came up with the insurgents before Clarence and Warwick could reach them, and beat them in a sanguinary battle which was fought on the 12th of March, at Empingham, in Rutlandshire. The common insurgents were permitted to depart, but all the leaders who had not fallen in battle were sent to the block.

#### FLIGHT OF WARWICK

The king then turned openly against his brother Clarence and Warwick, who, it was said, would have joined the insurgents on the following day. After some military manœuvres and long marches, the duke and the earl found it necessary to disband their forces and listen to conditions which the king offered by proclamation from the city of York. These terms were not very harsh, if they had been honourably meant; but they were not, and this was well known. Warwick therefore turned from the north, fled into Devonshire, and, with his wife, daughter, and several other ladies, his son-in-law Clarence, and a considerable number of friends, embarked at Dartmouth and made sail for Calais. But when, after a tedious navigation, he reached his old place of refuge, he found the artillery of Calais pointed against his ships, and on seeking an explanation, learned that a Gascon knight, whom he had left there as his lieutenant, was advised of all that had recently passed in England, and was resolved to keep the place for King Edward.

Warwick then sailed away for the coast of Normandy, to seek a temporary asylum with his cunning friend King Louis, who was right glad to see him as he was; for in the preceding year, as soon as Warwick had made his peace with Edward, it had been resolved to join the duke of Burgundy, who was at war with the French, and to send a great English army to the Continent. It was in the month of May that Warwick, Clarence, and their families landed at Harfleur, where the lord admiral of France received them all with great

[1470 A.D.]

respect, showing much gallantry to the ladies. Their vessels were admitted into the harbour, though they were numerous enough to excite some suspicion. Though a truce had been concluded, Louis was exasperated against his nominal vassal Charles the Bold, who since his marriage had become wholly English and Yorkist: he wore on all occasions the blue garter on one of his legs and the red cross on his mantle, which, adds the chronicler, plainly showed how fierce an enemy he was to his liege lord the king of France. When the duke Charles heard of the honourable reception given to the fugitives, and of Warwick's men being allowed to sell the captured ships and goods of his subjects in Normandy, he became still more furious, and, by way of reprisal, seized upon all the French merchants who had gone to the fair of Antwerp. Louis, who was prepared for a war, cared little for all this, and gave frequent audience to the fugitives at Tours, Amboise, Vendôme, and other places. He was happy in his own way; for never did sovereign so delight in political manœuvre and intrigue, and never was intrigue more difficult than the one he had now upon his hands.

## RECONCILIATION OF WARWICK AND MARGARET

In the month of June, in the Château of Amboise, the fallen Lancastrian queen Margaret and her son the prince of Wales met (at first by secret appointment) their old enemy the earl of Warwick. It was a scene for Shakespeare. Warwick had accused the queen of an attempt to murder him, and he knew her to have been the person that had sent his own father, his friends, and associates to the block. Margaret had cursed the name of Warwick for fifteen long years of misfortune and humiliation. Through that nobleman's means her husband was a prisoner, and she and her son, after suffering the extremity of privation and peril, were exiles and wanderers, dependent on the stinted bounty of relations or political friends.

But even the vengeance and hatred of Margaret of Anjou could give way to higher considerations, and when Warwick joined in cursing Edward of York, and engaged to restore the Lancastrian line either in the person of her husband or her son, she took him to her heart as a friend and brother. The great earl, however, did not engage to do all this without driving another of his hard bargains. Margaret's son, Prince Edward, married the lady Anne, Warwick's second daughter; and thus, though he destroyed the prospects of Isabella, duchess of Clarence, he still provided, and in a more direct manner, that one of his children should be queen of England. "An unaccountable match this," exclaims Comines, "to dethrone and imprison the father, and then marry his daughter to the son; but this was by King Louis' adroit management." "It was no less surprising," continues the chronicler, who wrote of state matters with the knowledge of a statesman and diplomatist, "that he should delude the duke of Clarence, brother to the king whom he opposed, who ought, in reason, to have dreaded and endeavoured to prevent the restoration of the house of Lancaster; but affairs of this nice nature are to be managed with great craft and artifice, and not without."

Up to this point it seems pretty evident that Warwick's scheme was to place his first son-in-law, the duke of Clarence, upon the throne instead of his brother Edward; but this plan would never have found favour in the sight of King Louis, whose assistance was indispensable, and even the all-prevailing Warwick might have doubted whether the Yorkists, to whom he must have addressed himself in this case, would have been mad enough to divide against

each other, and endanger a revolution which had been effected with such difficulty. The Lancastrian party, on the contrary, weakened though it was, was quite ready for another desperate plunge into the vortex; and Warwick, who was determined to recover his ascendancy and vast property, and to be revenged on him whom he considered the ungrateful king of his own making, by whatsoever means that offered, did not despair, when allied with Margaret and her son, of making that party believe in the sincerity of his conversion, though he had slaughtered their relations and friends in the field and on the scaffold.

#### CLARENCE TURNS TO THE KING

The duke of Clarence was at this time not much more than twenty-one years old, and, judging from all that is recorded of him, he must have conjoined a weak, bad head to a very indifferent heart. He was not, however, so far gone in fatuity as to be insensible to Warwick's startling alliance—perilous to the whole house of York—or to be blind to his own false position; and now an excellent negotiator came to him from his brother's court in the person of a fair lady. Comines,<sup>f</sup> who was actively engaged in some of these transactions as friend, agent, and confidential minister of the duke of Burgundy, and who had gone to Calais to keep the lieutenant-governor "true to his principles," tells us that one day a lady of quality passed through that town into France to join the duchess of Clarence. "But," he adds, "the secret business to be managed by this lady was to implore the duke of Clarence not to contribute to the subversion of his own family, by going along with those who were endeavouring to restore the house of Lancaster—to remember their old insolences, and the hereditary hatred that was between them, and not to be so infatuated as to imagine that the earl of Warwick, who had married his daughter to the prince of Wales and sworn allegiance already, would not endeavour to put that prince upon the throne to the exclusion of all the Yorkists. This lady managed the affair with so much cunning and dexterity that she prevailed with the duke to go over to King Edward's party, the duke desiring first to be in England. This lady was no fool nor blabber; and being on her way to join her mistress the duchess of Clarence, she, for that reason, was employed in this secret mission rather than a man."

This mission appears to have been the sole precaution taken by Edward or his court at this crisis. "The king seemed never concerned at anything," continues Comines,<sup>f</sup> "but still followed his gallantries and his hunting; and nobody was so great with him as the archbishop of York and the marquis of Montague, both brothers to the earl of Warwick: these swore to be true to him against all enemies whatsoever, and the thoughtless king put an entire confidence in them." His brother-in-law, Charles the Bold, was both prudent and active on this occasion: he got ready a strong fleet to blockade Harfleur and the mouth of the Seine; he sent Edward word of the very port where Warwick designed to land; and as the sea was an uncertain element, and the earl might break his blockade and escape his ships, he repeatedly warned him to take care of himself and put his kingdom in a posture of defence. But Edward only laughed at these fears: he said he wished his adversary were landed; and only begged the duke to keep a good look-out at sea, so as to prevent the earl from again escaping into France, when he, Edward, should have beaten him in battle on land.



[1470 A.D.]

## THE RETURN OF WARWICK AND RESTORATION OF HENRY (1470 A.D.)

Warwick did not make him wait long. The duke of Burgundy's fleet, which lay in battle array at Havre, was dispersed by a storm: as soon as the weather cleared Warwick set sail with a fair wind, and on the 13th of September landed safely on the Devonshire coast. Edward at the moment was in the north, whither, it appears, he had been drawn by a feigned revolt, headed by some of the Nevils. The great earl had not been landed above five or six days before the whole country flocked to his standard. "Fully furnished on every side by his kindred and friends," writes Hall,<sup>9</sup> "he took his way towards London, where he expected to find more open friends than privy enemies." The capital, indeed, had been greatly excited by one Doctor Goddard, who had preached at St. Paul's Cross in favour of the king in the Tower; and, in the neighbourhood, the men of Kent had taken up arms.

As London seemed secure, and as news was brought that Edward had retraced his steps to Nottingham, Warwick soon changed his direction and marched straight towards the Trent, summoning every man between the ages of sixteen and sixty to join him. Edward, in the mean time, found that the men he summoned did not come, and that those who were with him began to desert. One day, as he sat at dinner, news was brought him that the marquis of Montague, Warwick's brother, and several other persons of quality, had mounted their horses and caused the soldiers to toss their bonnets in the air, and cry "God bless King Harry!" Edward was at this moment in Lincolnshire, near the river Welland; he instantly armed himself, and posted a battalion of his guards at a neighbouring bridge in order to prevent the passage of the enemy, for Warwick's van was within half a day's march of him. The lord Hastings was with Edward with a body of three thousand horse; but Hastings had married a sister of the earl of Warwick, and while the king had probably no great confidence in him,<sup>1</sup> the soldiers possibly had no great affection for the queen's brother, Earl Rivers, who was also in attendance. Edward, at all events, determined to flee; and as his bravery was always conspicuous, we must conclude that resistance was hopeless.

It happened that his quarters were at no great distance from the sea, and a small ship that followed with provisions for his army lay at anchor with two Dutch vessels hard by, apparently in the Wash. He had but just time to get on board these vessels, with a few lords and knights and about three hundred men. Before leaving the rest, they were exhorted to go and join the earl of Warwick, pretending great friendship, but at the same time to retain secretly in their hearts their old affection and allegiance to King Edward. The three vessels presently weighed anchor: not one in twenty of Edward's followers knew where they were going, and they were all without any clothes except the warlike gear they had on their backs, and no money had they in their pockets.

Edward sailed directly for Holland. The Easterlings, who joined the calling of privateers to that of merchants, and who at times appear to have been pirates as lawless and cruel as the corsairs of Tunis or Algiers, were then at war both with the English and the French; they had many ships in the narrow seas, and had done the English much prejudice this year already. Eight of these Easterlings gave chase to Edward's weak squadron. Edward

<sup>1</sup> Hastings, however, remained true to Edward, accompanied him in his flight, contributed to his return, and continued to serve him faithfully, with the exception of taking "bribes from France."

ran his ships ashore on the coast of Holland, near the small town of Alkmaar. Gruthuyse, the governor or stadholder of Holland, Friesland, and Zealand, was at that time in Alkmaar, and he, by his prompt protection, saved the whole party from captivity—for the Easterlings had brought their ships close in shore, and only waited the turn of the tide to board the three vessels. "The king," says Comines,<sup>f</sup> "having no money, was forced to give the master of his ship a gown lined with martens, and to promise to do more for him another time; and sure so poor a company was never seen before: yet the lord de la Gruthuyse dealt very honourably by them, giving them clothes, and bearing all their expenses till they came to The Hague, to which place he safely conducted them." From The Hague the governor despatched news to the duke of Burgundy, Edward's loving brother-in-law, "who," adds the chronicler, "was much surprised when he heard it, and would have been much better pleased if it had been news of Edward's death, for he was in great apprehension of the earl of Warwick, who was his enemy, and now become absolute in England." On the other side, King Louis, whose many agents soon carried him the intelligence, was overjoyed, and, being a religious sovereign, he gave orders that the nobles, the clergy, and the good people of Paris should make processions in honour of God and the Virgin Mary, and continue them for three days, with praise and thanksgiving for the great victory which Henry of Lancaster, lawful king of England, had gained over the foul usurper, the earl of March, as also in gratitude for the happy peace that would now subsist between the two countries. Processions were afterwards performed in all the principal towns in Louis' dominions.

Warwick was now possessed, in appearance, of all the power in England. From the neighbourhood of the Welland he turned back upon London, which he entered in triumph on the 6th of October, in company with Clarence—for as yet this son-in-law concealed his hostile projects. Warwick went directly to the Tower and released King Henry, whom five years before he had himself committed to that prison. "When he imprisoned him," says Comines,<sup>f</sup> "he went before Henry, crying 'Treason! treason!' and 'Behold the traitor!'—but now he proclaimed him king, attended him to his palace at Westminster, and restored him to his royal title; and all this in the presence of the duke of Clarence, who was not at all pleased with the sight." A great number of persons of the first rank, who were in King Edward's interest, and who afterwards did him good service, took sanctuary in different religious houses. The queen, with her mother Jacquetta and her three daughters, had fled to the sanctuary of Westminster,<sup>1</sup> where, being in great want of all things necessary, Queen Elizabeth was shortly after delivered of her first son.

Save that of the earl of Worcester, who was hated for his severity by the people, no blood was shed in this rapid revolution. We are left in the dark as to the proceedings of the parliament which met in the month of November, for its acts were erased from the rolls at the subsequent counter-revolution. It is stated, however, on good authority, that an act of settlement entailed the crown on Henry's son Edward, prince of Wales, and, in case of that prince's death, on the duke of Clarence. Warwick, of course, would take care to attain his enemies and reward his friends: this "King-maker," in fact, was in all essentials king, and the imbecile Henry was still a captive, and in all probability a more unhappy one than he had been in his undisturbed prison in the Tower.

<sup>1</sup> This noted sanctuary was one of those exempted from suppression by Henry VIII. The church belonging to it was supposed to have been of the time of Edward the Confessor.

[1471 A.D.]

## THE RETURN OF EDWARD

But if Edward had lost a crown like a game at cards, he regained it with equal rapidity. On the 12th of March, 1471, about five months after his flight from the Wash, he appeared with a fleet off the coast of Suffolk, having been assisted in secret by the duke of Burgundy, who played as double a part in this business as might have been expected from his great rival, Louis XI. He had issued a proclamation forbidding any of his subjects to join Edward, but, underhand, he sent him 50,000 florins, with St. Andrew's cross, furnished him with three or four great ships of his own, which he had equipped for him at Veere, in Walcheren, and hired secretly fourteen Easterling ships, all well armed. As Edward's troops, however, did not exceed twelve hundred men, he was deterred from landing in the Wash, on the shores of which was assembled a Lancastrian army; but, bearing to the north, he sailed into the Humber, and landed on the 16th of March at Ravenspur, the place where Henry of Bolingbroke had disembarked when he came to dethrone Richard II. Finding the people in the north not very favourable, he veiled his designs; and even at York he only engaged the citizens to assist him to recover his honour and estate as duke of York, solemnly swearing not to attempt to recover the crown.

A few oaths cost nothing in these times, and in the present case the necessity for dissimulating soon passed. At Pontefract Warwick's brother, the marquis of Montague, who already repented of the revolution he had helped to make, opened a correspondence instead of fighting, and permitted Edward's weak column to march within sight of his quarters, where a great force was collected. As soon as the Yorkists crossed the Trent they were on their own ground, and the people flocked from all sides to the standard of Edward, who then reassumed the royal title. In the neighbourhood of Coventry he found himself in presence of a Lancastrian army, under the command of the earls of Warwick and Oxford, and the duke of Clarence: now was the moment for the latter to act, and, making his men put the White Rose of York over their gorgets, he went over with colours flying to his brother Edward.

Upon this sudden manœuvre of his son-in-law, Warwick found himself compelled to decline the battle which was offered to him, and then Edward threw himself tearlessly between his enemies and the capital, which had forgotten the sermons of Doctor Goddard and the roast-meats of the earl of Warwick, and was once more all for King Edward. Comines attributes the enthusiastic reception he met with in London to three things especially: the first was, he says, the great number of his partisans in sanctuary within the walls, and the recent birth of a young prince; the next, the great debts which he owed to the richest of the merchants, who could only hope for payment through his restoration; and the third was that the ladies of quality and rich citizens' wives, whom he had formerly delighted with his gallantries, forced their husbands and relations to declare themselves of his side. Whatever were their motives, it seems certain that the return of the White Rose of York was hailed with enthusiasm by the citizens.<sup>d</sup> At least there was no resistance. The archbishop obtained a conditional promise of pardon; and on the 11th, when Edward entered the city and rode straight to St. Paul's, the prelate there delivered King Henry to his great enemy.



## THE BATTLE OF BARNET (1471 A.D.)

The next day was Good Friday. On the Saturday Edward led his army out of London; for Warwick had rapidly followed him in his march and had halted at Barnet. His hope was to surprise Edward in London whilst he was occupied in the solemnities of the great festival of the church. The energy of the king was ready for every emergency. On that Easter Eve, the 13th of April, the advance guard of the Yorkists encountered the outposts of the Lancastrians and drove them out of the town of Barnet. Warwick's main force was encamped upon the high ground about half a mile beyond. In the dimness of nightfall Edward's army marched up the steep hill upon which the town is built, and in closed ranks and profound silence they passed through the narrow street and past the ancient church, and so on to the open plain.



DOORWAY OF CHURCH-HOUSE,  
SALISBURY  
(Formerly called Audley House)

"It was right dark," says the eye-witness,<sup>1</sup> so that the king could not see where his enemies were embattled, and therefore took up a position much nearer to them than he had supposed. "But he took not his ground so even in front afore them as he would have done if he might better have seen them; but somewhat a-syden-hand" [on one side]. The ground to the east suddenly declines from the elevated plain; and if Edward took his position "a-syden-hand" in this direction, he would have obtained an accidental advantage of some importance. Warwick had ordnance to defend his front; and as the tramp of men broke the silence "he shot guns almost all the night"; but "it so fortun'd that they

always overshot the king's host." They were nearer than Warwick's gunners thought, and they were upon lower ground.

There is something solemn in this array of two enemies in darkness and deep silence, each ignorant of the exact position of the other—the darkness and the silence interrupted at long intervals by the flash and the boom of a single gun. The morning came, but the obscurity did not vanish. There was little light on Barnet heath on that Easter morning, though peaceful thousands in other parts of England might have risen to see the sun dance, in the beautiful superstition that the firmament gave a token of gladness at this holy dawning. "The king, understanding that the day approached near, betwixt four and five of the clock, notwithstanding there was a great mist, and letted [hindered] the sight of either other," commenced the attack. In that mist English against English fought for three hours, madly, blindly—

[<sup>1</sup> The quoted passages that follow are from the narrative of one of the "king's servants," an eye-witness, who wrote an account of Edward's progress and campaign entitled *A Historie of the Arrivall of King Edward IV.* <sup>h</sup>]

[1471 A.D.]

the left wing of the Yorkists, under Hastings, beaten and flying, whilst the king was rushing on in the centre, unconscious of the discomfiture—the right wing under Gloucester successfully attacking Warwick, whose men, as Oxford returned from his pursuit of Hastings' flying Yorkists, mistook him for an enemy, and received him with a terrible discharge of arrows. All became confusion. Warwick fell fighting on foot; and so his brother Montague.<sup>1</sup>

The King-maker had had the advantage of numbers and of position. The mist, which even in these days of cultivation and drainage rises from the clay lands below Barnet, probably saved Edward from defeat. His random attack on that dark April morning was successful in its impetuosity, through the obscurity which prevented any combined movement of assault on his part or of resistance on the part of his enemy. Edward fought hopefully, in the ignorance that a third of his army had sustained a defeat. Warwick fought desperately without the animating conviction that in another part of the field he had been victorious. Seldom has such a great result been produced out of blind chance and confusion. Edward was completely master of the field.<sup>2</sup> On the afternoon of that Easter Day the king marched back to London and rode straight to St. Paul's; and there was thanksgiving and gratulation, and the steeples gave forth their merry peals, and the people shouted for the young victorious king; and the poor dethroned Henry, who had been led out to Barnet, was led back to the Tower.<sup>3</sup>

[But the one event of the greatest significance on this day was the death of the King-maker.] Richard Nevil (or Neville), earl of Warwick, was descended from a family of note of the north of England, who enjoyed for many generations the title of earls of Westmoreland. His grandmother on his father's side was Joan, daughter of John of Gaunt. He inherited the title of earl of Salisbury from his father, a younger son of Richard Nevil, and by his marriage with Anne, daughter of Richard Beauchamp (under whose tutelage Henry passed his youth), he became earl of Warwick. His descent from John of Gaunt made him naturally a member of the Lancastrian party, but the marriage of his father's sister, Cicely Nevil, to Richard, duke of York, connected him also with the Yorkist house. As first cousin of Edward IV and second cousin of Henry VI he was well fitted for the double part he was destined to play in English history.

[<sup>1</sup> The number of the slain in this battle has been much exaggerated by Yorkist historians, as has also the number of troops engaged. Sir John Paston,<sup>b</sup> who fought under Warwick, is probably nearly correct when he places the number of killed on both sides at one thousand.]

[<sup>2</sup> Ramsay <sup>c</sup> points out that, contrary to recent practice, no indignities were offered to the bodies of the dead leaders. But the magic of Warwick's name was so great that his body and that of Lord Montague were exposed for two days at St. Paul's, lest the contemporary writer <sup>h</sup> explains, "feyned seditious tales" should assert that they were still "on lyve."]



DOORWAY OF COLLEGE COURT  
GLOUCESTER

The career of the King-maker is chiefly remarkable as illustrating the grandeurs and the evils of feudalism. Warwick's landed property was enormous, comprising, according to the deed by which his widow made it over to Henry VII, upwards of one hundred and ten manors, in twenty-one counties, besides the city of Worcester, the islands of Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, and Sark, and various places in Wales. Comines *i* tells us that at Calais he was so popular that everyone wore his badge, "no man esteeming himself gallant whose head was not adorned with his ragged staff." Stow *i* (*Annals*) says that "at his house in London six oxen were usually eaten at a breakfast, and every tavern was full of his meat, for who that had any acquaintance in his family should have as much sodden and roast as he could carry on a long dagger." In a time of civil war and a disputed title to the throne, such a man was naturally too strong for a subject. The restoration of order and the maintenance of the sovereignty of the state rendered inevitable the disappearance of the class so vigorously represented by the "Last of the Barons."<sup>i</sup>

#### THE BATTLE OF TEWKESBURY (1471 A.D.)

The great struggle was not yet over. Queen Margaret had gathered a large army of foreigners and exiles, and she landed at Weymouth on the very day that Warwick had fallen at Barnet. This force had embarked at Honfleur on the 24th of March, and had again and again been driven back by stress of weather. There soon gathered around the queen Somerset, and Devonshire, and other staunch friends. On Easter Monday the news was brought of the battle of Barnet. "She was right heavy and sorry," says Edward's official account. "She, like a woman all dismayed, for fear fell to the ground," writes Hall.<sup>o</sup>

They marched to Exeter, gathering the men of Devonshire and Cornwall as they proceeded, and then took the direct way to Bath. Edward supplied the place of the killed and wounded of his men, and assembled his forces around him at Windsor, where he kept the feast of St. George on the 23d of April. On the 24th he marched forth, seeking his enemies in the west. By weary marches, "in a foul country, all in lanes and stony ways, betwixt woods, without any good refreshing," the Lancastrians reached Tewkesbury, and there determined to make a stand. They took up a strong position "in a close even at the town's end; the town and the abbey at their backs; afore them, and upon every hand of them, foul lanes and deep dikes, and many hedges, and hills and valleys—a right evil place to approach." Edward had followed them, by forced marches, finding little provision on his way, and on the 3d of May "lodged himself and all his host within three miles of them." They met on Saturday, the 4th of May. Strong in their positions, the Lancastrians repulsed the attacking army; but Somerset boldly led his men into the open field by by-paths, and fiercely attacked Edward's flank. He was unsupported by Lord Wenlock, who was to have followed Somerset; was soon overpowered and driven back to his intrenchments, with great slaughter; and in the frenzy of despair he killed his companion-in-arms, whose treachery or fear had betrayed him in the hour of need. The king and his brother Richard pursued their advantage with their wonted impetuosity; and the unfortunate remnant of the adherents of the Red Rose "took them to flight"—some "into lanes and dikes, where they best hoped to escape the danger"; many were drowned at a mill-stream, "in the meadow fast by the town"; many ran



[1471 A.D.]

towards the town, many to the church, to the abbey, and elsewhere, as they best might. The kingdom was won.

It is now for the first time that we find Richard of Gloucester a conspicuous personage in our historical relations. He has been the companion of his brother in his short exile, and has returned with him to fight by his side in his great victories. He is now under twenty years of age. In his conduct at the decisive day of Tewkesbury, the gallantry of the knight is held to have been tarnished by the cruelty of the assassin. The usual account is derived from Polydore Vergil,<sup>a</sup> whose history was written in Latin in the reign of Henry VII. He says: "Edward, the prince, and excellent youth, being brought a little after [the battle] to the speech of King Edward, and demanded how he durst be so bold as to enter and make war in his realm, made answer, with bold mind, that he came to recover his ancient inheritance: hereunto King Edward gave no answer, only thrusting the young man from him with his hand; whom, forthwith, those that were present, George, duke of Clarence, Richard, duke of Gloucester, and William, Lord Hastings, cruelly murdered."

On the other hand, there is the contemporary account of the servant of Edward IV, who says: "In the winning of the field, such as abode hand-strokes were slain incontinent: Edward, called prince, was taken fleeing to the townwards, and slain in the field." Another early record, that of Warkworth,<sup>b</sup> a Lancastrian, gives the same account of young Edward's death in the field, with a circumstantial variation: "And there was slain in the field Prince Edward, which

cried for succour to his brother-in-law, the duke of Clarence." The victory of Tewkesbury was followed by the executions of the duke of Somerset and other Lancastrian leaders, who "divers times" were brought before the king's brother, the duke of Gloucester and constable of England, and the duke of Norfolk, marshal of England, their judges, "and so were judged to death." The judicial slaughters were rendered more atrocious than the ordinary ferocities of both parties after victory, by the circumstance that their fallen enemies were dragged from the sanctuary of the abbey of Tewkesbury, in spite of the promise of Edward that those who had there taken refuge should be pardoned.

On the 7th of May King Edward marched from Tewkesbury to Worcester. On the 11th he was at Coventry, where Queen Margaret, who had been discovered in a small house of religion, where she had taken refuge, was brought to him, and went on to London in the train of the victor.<sup>b</sup> [Within a few days after reaching London Edward had quelled all resistance to his authority and could securely reign.]



TEWKESBURY

## DEATH OF HENRY VI AND DOMESTIC PEACE

Margaret lived for five years the prisoner<sup>1</sup> of her conqueror, was then ransomed by Louis XI, and died in France about eleven years after the fight at Tewkesbury. The death of her husband, which immediately followed Edward's return to London, probably did not much affect her. The triumphant party had now evidently made up their minds to show no mercy; but that event was probably precipitated by a desperate attempt made on the 14th of May, by Thomas Nevil, the bastard of Falconbridge, Warwick's vice-admiral, to release Henry from his confinement and proclaim him once more. On the 21st of May King Edward entered London in great pomp with thirty thousand men, and on that evening, or the following morning, King Henry was found lifeless in the Tower.<sup>d</sup>

That Henry was made away with either by the order or with the knowledge of Edward seems to be pretty well established; and the linking of Richard's name with the deed, even if without possible substantiation, is most natural. The Yorkist writers try to make it appear that his death was natural. The author of the *Arrival*<sup>h</sup> says that when Henry heard the news of Barnet and Tewkesbury "he took it so great despite, ire, and indignation that of pure displeasure and melancholy he died." Warkworth<sup>l</sup> says that he was put to death in the presence of Gloucester, "and on the morrow he was chested, and brought to St. Paul's and his face was open that everyone might see him; and in lying he bled on the pavement there." More<sup>o</sup> and Polydore Vergil<sup>m</sup> had heard it said that Gloucester slew him with his own hand, and Fabyan<sup>n</sup> has it that "he was sticked with a dagger by the hand of the duke of Gloucester."<sup>a</sup>

The dead body, surrounded by guards and torches, was exhibited to the people in St. Paul's, and afterwards quietly buried in the abbey of Chertsey. But this unhappy prince was not allowed rest even in the grave. A few years after, Gloucester, then Richard III, was made uneasy by the popular belief that miracles were wrought at his tomb, and he ordered his bones to be removed—some say to Windsor; then, on the fall of Richard, Henry VII wished to bring them back to Westminster, but it appears that they could not be found.<sup>d</sup>

All the enemies of the house of York were swept away by the sword or the axe, or were in prison or in exile. Margaret of Anjou was a captive in the Tower, with a small allowance. The duke of Exeter, who had escaped from Barnet to the sanctuary of Westminster, perished at sea the next year. Vere, the earl of Oxford, after having kept the coast of the Channel in alarm with a little fleet, and taken St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, surrendered upon condition that his life should be spared, and was confined for eleven years in the castle of Ham. The earl of Pembroke, with his nephew, the young earl of Richmond, was cast by a storm on the coast of Brittany, and remained there during the reign of Edward. Some who had been hostile to the Yorkists, such as Doctor Morton and Sir John Fortescue, submitted to the favourite of fortune. Many persons, who, as Fuller somewhere says, in playing their cards could scarcely know which was the trump, easily obtained their pardons.

For a while the court of Edward was one of the most gay and magnificent in Europe, as indeed it was before the sudden revolution of 1470. There is a very curious account of the reception, by Edward and his queen, in 1466, of a

<sup>1</sup> She was at first confined in the Tower of London, afterwards at Windsor, and then at Wallingford. All that Edward would allow for the support of herself and servants was a pittance of five marks per week.<sup>n</sup>

[1471-1472 A.D.]

Bohemian nobleman, in which a native of Nuremberg, one of his suite, furnishes some details of the wearisome ceremonies of the royal life. The Bohemian lord—having been feasted himself, whilst the king was making presents to trumpeters, pipers, players, and heralds, in the most lavish manner—“was conducted into a costly ornamented room where the queen was to dine; and there he was seated in a corner, that he might see all the expensive provisions. The queen sat down on a golden stool alone at her table; and her mother and the king's sister stood far below her. And when the queen spoke to her mother, or to the king's sister, they kneeled down every time before her, and remained kneeling until the queen drank water. And all her ladies and maids, and those who waited upon her, even great lords, had to kneel while she was eating, which continued three hours. After dinner there was dancing, but the queen remained sitting upon her stool, and her mother kneeled before her.” It is scarcely to be wondered that King Edward too frequently stole away from this frightful etiquette, to be merry after his own vicious fashion; or that he “would a hunting ride, some pastime for to see.” The court fool, with his jests and his antics, must have been a welcome relief to the three hours of dining and kneeling.

But in the court of England, after the re-establishment of the house of York, there were more rational occupations than the processions and banquets of the great days of ceremony, as that day was on which the Bohemian lord was received. There were literary tastes in those times which had so recently witnessed the waste and ferocity of civil war. Edward was himself a reader. In his “Wardrobe Accounts” there are entries for binding his Titus Livius, his Froissart, his Josephus, and his Bible; as well as for the cost of fastening chests to remove his books from London to Eltham.

The brother of the queen, Anthony, Earl Rivers, was the patron of Caxton, who brought his art to England in 1474. For Caxton's press the accomplished Rivers translated *The Dictes and Sayings of Philosophers*, which was printed at Westminster in 1477; and he afterwards translated two other works for Caxton. England's first printer was intimately connected with the family of Edward IV. He had “a yearly fee,” as he says, from Margaret, the duchess of Burgundy, King Edward's sister, while he resided at Bruges; and by her command he proceeded with his *Historyes of Troye*, a translation from the French, which the critical duchess looked over, and found “defaute” of his English. He dedicates the first book which he printed to the duke of Clarence. He receives a payment, by order of Edward IV, in 1479, of the large sum of twenty pounds “for certain causes and matters performed by him for the said lord the king.” It is manifest that, at a period when the number of original writers was very small, the king and his court lent a willing aid to the great discovery which was to make knowledge a common property, in causing, as Caxton says Earl Rivers did, “books to be imprinted and so multiplied to go abroad among the people.”

The public triumphs of the house of York seem to have done little to secure the brotherly union of its members. The great earl of Warwick had two daughters: one married to the duke of Clarence, the other contracted to the son of Henry VI, who fell at Tewkesbury in his seventeenth year. They were the heiresses of the enormous possessions of Warwick; and Clarence appears to have had no inclination to divide the great wealth of the Nevils and the Beauchamps with any other. He concealed Anne, the younger sister, from the pursuit of Gloucester, who was her suitor. In February, 1472, Sir John Paston<sup>k</sup> writes that the family are “not all in charity,” adding, “the king entreateth my lord of Clarence for my lord of Gloucester; and, as it is said, he



answereth that he may well have my lady his sister-in-law, but they shall part no livelihood, as he saith."

Gloucester was not a man to be put off in this fashion by his brother; so he did contrive "to have my lady his sister-in-law," discovering her, as the gossip of the day relates, in the disguise of a cook-maid. The quarrel went on; and in April, 1473, Sir John Paston again writes: "The world seemeth queasy here; for the most part that be about the king have sent hither for their harness, and it is said for certain that the duke of Clarence maketh him big in that he can, showing as he would but deal with the duke of Gloucester; but the king intendeth, eschewing all inconvenience, to be as big as they both, and a stiffer atween them." The question how the "livelihood" should be parted was settled in 1474 by the parliament dividing the great fortune of Warwick between the two royal brothers, leaving the widow of Warwick, most unjustly, a very wretched provision. Richard had been appointed chief seneschal of the duchy of Lancaster, and resided officially at Pontefract castle. The son and only child of Richard and Anne was born in 1473 at Middleham castle, which had been the property of the earl of Warwick.

#### EDWARD AND LOUIS XI

There had been three years of repose in England. The quiet suited ill with the restless nature of King Edward. His voluptuous habits had produced their usual consequence, satiety. A war with France was ever popular in England, and the king employed the years of 1473 and 1474 in preparation for a new conquest of the provinces which had been lost during the minority of Henry VI. The duke of Burgundy and the duke of Brittany urged on the revival of the ancient claims to the French crown. The parliament voted supplies with a profuse liberality, which the taxpayers did not entirely approve. "The king goeth so near us in this country, both to poor and rich, that I wot not how we shall live, unless the world amend." On the 20th of June, 1475, Edward sailed from Sandwich with fifteen hundred men-at-arms, fifteen thousand archers, and a great number of foot-soldiers and artillery. Comines<sup>f</sup> says that embarking and landing these forces at Calais occupied three weeks.

Before the king sailed he sent a herald with a letter, in which he demanded the crown from Louis XI as his right and inheritance—written, adds Comines, in such an elegant style "that I can scarcely believe any Englishman wrote it." The purity of the language and the arrogance of the demand were alike indifferent to the French king, who took the herald into a private room, gave him a magnificent present of 300 crowns, and "was much revived by what he got out of" Edward's messenger. The whole account of this invasion of France, as told by the most interesting of the early memoir-writers, is a comedy full of amusement, instead of the monotonous tragedy that is the more natural and usual chronicle of the quarrels of princes. As an exhibition of character, the narrative of Comines is perfect.

The duke of Burgundy had deceived Edward as to the amount of assistance he would render in the attempt upon France. He gave the English a cold welcome at Péronne. The constable of Saint-Pol, instead of being friendly to Edward and delivering up the fortress of St. Quentin, fired upon an English detachment who went to take possession of the place. Louis of France, who was in real terror at the presence of the English king, had a scheme for getting rid of him, which he wisely preferred to fighting. He had a trick of

[1475 A.D.]

whispering in people's ears; and he whispered to Comines to send for a certain lord's servant, and propose to him to go disguised as a herald to the camp of the English king. The man was frightened; but Louis tutored him well, and he was dressed up with a coat-of-arms made out of the banner of a trumpet. Louis himself had no heralds, as other princes had. "He was not so stately or vain." The mock herald was well received at the English camp, and he played his part so well that a negotiation was opened through commissioners. The original demand of Edward for the French crown first dwindled to a claim for Normandy and Gascony, and ended in a proposal for a large pension, as the French called it, as the condition of leaving France.

The wily Louis feasted the English at Amiens; sent Edward three hundred cart-loads of the best wines of France, and bribed his nobles without stint.<sup>1</sup> The two kings met at Picquigny, and there a peace was sworn between them, upon the conditions of present and future money payments; of a marriage between the son of Louis and a daughter of Edward; and the release of Margaret of Anjou. Then Louis invited Edward to Paris, "in a jocular way," saying he would assign him the cardinal Bourbon for his confessor, who would willingly absolve him if he committed any sin. Edward was delighted with the raillery, and promised to come, somewhat to the discomposure of Louis; for he whispered to Comines, "His predecessors have been too often in Paris and Normandy already, and I do not care for his company so near." One only of the greater nobles of the train of Edward evinced displeasure at these negotiations, in which the king of France had cajoled and degraded the English—that one was Richard of Gloucester. At the interview between the kings Gloucester was not present, "as being averse to the treaty." That man is truly unfortunate whose best actions are held to proceed from the worst motives. One who lived in a court where there was little display of high principle, says of Richard: "Out of the deep root of ambition it sprang that, as well at the treaty of peace that passed between Edward IV and Louis XI of France, concluded by interviews of both kings at Picquigny, as upon all other occasions, Richard, the duke of Gloucester, stood ever upon the side of honour, raising his own reputation to the disadvantage of the king his brother, and drawing the eyes of all, especially those of the nobles and soldiers, upon himself." Comines asked a Gascon in the English service how many battles Edward had won, and the answer was, nine: how many he had lost—and the reply was, never but one, and that was this in which the French had outwitted him.

With the Treaty of Picquigny, its bribes and its cajoleries, its heartless compacts and hollow friendships, the chivalrous grandeur of England had come to an end. The pageant was played out. The world was henceforward to be governed by that statecraft of which Louis XI was the greatest example. There was one prince who continued to rely upon force, with an occasional mixture of fraud, in which game he was a child when opposed to his practised adversary. His high-blown pride was humbled at Granson and Morat by the Swiss, whose poverty he despised; and Charles of Burgundy perished in his mad career in 1477. Edward returned to England more disgraced than his brother-in-law, when the mountaineers broke into his camp and carried off his gold and his jewels, his rich armour and his silk pavilions.

[It is related that the caution of Hastings, then high chamberlain, led him to refuse to give a receipt for a "gift" which Louis had made him. He was anxious to receive the gold, however. "This present," he said to Louis' agent, "proceeds from your master's generosity, not from any request of mine; if you have a mind I should receive it you may put it in my sleeve."]

Edward came home to an indignant people with a disappointed army. His soldiers compensated themselves for the loss of plunder in France by pillaging their own countrymen. The king went in person with the judges to try the offenders, and hung without mercy everyone who was apprehended for the least theft.

#### THE DEATH OF CLARENCE; EDWARD'S LAST YEARS

The marriages of the great, at this period, when the increase of possessions appears to have been the dominant passion, were a fruitful source of dissimulation and enmity. Clarence had lost his wife by poison, and the duchess of Burgundy was a widow. There is a letter of Edward to his ambassador in Scotland, in which, in 1477, he writes that the king of Scots desires two marriages connected with the royal line: one that the duke of Clarence should marry a sister of the king of Scots, and that a brother of that king, the duke of Albany, should marry the duchess of Burgundy. "Ye shall say that, for so much as this desire proceedeth of his entire love and affection anent us, we thank him as heartily as we can; and for so much also as, after the old usages of this our realm, no estate or person honourable communeth of marriage within the year of their doole (widowhood), we therefore as yet cannot conveniently speak in this matter. Nathless, when we shall find time convenient (suitable) we shall feel their dispositions, and thereupon show unto him the same in all goodly haste."

The king did feel the disposition of his brother Clarence, and found that the ambitious duke desired to wed the only daughter and heir of Charles of Burgundy, in which desire he was seconded by the widowed duchess, her step-mother: Edward resolutely opposed this scheme, and the brothers became enemies. Clarence estranged himself from his brother's court. At this time two of his dependents, Thomas Burdett and John Stacy, were accused of having "worked and calculated by art magic, necromancy, and astronomy the death and final destruction of the king and prince," and they were tried and executed. Clarence asserted their innocence before the council, and was immediately arrested by the king and committed to the Tower on the 16th of January, 1478. Edward forced on his brother's condemnation, by appearing in person to maintain a charge of treason against him. The obsequious peers found the imprudent prince guilty, and sentence of death was pronounced upon him by the duke of Buckingham, who acted as high steward. On the 7th of February the commons, by their speaker, demanded the execution of the sentence, and within ten days it was announced that the duke had died in the Tower. The drowning in a butt of malmsiey wine was a rumour of the period. The suspicion that the duke of Gloucester was implicated in the condemnation of Clarence rests upon no evidence whatever. The insinuation against him is thus stated by More: "Some wise men also ween that his drift, covertly conveyed, lacked not in helping forth his brother of Clarence to his death; which he resisted openly, howbeit somewhat, as men deemed, more faintly than he that were heartily minded to his wealth."

The few remaining years of the life of King Edward were not years of ease and prosperity. The chroniclers say that his remorse for the death of Clarence was constant and bitter, and that "he was wont to cry out in a rage, 'O unfortunate brother, for whose life no man in this world would once make request!'" England, in 1479, was visited with a frightful pestilence. Whilst his subjects in London and elsewhere were perishing around him,



[1479-1483 A.D.]

Edward was enduring bitter mortification in his private affairs. He had a passion for contracting alliances for his children even while they were in their cradles. His eldest daughter, Elizabeth, was contracted, as we have seen, to the dauphin of France, by the Treaty of Picquigny; but Louis began to give indications that the treaty would only endure as long as suited his convenience. His daughter Cecily was engaged to the son and heir of the king of Scotland, and the dowry of the lady had commenced to be paid by instalments. From the time of the death of James I, who was murdered in a conspiracy of his nobles in 1437, the kingdom had been the scene of intestine conflicts. James II came to the crown when six years old, and his reign was a constant struggle with the great families of Douglas and Livingston and other feudal lords. He was killed at the siege of Roxburgh in 1460.

James III was also a minor when he came to the throne. He was of a contemplative and indolent nature, and fell into the hands of favourites. The Boyds, who had long governed, were at last dispossessed of their power; and the duke of Albany and the earl of Mar, the brothers of James, took the lead in the management of affairs, but soon excited the suspicion of the king that they aspired to the royal authority. Mar was put to death. Albany escaped to France. At this juncture James III and Edward IV quarrelled. The marriage treaty was broken off, and in 1480 there was war between England and Scotland. The duke of Gloucester, who was warden of the Marches, commanded the English forces. Berwick was invested, but without success, and the two armies were content with occasional forays upon the borders. In 1482 the duke of Albany was encouraged by Edward in a rebellion against his reigning brother; and he engaged to hold Scotland as a fief of England, and to surrender Berwick.

That important fort was now besieged by Gloucester and Albany. James raised an army and marched towards the borders; but his turbulent nobles seized the king, and hanged his associates, two of whom were artists. Albany and Gloucester marched on to Edinburgh; and the rebellion and the war with England were ended by Albany swearing to be a true and faithful subject, and Gloucester obtaining the strong post of Berwick, which ever after remained an English possession. In 1483 Louis of France broke off the contract which he had made with the king of England for the marriage of the dauphin and the lady Elizabeth. He saw a more advantageous union for his son in the daughter of Mary of Burgundy. Edward was furious, and immediately determined for war. But he who was "inclining to be fat" when Comines saw him at Picquigny, was now enfeebled in mind and body by long indulgence in every excess. His anger was expressed in paroxysms of rage without any determinate plans. A serious illness succeeded a slight ailment, and he died on the 9th of April, 1483, in the forty-second year of his age. He was buried in the new chapel of St. George at Windsor, to which the remains of Henry VI were afterwards removed.<sup>b</sup>

#### THE CHARACTER OF EDWARD IV

Edward is said to have been the most accomplished, and, till he grew too unwieldy, the handsomest man of the age. The love of pleasure was his ruling passion. Few princes have been more magnificent in their dress or more licentious in their amours; few have indulged more freely in the luxuries of the table. But such pursuits often interfered with his duties, and at last incapacitated him for active exertion. Even in youth, while he was fighting

for the throne, he was always the last to join his adherents; and in manhood, when he was firmly seated on it, he entirely abandoned the charge of military affairs to his brother Richard, duke of Gloucester. To the chief supporters of the opposite party he was cruel and unforgiving; the blood which he shed intimidated his friends no less than his foes: and both lords and commons during his reign, instead of contending, like their predecessors, for the establishment of rights and the abolition of grievances, made it their principal study to gratify the royal pleasure.

He was as suspicious as he was cruel. Every officer of government, every steward on his manors and farms, was employed as a spy on the conduct of all around him; they regularly made to the king reports of the state of the neighbourhood; and such was the fidelity of his memory that it was difficult to mention an individual of any consequence, even in the most distant counties, with whose character, history, and influence he was not accurately acquainted. Hence every project of opposition to his government was suppressed almost as soon as it was formed; and Edward might have promised himself a long and prosperous reign, had not continued indulgence enervated his constitution and sown the seeds of that malady which consigned him to the grave in the forty-first year of his age.<sup>p</sup>

The characterisation of Edward by Sir Thomas More which follows is interesting:

"Hee was goodly of Personage, and Princely to behold, of heart couragious, politicke in counsell, and in adversity nothing abashed, in prosperity rather joyfull then proud, in peace just and merciful, it was sharp and fierce, in the field bold and hardy, and yet neverthesse no farther then reason and policie would adventure, whose warres whosoever circumspectly and advisedly considereth, hee shall no lesse commend his wisdom and policie where he avoided them, then his manhood where hee vanquished them. Hee was of vantage fullfaced and lovely, of body mighty, strong and clean made: with over-liberall and wanton dyet he waxed something corpulent and burly, but neverthesse not uncomely. Hee was in youth greatly given to fleshly wantonnesse, from the which health of body in great prosperity and fortune, without an especiall grace hardly refraineth. This fault little grieved his people; for neither could any one man's pleasure stretch or extend to the displeasure of very many, nor a multitude bee grieved by a private man's fantasie or voluptuousnesse, when it was done without violence. And in his latter dayes hee left all wild dalliance, and fell to gravity, so that hee brought his Realme into a wealthy and prosperous estate, all feare of outward enemies were clearly extinguished, and no warre was in hand, nor none toward, but such as no man looked for. The people were toward their Prince not in a constrained feare, but in a true, loving, and wilfull obedience among themselves, and the Commons were in good peace. The Lords whom hee knew at variance, hee on his death bed (as hee thought) brought to good concord, love, and amity. And a little before his death, he had left gathering of money of his subjects, which is the onely thing that draweth the hearts of English men from their Kings and Princes: nor nothing hee enterprised nor tooke in hand, by the which hee should be driven thereunto."<sup>o</sup>



MIDDLEHAM CASTLE, WENSLEYDALE  
(Residence of Warwick, the King-maker)

## CHAPTER XVII

### EDWARD V AND RICHARD III

[1483-1485 A.D.]

O, momentary grace of mortal men,  
Which we more hunt for than the grace of God!  
Who builds his hopes in air of your good looks,  
Lives like a drunken sailor on a mast,  
Ready, with every nod, to tumble down  
Into the fatal bowels of the deep.

SHAKESPEARE (*Richard III*: Act iii.; Scene v.).

#### THE PROCLAMATION OF EDWARD V

A FAINT glimmering of light may be thrown on the dark transactions which followed the death of the late king by adverting to the state of parties at the close of his reign. Whether it were that Edward had been compelled by the importunities of his wife, or that he felt a pride in aggrandising the family of her whom he had placed by his side on the throne, he had successively raised her relations from the condition of knights and esquires to the highest honours and offices in the state. By the more ancient nobility their rapid elevation was viewed with jealousy and resentment; and their influence, though it appeared formidable while it was supported by the favour of the king, proved in the sequel to be very inconsiderable, and confined to the few families into which they had married.

The marquis of Dorset, the queen's son by a former marriage, and her brother, the accomplished but unfortunate Earl Rivers, possessed the first seats at the council board; but they were continually opposed by the lords Hastings, Howard, and Stanley, the king's personal friends, particularly the first, whom Edward had chosen for the companion of his pleasures, and who on that very account was the more odious to the queen. The monarch during his health had balanced by his prudence the rivalry and silenced by his authority the dissensions of the two parties; and on his death-bed, warned by the unfortunate minority of Henry VI, had called them into his chamber, exhorted them to mutual forgiveness, and commanded them to embrace in



his presence. They obeyed with apparent cheerfulness, but their hearts gave the lie to the sentiments which they uttered, and the lapse of a few days proved how treacherous were all such reconciliations, when he by whose order they had been made no longer lived to enforce them.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as the king had expired, the council assembled, and resolved to proclaim his eldest son by the style of Edward V. But here their unanimity ended. The young prince, accompanied by his uncle, Earl Rivers, and his uterine brother, Lord Grey, had been sent to Ludlow in Shropshire, under the pretext that his presence would serve to restrain the natives of Wales—but in reality that, by growing up under their tuition, he might become more attached to his maternal relatives. A suspicion was entertained that, in imitation of Isabella, the mother of Edward III, the queen would aspire to a considerable share of authority during

the minority of her son; and to defeat her designs, the enemies of the Woodvilles anxiously expected the arrival of the duke of Gloucester, the king's uncle, and the duke of Buckingham, the lineal descendant of Thomas of Woodstock, the youngest son of Edward III. When Elizabeth proposed that Rivers and Grey should conduct Edward from Ludlow to the metropolis under the protection of an army, Hastings and his friends took the alarm.

Gloucester and Buckingham were still absent; the Tower was in the possession of the marquis of Dorset; the king was surrounded by the queen's creatures; and the addition of an army would place her opponents at her mercy, and enable the Woodvilles to establish their authority. Where, they asked, was the necessity of an army? Who



EDWARD V  
(1470-1483)

were the enemies against whom it was to be directed? Did the Woodvilles mean to break the reconciliation which they had sworn to observe? A long and angry altercation ensued; Hastings declared that he would quit the court and retire to his command at Calais; the queen thought it prudent to yield, and in an evil hour the resolution was taken that the retinue of the young king should not exceed two thousand horsemen.

Richard, duke of Gloucester, was a prince of insatiable ambition, who could conceal the most bloody projects under the mask of affection and loyalty.

<sup>1</sup> For our knowledge of the events of this period we are chiefly indebted to the continuator of the *History of Croyland* <sup>m</sup> and Sir Thomas More. <sup>b</sup> The first was a contemporary. His name is unknown, but it appears from his work that he was a doctor of canon law, sometimes a member of the council under Edward IV, and occasionally employed by him as envoy to foreign powers. He declares that he has written with truth and impartiality. Sir Thomas More was born in 1480. In 1513, when he was under-sheriff of London, he wrote his *History of Richard III*, according to Rastell, who printed it in 1557 from a copy in More's handwriting. But Mr. Ellis has observed that the writer speaks of Edward IV as if he had been present during the last sickness of that monarch, which could not be the case with More, only three years old; and he is therefore inclined to believe that More was only the copier of a manuscript delivered to him by someone else, probably Cardinal Morton.

[1483 A.D.]

Having the command of the army against the Scots, he was employed in the marches at the time of his brother's death; but the moment he heard of that event, he repaired to York with a train of six hundred knights and esquires dressed in mourning, ordered the obsequies of the deceased king to be performed with royal magnificence in the cathedral, summoned the gentlemen of the county to swear allegiance to Edward V, and, to give them an example, was himself the first who took the oath. At the same time he despatched letters to profess his affection and loyalty to his nephew, to condole with Elizabeth on the loss of her consort, and to offer his friendship to the earl Rivers and the other lords of the queen's family. Having added to the number of his followers, he proceeded southward, avowedly for the purpose of assisting at the coronation, which had been fixed by the council for the 4th of May.

With the object of the secret messages which during this interval had passed between the duke and Buckingham and Hastings we are unacquainted; of their import we may form a probable conjecture from the events which immediately succeeded. The young Edward had reached Stony Stratford on his road to London on the same day on which his uncle arrived at Northampton, about ten miles behind him. The lords Rivers and Grey hastened to welcome Gloucester in the name of the king, and to submit to his approbation the orders which had been framed for the royal entry into the metropolis. They were received with distinction and invited to dine with the duke, who lavished on them marks of his esteem and friendship. In the evening came the duke of Buckingham with a suite of three hundred horsemen. After supper Rivers and Grey retired to their quarters, highly pleased with their reception; the two princes, left to themselves, arranged the plan of their proceedings for the next day.

#### ARREST OF THE KING'S UNCLES

In the morning it was discovered that every outlet from the town had been strongly guarded during the night, for the purpose, it was said, of preventing any person from paying his respects to the king before the arrival of his uncle. The circumstance awakened suspicion; but the four lords rode in company, and apparently in friendship, to the entrance of Stony Stratford, when Gloucester suddenly accused Rivers and Grey of having estranged from him the affection of his nephew. They denied the charge, but were immediately arrested and conducted into the rear. The two dukes proceeded to the house where the king resided, and approached him bending the knee, and professing their loyalty and attachment. But after this outward demonstration of respect, they apprehended Sir Thomas Vaughan and Sir Richard Hawse, his confidential servants, ordered the rest of his retinue to disperse, and forbade by proclamation any of them to return into the royal presence under the penalty of death. The prince, abandoned and alarmed, burst into tears; but Gloucester, on his knees, conjured him to dismiss his terrors, to rely on the affection of his uncle, and to believe that these precautions had been rendered necessary by the perfidy of the Woodvilles. He conducted Edward back to Northampton, and ordered the four prisoners to be conveyed under a strong guard to his castle of Pontefract.

The same evening this mysterious transaction was confidentially announced to the lord Hastings, and soon afterwards was communicated to the queen-mother, who, foreboding the ruin of her family, hastily retired with her second son, Richard, her five daughters, and the marquiss of Dorset, into

the sanctuary at Westminster, and was there lodged in the abbot's apartments. That asylum had formerly been respected by her greatest enemy, the earl of Warwick; it would not, she trusted, be violated by a brother-in-law. The capital was instantly thrown into confusion. The citizens armed themselves; some repaired to Elizabeth in Westminster, others to the lord Hastings in London. That nobleman in general terms assured his friends, what he probably believed himself, that the two dukes were loyal subjects, but their real purpose was preserved an impenetrable secret; and the adherents of the queen, without a leader and without information, awaited the result in the most anxious uncertainty.

On the 4th of May, the day originally appointed for the coronation, Gloucester conducted his captive nephew into the metropolis. At Hornsey park they were met by the lord mayor and aldermen in scarlet, followed by five hundred citizens in violet. The young king wore a long mantle of blue velvet; his attendants were dressed in deep mourning; Gloucester rode before him with his head bare, and pointed him out to the acclamations of the citizens. He was lodged with all the honours of royalty in the palace of the bishop, and immediately received the fealty and homage of the prelates, lords, and commoners who were present. A great council had been summoned, and continued to sit during several days. On the motion of the duke of Buckingham the king was removed to the Tower; a distant day, the 22d of June, was fixed for the coronation; the seals were taken from the archbishop of York and given to the bishop of Lincoln; several officers of the crown were dismissed, to make room for the adherents of the ruling party; and Gloucester, who had been appointed protector, assumed the lofty style of "brother and uncle of kings, protectour and defensour, great chamberlayne, constable, and lord high admiral of England."

What may have been the original object of this prince can be matter for conjecture only. It is not often that the adventurer discerns at the outset the goal at which he ultimately arrives. The tide of events bears him forward, and past success urges him to still higher attempts. If the duke aspired to nothing more than the protectorate, his ambition was not to be blamed. It was a dignity which the precedents of the two last minorities seemed to have attached to the king's uncle. But it soon appeared that he could not stand so near to the throne without wishing to place himself on it, and that, when he had once taken his resolve, no consideration of blood, or justice, or humanity could divert him from his object. He proceeded, however, with that caution and dissimulation which marked his character; his designs were but gradually and partially unfolded; nor did he openly avow his pretension to the crown till he had removed the most trusty of the king's friends, and taken from the rest every hope of opposing him with success.

#### THE FALL OF HASTINGS

While orders were issued and preparations made for the expected coronation, Gloucester was busily employed in maturing his plans and despatching instructions to his adherents. The council met daily at the royal apartments in the Tower; the confidants of the protector, at Crosby place, in Bishopsgate street, his residence in London. These separate meetings did not escape the notice of Lord Stanley; but his suspicion was lulled by the assurance of Hastings that he had secured the services of a trusty agent, through whom he learned the most secret counsels of Gloucester.



[1483 A.D.]

The sequel will make it probable that this trusty agent deceived and betrayed him. A summons was issued to forty-eight lords and gentlemen to attend and receive knighthood preparatory to the coronation of the young king, a measure devised as a blind by the protector; for, three days later, he despatched orders to his retainers in the north to hasten to London for his protection against the bloody designs of the queen and her kinsmen; and shortly afterwards entering the council chamber at the Tower, he stood at first in silence knitting his brows, and then in answer to a remark by Lord Hastings called him a traitor, and struck his fist upon the table. A voice at the door exclaimed "Treason!" and a body of ruffians bursting into the room arrested Hastings, Stanley, and the two prelates York and Ely. The three last were conveyed to separate cells; Hastings was told to prepare for immediate execution. It was in vain that he inquired the cause. The order of the protector would not admit of delay; the first priest who offered himself received his confession; and a piece of timber, which accidentally lay in the green at the door of the chapel, served for the block on which he was beheaded. A proclamation was issued the same afternoon announcing that Hastings and his friends had conspired to put to death the dukes of Gloucester and Buckingham, who had miraculously escaped the snare laid for their destruction.

On the same day (and the time should be noticed) Ratcliffe, one of the boldest partisans of the protector, at the head of a numerous body of armed men, entered the castle of Pontefract and made himself master of the lord Grey, Sir Thomas Vaughan, and Sir Richard Hawse. To the spectators it was announced that they had been guilty of treason; but no judicial forms were observed, and the heads of the victims were struck off in the presence of the multitude.<sup>1</sup> Two days afterwards a letter from the duke was delivered by Ratcliffe to the mayor and citizens of York, informing them of the traitorous designs imputed to Elizabeth and the Woodvilles; and four days later proclamations were issued in the northern counties, commanding all men "to rise, and come to London under the earl of Northumberland and the lord Neville, to assist in subduing, correcting, and punishing the queen, her blode, and other her adherents, who entended to murder and destroy the protectour and his cousyn the duc of Buckyngham, and the old royal blode of the realm."

With these proceedings in the north the inhabitants of London were yet unacquainted; but the murder of Hastings and the arrest of Stanley and the two prelates had freed Gloucester from all apprehensions on the part of those who were most attached to the family of the late king. Of the royal brothers the elder had been securely lodged in the Tower; the younger still remained in sanctuary under the eye of Elizabeth. Him also the protector resolved to have at his mercy, and before the terror created by the late execution could subside, he proceeded to Westminster in his barge, accompanied by several noblemen and prelates, and followed by a numerous body of armed men. There cannot be a doubt that he intended to employ force, if force should be found necessary; but he determined to try first the influence of persuasion, and ordered a deputation of lords, with the cardinal of Canterbury at their head, to enter and demand the young prince from his mother. The ingenious arguments which Sir Thomas More has attributed to the prelate and the affecting replies which he has put into the mouth of the queen are probably the

<sup>1</sup> More *b* asserts repeatedly that these murders occurred on the same day as that of Lord Hastings. This may be true of the others, but is not correct as to Lord Rivers, who was indeed put to death at Pontefract but a few days later, and by command of the earl of Northumberland.

composition of the writer; a better authority assures us that Elizabeth, convinced of the inutility of resistance, affected to acquiesce with cheerfulness in the demand. She called for her boy, gave him a last and hasty embrace, and turning her back burst into tears. The innocent victim was conducted with great pomp to the Tower; and while the mother abandoned herself to the prophetic misgivings of her heart, her sons made themselves happy in the company of each other, little suspecting the wiles and cruelty of their unnatural uncle.

#### RICHARD'S PREPARATIONS FOR USURPING THE THRONE

The partisans of the protector were now employed in circulating the most strange and incredible rumours. Some revived the tale originally invented by Clarence, that the late king, though the reputed son of the duke of York, was in reality the fruit of an adulterous intercourse between his mother, Cecily, and a knight in the service of her husband. Others, and in greater numbers, affected to throw doubts on the validity of his marriage with Elizabeth, and consequently on the legitimacy of his children by that lady. To aid these impressions, the protector appeared in a new character, that of the patron and avenger of public morals. Among the married women who were known to have yielded to the desires of Edward was Jane, the wife of Shore, a young and opulent citizen. From the moment that her seduction became public she had been abandoned by her husband, and notwithstanding the inconstancy of her lover, she had contrived to retain the principal place in the king's affections till the time of his death. This woman, whose husband was now dead, Richard singled out for punishment. Her plate and jewels, to the value of 3,000 marks, he very wisely appropriated to himself; her person he delivered over to the ecclesiastical court to be punished according to the canons. In her kirtle, with her feet bare, carrying a lighted taper in her hand, and preceded by an officer bearing the cross, Shore was compelled to walk through the streets of the capital lined with an immense concourse of people.<sup>1</sup> That her penance could not affect the title of Edward's children is evident; but it served to direct the attention of the public to the dissolute conduct of that monarch, and to prepare men for the marvellous scene which was soon to be exhibited.

By this time the retainers of the late Lord Hastings, and a numerous body of Welshmen, had joined the duke of Buckingham; and the ruffians who had murdered the prisoners at Pontefract had reached the neighbourhood of London with a force of Yorkshiresmen. It was believed that, in the course of the week, the protector and the duke would have twenty thousand armed men under their command in the metropolis. In these circumstances no danger could be apprehended from the public exposure of Gloucester's object. On the next Sunday, therefore, he appointed Doctor Shaw, the brother of the lord mayor, to preach at St. Paul's Cross, who selected for his text the following passage of the *Book of Wisdom*: "Bastard slips shall not strike deep roots." Having maintained from different examples that children were seldom permitted to enjoy the fruit of their father's iniquity, he proceeded to describe the well-known libertinism of the late king, who, he averred, had

<sup>1</sup> More <sup>b</sup> gives her in one respect a commendable character: "Many the king had, but her he loved, whose favour, to say the truth (for sin it were to belie the devil), she never abused to any man's hurt, but to many a man's comfort and relief; and now she beggeth of many at this day living, that at this day had begged if she had not been."

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been in the habit of promising marriage to every woman whom he found it difficult to seduce. Thus, in the beginning of his reign, to gratify his passion, he had not hesitated to contract marriage in private with Eleanor, the widow of the lord Boteler of Sudely;<sup>1</sup> and afterwards had married in the same clandestine manner Elizabeth, the widow of Sir John Grey. At a subsequent period he had thought proper to acknowledge the second contract; but such acknowledgment could not annul the prior right of Eleanor, who in the eyes of God and man was the true wife of the king.

Hence the preacher concluded that Elizabeth, though admitted as queen of England, could be considered in no other light than a concubine, and that her children by Edward had no legitimate claim to the succession of their father. Indeed, he entertained a doubt whether that prince were in reality the son of Richard, duke of York, and real heir to the crown. All who had been acquainted with the duke must know that there existed no resemblance between him and Edward. "But," he exclaimed (and at the very moment the protector, as if by accident passing through the crowd, showed himself from a balcony near the pulpit), "here, in the duke of Gloucester, we have the very picture of that hero; here every lineament reflects the features of the father." It had been expected that at these words the citizens would exclaim, "Long live King Richard!" but they gazed on each other in silent astonishment: the protector put on an air of displeasure; and the preacher, having hastily concluded his sermon, slunk away to his home. It is said that he never afterwards ventured beyond his own door, but pined away through shame and remorse.<sup>2</sup>

Richard, however, was not disheartened by the failure of this attempt, but intrusted his cause to the eloquence of a more noble advocate. On the next Tuesday the duke of Buckingham, attended by several lords and gentlemen, harangued the citizens from the hustings at Guildhall. He reminded them of Edward's tyranny, of the sums which he had extorted under the name of benevolence, and of the families which he had rendered unhappy by his amours. He then took occasion to allude to the sermon which they had heard on the last Sunday, the story of the king's pre-contract with the lady Boteler, his subsequent union with the lady Grey, and the illegitimacy of the children, the



COSTUME, TIME OF RICHARD III

<sup>1</sup> In Sir Thomas More, <sup>b</sup> Elizabeth Lucy is substituted for Lady Boteler. It is probably an accidental mistake, as both are said to have been Edward's mistresses.

<sup>2</sup> This sermon is rejected by Walpole <sup>n</sup> in his *Historic Doubts*. That several of the speeches recorded by Sir Thomas More <sup>b</sup> are mere rhetorical exercises is indeed probable; but it is equally probable that in mentioning this public and celebrated sermon, which was still in the recollec-



fruit of that pretended marriage. He added that evidently the right to the crown was in Richard, duke of Gloucester, the only true issue of the duke of York, and that the lords and commons of the northern counties had sworn never to submit to the rule of a bastard. Contrary to his expectations, the citizens were still silent: he at length required an answer, whether it were in favour of the protector or not; and a few persons, hired for the purpose, and stationed at the bottom of the hall, having thrown up their bonnets, and exclaimed "King Richard!" the duke gave the assembly his thanks for their assent, and invited them to accompany him the next day to Baynard's castle, which was at that time the residence of the duke of Gloucester.

#### THE PETITION TO THE PROTECTOR

In the morning Buckingham, with many lords and gentlemen, and Shaw, the lord mayor, with the principal citizens, proceeded to the palace and demanded an audience.<sup>1</sup> The protector affected to be surprised at their arrival; expressed apprehensions for his safety; and when at last he showed himself at a window, appeared before them with strong marks of embarrassment and perturbation. Buckingham, with his permission, presented to him an address, which, having been afterwards embodied in an act of parliament, still exists for the information of posterity. It is styled the consideration, election, and petition of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons of this realm of England; and after an exaggerated picture of the former prosperity of the kingdom, and of its misery under the late king, proceeds thus:

"Also we consider how the pretended marriage betwixt the above-named King Edward and Elizabeth Grey was made of great presumption, without the knowing and assent of the lords of this land, and also by sorcery and witchcraft committed by the said Elizabeth and her mother Jacquetta, duchess of Bedford, as the common opinion of the people, and the public voice and fame is throughout all this land, and hereafter, and as the case shall require, shall be proved sufficiently in time and place convenient; and here also we consider how that the said pretended marriage was made privily and secretly, without edition of banns, in a private chamber, a profane place, and not openly in the face of the church, after the law of God's church, but contrary thereunto, and the laudable custom of the church of England; and how also that at the time of the contract of the said pretended marriage, and before and long after, the said King Edward was and stood married and troth-plight to one Dame Eleanor Butteler, daughter of the old earl of Shrewsbury, with whom the said King Edward had made a pre-contract of matrimony long time before he made the said pretended marriage with the said Elizabeth Grey, in manner and form aforesaid; which premises being true, as in very truth they

tion of many of his readers, he would preserve at least its substance. The principal part of his narrative is moreover corroborated by the testimony of Fabian,<sup>k</sup> who was probably present. To the objection that the protector lived in habits of friendship with his mother, and therefore would not allow her character to be aspersed, it may be replied that there is no satisfactory proof of that friendship, and that the man who could shed the blood of two nephews to procure the crown would not refuse to allow the character of his mother to be slandered for the same purpose.

<sup>1</sup> A parliament had been summoned for this very day, and Buckingham would take advantage of the arrival of the members to induce many of them to accompany him. But there is no reason to believe that any parliament was regularly held, though there exists a copy of a speech with which the bishop of Lincoln, the chancellor, is supposed to have opened it. The chancellor, unaware of the revolution which was about to take place, had prepared his speech which, though never spoken, has accidentally been preserved.

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be true, it appeareth and followeth evidently that the said King Edward, during his life, and the said Elizabeth, lived together sinfully and damnably in adultery against the law of God and of his church. Also it appeareth evidently, and followeth, that all the issue and children of the said King Edward be bastards, and unable to inherit or to claim anything by inheritance by the law and custom of England."

Next is recited the attainder of the duke of Clarence, by which his children were debarred from the succession: and thence it is inferred that the protector is the next heir to Richard, late duke of York. "And hereupon," continues the petition, "we humbly desire, pray, and require your noble grace, that according to this election of us, the three estates of your land, as by your true inheritance, you will accept and take upon you the said crown and royal dignity, with all things thereunto annexed and appertaining, as to you of right belonging, as well by inheritance as by lawful election."<sup>1</sup>

The protector was careful not to dispute the truth of these assertions. But he replied with modesty that he was not ambitious: that royalty had no charms for him; that he was much attached to the children of his brother, and would preserve the crown to grace the brows of his nephew. "Sir," returned the duke of Buckingham, "the free people of England will never crouch to the rule of a bastard, and if the lawful heir refuse the sceptre, we know where to find one who will cheerfully accept it." At these words Richard affected to pause; and after a short silence replied that it was his duty to obey the voice of his people; that since he was the true heir and had been chosen by the three estates, he assented to their petition, and would from that day take upon himself the royal estate, pre-eminence, and the kingdom of the two noble realms of England and France; the one from that day forward by him and his heirs to rule, the other by God's grace and their good help to get again and subdue.

Thus ended this hypocritical farce. The next day Richard proceeded to Westminster in state and took possession of his pretended inheritance, by placing himself on the marble seat in the great hall, with the lord Howard, afterwards duke of Norfolk, on his right hand, and the duke of Suffolk on his left. To those present he stated that he had chosen to commence his reign in that place because the administration of justice was the first duty of a king; and ordered proclamation to be made that he forgave all offences which had been committed against him before that hour. From Westminster he went to St. Paul's, where he was received by the clergy in procession, and welcomed with the acclamations of the people. From that day, the 26th of June, 1483, he dated the commencement of his reign.<sup>c</sup>

#### THE ACCESSION OF RICHARD III

As far as we can discover, however, the accession of the duke of Gloucester to the crown was not an unsanctioned usurpation, resting only upon the resolute will of one man, surrounded by a few unscrupulous partisans, and having the command of a strong military force. Hastings, Rivers, Vaughan, Grey,

<sup>1</sup> But was there ever any such person as Dame Eleanor Butteler, daughter of the old earl of Shrewsbury? We know so little about her that her existence has been called in question. There is, however, in the possession of Lord Shrewsbury an illuminated pedigree by Glover in 1580, in which she is named as the first-born of the second marriage of the first earl (with a daughter of Beauchamp, earl of Warwick), and as wife of Sir Thomas Butler, Lord Sudeley. If this be correct, there must have been the disparity of at least fifteen years, probably of more, between her age and that of Edward.

Hawse had been swept away by sudden tyranny. The heir of the last king, to whom the nobles of the land had twice sworn fealty, was, with his brother, in mysterious confinement; which, according to the natural destiny of deposed princes, would probably end in secret murder. And yet, in less than a fortnight after Richard had seated himself on the marble bench of Westminster Hall, thirty-five of the peers of England and seventy of her knights—names amongst the highest in the land—did homage at his coronation. There is nothing to indicate that the usurper had an insecure seat—that the violence which these great men had witnessed, or thoroughly known, was far out of the ordinary course of events. Theirs had been a long training in the outrage and dissimulation of a disputed succession; and if their moral sense was not so completely blunted as that of the chief perpetrator of the revolution of 1483, their prostration before the despot of the hour was so absolute as to throw a colour of legality over all his proceedings.

Nor is it to be affirmed that no principle of public policy was mingled with their ready submission to his will. They had a natural dread of the insecurity of minorities and protectors, and of struggles for power amongst unprincipled favourites. They were familiar with depositions and “sad stories of the death of kings.” These were the invariable accompaniments of the inordinate power of a turbulent aristocracy; and when Buckingham, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Northumberland—the highest of the nobles—were ranged on the side of Richard, the herd of lesser lords of the soil did not trouble their consciences with thoughts of the probable fate of the children of their late master. One had leapt into the throne whom they knew for a man of courage and sagacity, as ready to defend his own interests as to uphold those who served him and depress those who were open enemies or cold friends. During the next half century of our history we shall see how much more completely even than in the case of Richard the directing minds of the country were subjected to the absolute will of the monarch; and, therefore, how imperfect is the evidence furnished by proclamations of council, and statutes of parliament, and verdicts of peers, of a regard for the public welfare overriding the baser influences of selfishness and cowardice, to sanctify, as some would believe, the caprice, injustice, and cruelty of regal pride and passion.

The character of Richard was an extraordinary mixture of hateful and amiable qualities, of either of which we must not attempt altogether to judge by the opinions of our own times. Those who had served him he loaded with benefits. Foremost amongst these was the duke of Buckingham, to whom by letters patent, dated a week after the coronation, he assigned the estates which Buckingham derived in right of his descent from Humfrey de Bohun, earl of Hereford, which had been withheld from him by Edward IV. Nor had Richard any petty feelings of revenge towards the representatives of those whom his policy had cast down. About the same time he released the estates of Hastings from forfeiture, in favour of his widow and her children. He secured her jointure to the widow of Rivers, and bestowed a pension on Lady Oxford, whose husband was in prison. He moved about amongst the people as though he had no sense of having committed wrongs which would make him obnoxious, going a progress to Reading, Oxford, Gloucester, Tewkesbury, Worcester, Warwick, Coventry, Leicester, Nottingham, York. At the great city of the north, York, Richard and his queen [Anne, daughter of the “King-maker,” Warwick] were again crowned in the minster. During the progress he administered justice against offenders and “heard the complaints of poor folks.” All seemed to promise a reign of peace and security, however troubled its beginnings.<sup>d</sup>



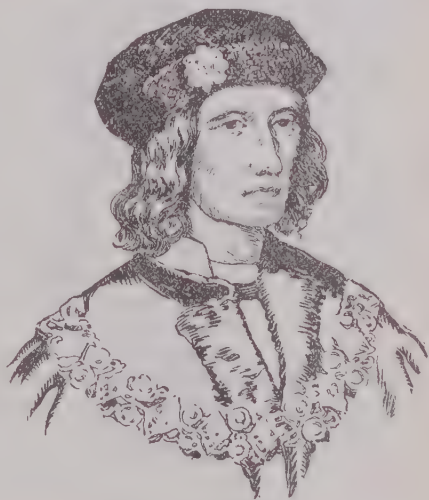
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## BUCKINGHAM'S REVOLT; THE MURDER OF THE PRINCES

Whilst Richard was thus spending his time in apparent security at York, he was apprised of the tempest which had been gathering behind him. The terror of his presence had before silenced the suspicions of the public; but he was no sooner gone than men freely communicated their thoughts to each other, commiserated the lot of the young Edward and his brother in the Tower, and openly condemned the usurpation of the crown by their unnatural uncle. Different plans were suggested. Some proposed to liberate the two princes from their confinement; others preferred the less dangerous measure of conveying one or more of their sisters beyond sea, that, whatever might be the subsequent policy of Richard, the posterity of his brother might survive to claim, perhaps to recover, the crown. But the king, though it was unknown, had already guarded against the first of these projects by the murder of his nephews; and to prevent the second, he had ordered John Nesfield to surround the sanctuary of Westminster with a body of armed men, and to refuse ingress or egress to any person without a special license.

Meanwhile the friends of the princes steadily pursued their object. In Kent, Essex, and Sussex, in Berkshire, Hants, Wilts, and Devonshire, meetings were privately held; a resolution was taken to appeal to arms, and the hopes of the confederates were raised by the unexpected accession of a most powerful ally. What, in the course of a few weeks, could have changed the duke of Buckingham from a zealous friend into a determined enemy to the new king it is in vain to conjecture. If his services to Richard had been great,

they had been amply rewarded. He had been made constable of England, justiciary of Wales, governor of the royal castles in that principality, and steward of the king's manors in Hereford and Shropshire; and in addition had obtained the opulent inheritance of Humphrey de Bohun, which the late monarch had unjustly annexed to his own demesnes. Perhaps his knowledge of the cruel and suspicious character of the usurper had taught him to fear that he himself, to whom the Lancastrians looked up for protection, might be the next victim; perhaps, as has been said, his opinions were changed by the artful and eloquent observations of his prisoner Morton. However that may be, Buckingham, whose wife was the sister of Elizabeth, engaged to restore the crown to the young prince, whom he had contributed to dethrone; and his resolution to put himself at the head of the party was communicated in circular letters to the principal of the confederates. At that very moment, when their hearts beat with the confidence of success, their hopes were suddenly dashed to the ground by the mournful intelligence that the two princes for whom they intended to fight were no longer alive

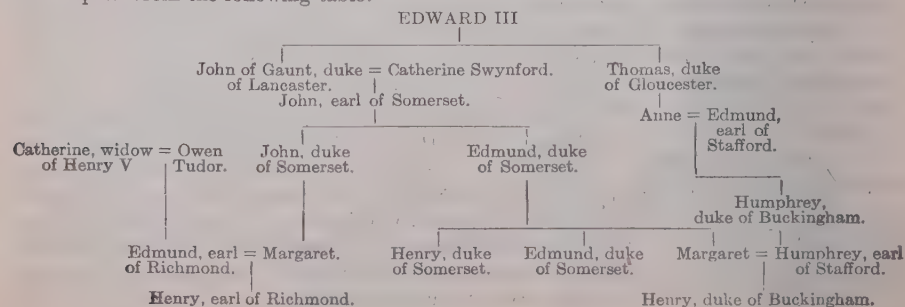


RICHARD III

On what day or in what manner they perished was kept a profound secret; the following is the most consistent and probable account, collected from the confession made by the murderers in the next reign. Soon after his departure from London Richard had tampered in vain with Brackenbury, the governor of the Tower. From Warwick he despatched Sir James Tyrrel, his master of the horse, with orders that he should receive the keys and the command of the fortress during twenty-four hours. In the night Tyrrel, accompanied by Forest, a known assassin, and Dighton, one of his grooms, ascended the staircase leading to the chamber in which the two princes lay asleep. While Tyrrel watched without, Forest and Dighton entered the room, smothered their victims with the bed-clothes, called in their employer to view the dead bodies, and by his orders buried them at the foot of the staircase. In the morning Tyrrel restored the keys to Brackenbury, and rejoined the king before his coronation at York. Aware of the execration to which the knowledge of this black deed must expose him, Richard was anxious that it should not transpire; but when he understood that men had taken up arms to liberate the two princes, he suffered the intelligence of their death to be published, that he might disconcert the plans and awaken the fears of his enemies.

The intelligence was received with horror both by the friends and the foes of the usurper; but, if it changed the object, it did not dissolve the union of the conspirators. They could not retrace their steps with security; and since the princes for whom they had intended to fight were no longer alive, it became necessary to set up a new competitor in opposition to Richard. The bishop of Ely proposed that the crown should be offered to Henry, the young earl of Richmond, the representative, in right of his mother, of the house of Lancaster,<sup>1</sup> but on the condition that he should marry the princess Elizabeth, to whom the claim of the house of York had now devolved—a marriage which, the prelate observed, would unite the partisans of the two families in one common cause, enable them to triumph over the murderer, and put an end to those dissensions which had so long convulsed and depopulated the nation. The suggestion was approved by the queen-dowager, the duke of Buckingham, the marquis of Dorset, and most of their friends: the countess of Richmond consented in the name of her son; and a messenger was despatched to Brittany to inform the earl of the agreement, to hasten his return to England, and to announce the 18th of October as the day fixed for the general rising in his favour.

<sup>1</sup> If Margaret, countess of Richmond, was the great-granddaughter of John of Gaunt, so was Margaret, countess of Stafford, the mother of Buckingham; but as the father of the former was an elder brother, she was deemed the head of the house of Lancaster, and had married Edmund, earl of Richmond, the son of Queen Catherine by Owen Tudor—Buckingham was descended also from Thomas, duke of Gloucester, sixth son of Edward III. These particulars will be plain from the following table:



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## THE SUPPRESSION OF THE REVOLT

The new plan of the confederates escaped the vigilance of the king, who, ignorant of his danger, proceeded from York into Lincolnshire; but in a fortnight the answer of Henry was received, and was no sooner communicated to his friends than it reached the ears of Richard. To prepare for the contest, he summoned all his adherents to meet him with their retainers at Leicester, proclaimed Buckingham a traitor, and sent for the great seal from London. On the appointed day the rising took place. The marquis of Dorset proclaimed Henry at Exeter; the bishop of Salisbury declared for him in Wiltshire; the gentlemen in Kent met for the same purpose at Maidstone; those of Berkshire at Newbury; and the duke of Buckingham unfurled his standard at Brecon.

Five days later Richard joined his army at Leicester, where he issued a most singular proclamation. He begins by boasting of his zeal for morality and the administration of justice; then calls his enemies "traitors, adulterers, and bawds"; asserts that their object is not only the destruction of the throne, but "the letting of virtue, and the damnable maintenance of vice"; grants a free pardon to all yeomen and commoners who have been deluded by the false pretensions of the rebels; threatens with the punishment of treason all who shall hereafter lend them assistance; and promises rewards for the apprehension of Buckingham and his associates. But Richard's good fortune served him better than his troops or his proclamations. Had Henry landed, or had the duke been able to join the other insurgents, the reign of the usurper would probably have been terminated. But though Henry had sailed from St. Malo with a fleet of forty sail, the weather was so tempestuous that but few could follow him across the Channel; and when he reached the coast of Devon the insufficiency of his force forbade him to disembark.

Buckingham was still more unfortunate. From Brecon he had marched through the forest of Dean to the Severn; but the bridges were broken down, and the river was so swollen that the fords had become impassable. He turned back to Weobley, the seat of the lord Ferrers; but the Welshmen who had followed him disbanded, and the news of their desertion induced the other bodies of insurgents to provide for their own safety. Thus the king triumphed without drawing the sword. Weobley was narrowly watched on the one side by Sir Humphrey Stafford, on the other by the clan of the Vaughans, who for their reward had received a promise of the plunder of Brecon. Morton effected his escape in disguise to the isle of Ely, and thence passed to the coast of Flanders; the duke in a similar dress reached the hut of Banaster, one of



KING'S HOUSE, SALISBURY  
(Erected latter end of fourteenth century)



his servants in Shropshire, where he was betrayed by the perfidy of his host. If he hoped for pardon on the merit of his former services, he had mistaken the character of Richard. That prince had already reached Salisbury with his army; he refused to see the prisoner, and ordered his head to be immediately struck off in the market-place. From Salisbury he marched into Devonshire. The insurgents dispersed; the marquis of Dorset, and Courtenay, bishop of Exeter, crossed the Channel to the coast of Brittany; and others found an asylum in the fidelity of their neighbours and the respect which was still paid to the sanctuaries. Of the prisoners, St. Leger, a knight, had married the duchess of Exeter, the sister of Richard. But it was in vain that the plea of affinity was urged in his favour, and a large sum of money offered for his ransom. By the king's order he suffered with others at Exeter.<sup>c</sup>

#### LEGISLATION OF RICHARD'S REIGN

In this abortive revolt against the power of Richard we see nothing like a popular movement on one side or the other. The faithful adherents of the king, such as the duke of Norfolk, gathered their "tall fellows in harness," and stood by the man whom they had placed on the throne. Buckingham impressed his Welshmen, and a few lords and knights prepared their tenants for the field. But there was no signal demonstration in London or the great cities. The peaceful and industrious people of town and country were utterly weary of these feudal struggles, and had sunk into the worst state of public feeling—that of indifference. Richard and his advisers appear to have partially comprehended the spirit of their time, and to have endeavoured to discharge their duty to the people by wise legislation and impartial justice. Bacon<sup>e</sup> says of this king that he was "jealous of the honour of the English nation, and likewise a good law-maker, for the ease and solace of the common people." At the same time Bacon objects that "the politic and wholesome laws which were enacted in his time" were only "to woo and win the hearts of the people, as being conscious to himself that the true obligations of sovereignty in him failed and were wanting." Bacon lived at a period when "the ease and solace of the common people," to be promoted by wholesome laws, were scarcely thought to be amongst "the true obligations of sovereignty." The maligned Richard, in the statutes of his one parliament, showed that he was in advance of his age.

The triumph of the king, in the failure of the plans of Buckingham and Richmond, would naturally tend to place his government upon a more secure basis. He found a parliament ready enough to confirm his title, by passing an act for the settlement of the crown upon him and his issue, in which the illegitimacy of the children of Edward IV was affirmed, and his widow was styled "sometime wife to Sir John Grey, knight, late naming herself and many years heretofore queen of England." But this parliament, which was held at Westminster on the 23d of January, 1484, did something beyond this confirmation of Richard's claims, and the attainder of those who had been concerned in the recent revolt. In the address which the protector delivered to the meeting which invited him to assume the crown, he used these remarkable words: "For certainly we be determined rather to adventure and commit us to the peril of our life and jeopardy of death, than to live in such thralldom and bondage as we have lived long time heretofore, oppressed and injured by extortions and new impositions against the laws of God and man, and the liberty, old policy, and laws of this realm, wherein every Englishman is

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inherited." This was not a mere boast of the hour. Edward IV had been accustomed to plunder his subjects under the name of "benevolences"; which practice the duke of Buckingham defined to be "that every man should pay, not what he of his own good will list, but what the king of his own good will list to take." The statute of Richard "to free the subject from benevolences" denounces these "new and unlawful inventions" as the cause of "great penury and wretchedness," and ordains that no such exactions shall in future be made, but that they be "annulled forever."

The Act for Bailing of Persons suspected of Felony provides that on arrests for mere suspicion of felony, every justice of the peace shall have power to bail; and that the goods of persons apprehended for felony shall not be seized before conviction. An Act for Returning of sufficient Jurors aims at the proper administration of justice, by requiring that no jurymen be summoned but such as are of good name and fame, and have twenty shillings a year in freehold land, or twenty-six shillings and eightpence in copyhold. An Act against privy and unknown Feoffments secures the transfer of property to the buyer against the claims of the heirs of the seller. An Act for Proclamation upon Fines levied is repeated in almost the exact words by a statute of Henry VII. "It is surely strange," says Hallam,<sup>f</sup> "that those who have extolled this sagacious monarch (Henry VII) for breaking the fetters of landed property (though many of them were lawyers) should never have observed that whatever credit might be due for the innovation should redound to the honour of the unfortunate usurper." It is unnecessary here to enter upon a technical explanation of the provisions of this act. By a decision of the courts of law in the time of Edward IV, the practice of barring estates tail—that is, of permitting their alienation in despite of entail—by what is called a common recovery, was established. The statute of Richard, by enacting that a fine levied in the courts, with due proclamation, should, after five years, be a bar to all claims, gave security to possession, and thus facilitated the transfer of lands, and in so doing broke down one of the chief foundations of the feudal system.

Lord Campbell,<sup>g</sup> looking at these acts of Richard III—fifteen altogether—says of this, his only parliament: "We have no difficulty in pronouncing it the most meritorious national council for protecting the liberty of the subject, and putting down abuses in the administration of justice, which had sat since the time of Edward I." But in opening the volumes of laws, as printed by authority "from original records and authentic manuscripts," we are struck with a change upon the face of these statutes of Richard III, which indicates as true a regard for the liberty of the subject as the laws themselves. For the first time the laws to be obeyed by the English people are enacted in the English tongue. But, beyond this, they are the first laws of the land which were ever printed. In the legislation of this short and troubled reign, and in the mode of promulgating a knowledge of the laws, there is the evidence of some master mind breaking down the trammels of routine and prescription.

The commercial acts are not marked by any advance beyond the principle of protection, except in one striking instance, in which an exception is made to the old system of fettering the dealings and restricting the liberty of alien traders. There was one commodity which was to come into the land as freely as the light from heaven; there was one class of foreign merchants whose calling was to be encouraged, for in their hands were the great instruments of all national progress. Let us give this memorable enactment in its original English: "Provided alwey that this acte, or any part therof, or any other acte made or to be made in this present parliament, in no wise extende or be

prejudiciall any lette hurte or impediment to any artificer or merchaunt straungier of what nacion or contrey he be or shalbe of, for bryngyng into this realme, or sellyng by retail or otherwise, of any maner bokes wrytten or imprynted, or for the inhabitynge within the said realme for the same intent, or to any writer, lymper, hynder, or imprynter, of suche bokes, as he hath or shall have to sell by wey of merchaundise, or for their abode in the same realme for the exercysyng of the said occupacions; this acte or any parte therof notwithstanding." There could be no greater homage to the memory of Gutenberg, the inventor of printing, than this law, enacted fifteen years after his death, which said to his fellow craftsmen of every nation that no English restrictions upon aliens should touch them. The power, now for the first time exercised, of securing a better obedience to the laws by a wider publicity, demanded such a tribute to the merchants and artificers of knowledge. Richard and his counsellors stood upon the threshold of a new state of society; and this encouragement of transcribers, printers, and sellers of books showed that they understood what was one of the characteristics of their time. But the spirit of the feudal ages was still a living presence. As the commercial classes were pressing forward to the honours which wealth commanded, and the gates of knowledge were opened wider, the claims of blood came to be regarded even more than when the only social distinction was that of lord and vassal. The knight-riders, poursuivants, heralds of kings were more than ever required to be the arbiters of rank and the tracers of genealogies. Richard III raised the heralds into an incorporation, and bestowed upon them the royal house of Cold Harbour. They became the worthy depositaries of the nation's family antiquities.

#### RICHARD AND PRINCESS ELIZABETH

One of the measures of Richard's parliament was to annul all letters-patent granting estates to "Elizabeth, late wife of Sir John Grey." The relict of Edward IV still remained with her daughters in sanctuary. But on the 1st of March, 1484, the king, in the presence of lords spiritual and temporal, and the mayor and aldermen of London, made oath *verbo regio* upon the holy evangelists that if Elizabeth, Cecily, Anne, Catherine, and Bridget, the daughters of Dame Elizabeth Grey, would come out of the sanctuary, and be guided, ruled, and demeaned after him, he would see that they should be in surety of their lives and suffer no hurt or imprisonment, but that they should have everything necessary as his kinswomen; and that he would endow such as were marriageable with lands to the yearly value of 200 marks, and provide them gentlemen-born as husbands; and that their mother should receive of him 700 marks annually for her support. This family accordingly came out of their place of refuge, and submitted themselves to the guidance of Richard.

In the next month he, who was suspected of having destroyed his brother's sons, himself sustained the heaviest of human afflictions. His own son, Edward, the only child of his marriage with the daughter of Warwick, died at Middleham castle. The unhappy parents were driven almost mad by the intelligence. But the king had too many enemies to watch to sit down in hopeless grief. He declared his nephew, John de la Pole, earl of Lincoln, his heir, and applied himself to counteract the schemes of Richmond, by negotiating with the duke of Brittany to deliver him up. But Richmond was in many respects his intellectual equal; and he had secret friends in the English



[1484-1485 A.D.]

court, as useful as the spies whom Richard employed to watch the motions of his rival. He suddenly fled from Vannes with a few servants, and succeeded in entering France, where he claimed the protection of Charles VIII. The earl of Oxford, one of the most constant of the Lancastrians, escaped from his prison at Ham and joined Richmond, to whom other adherents gradually flocked.

The king spent the year in active preparation for the possible invasion. He kept his Christmas at Westminster with great splendour; and it was remarked that his niece Elizabeth was dressed in robes of the same fashion and colour as those of his queen. Scandal upon this hint took up its courtly vocation, and the rumour went that, as the queen was in ill health, he contemplated marriage with his niece. On the 16th of March, 1485, the queen died. Here was a new occasion for fastening one more horrible suspicion upon the evil reputation of Richard; and therefore Polydore Vergil<sup>i</sup> makes a doubt "whether she were despatched by sorrowfulness or poison."<sup>1</sup> A eulogist of Richard, Sir George Buck,<sup>j</sup> affirms that he had seen a letter written to the duke of Norfolk by Elizabeth of York, in which she called the king "her joy and maker in this world, and said that she was his in heart and thought; withal insinuating that the better part of February was past, and that she feared the queen would never die." Although such a marriage was not beyond the bounds of papal dispensation, Richard felt that the rumour was injurious to him. Within a month after the death of the queen, on the 11th of April, before the mayor and citizens of London he solemnly disavowed the intention which had been imputed to him. It has been justly observed by Sir N. H. Nicolas<sup>k</sup> that his title to the crown would not have been strengthened by marrying a woman whom the law had declared illegitimate; and as justly inferred that "the whole tale was invented with the view of blackening Richard's character, to gratify the monarch in whose reign all the contemporary writers who relate it flourished." But they told the story, as against Richard, without the slightest hint that the lady who became the wife of Henry VII was enamoured of the man who was held to be the destroyer of her brothers; but on the contrary they said that she abhorred his proposals. After the death of Richard's queen, Elizabeth was removed to Sheriff Hutton castle, where her cousin, the earl of Warwick, the son of the duke of Clarence, was kept in a sort of honourable captivity. Historians, who can scarcely avoid dwelling too much upon the intrigues of courts, are indignant with the widow of Edward IV that at this time she was in friendly relations with Richard, and induced her son, the marquis of Dorset, to attempt to return to England. He was detained by the king of France, who gave assistance to the project of Richmond; and the preparations for invasion went forward.

Richard appears to have somewhat too much despised his adversary. He was in London from the beginning of the year till the middle of May. There had been no parliament to grant him a subsidy, and he, by a solemn legislative act, had declared against "benevolences." He was too straitened for money to make large warlike preparations. Fabyan,<sup>k</sup> who personally knew whatever actions of the king bore upon the pockets of the citizens, says of this period that "King Richard spared not to spend the great treasure which, before, King Edward IV had gathered, in giving of great and large gifts"; and that "he borrowed many notable sums of money of rich men of this realm, and

[Lingard<sup>c</sup> says: "From the expressions in Elizabeth's letter there is reason to fear that this suspicion was too true. It is evident Richard had not only promised to marry her, but had told her that the queen would die in February. Hence she observes that the better part of February is past, and the queen still alive."]

specially of the citizens of London, whereof the least sum was forty pounds. For surety whereof he delivered to them good and sufficient pledges." This is explicit enough; and yet we constantly find it stated that Richard lost his small share of the affections of the citizens by adopting the system of benevolences [which he had expressly revoked], though not in name.<sup>1</sup> He who gives "good and sufficient pledges" for a loan can scarcely be said to pursue the same system of extortion as he who compels a gift without an intention of repayment.

#### HENRY OF RICHMOND

The earl of Richmond had been acquainted with misfortune from his first years. Comines<sup>2</sup> says, "He told me, not long before his departure from this kingdom, that from the time he was five years old he had always been a fugitive or a prisoner." According to outward appearances and ordinary calculations, his enterprise for the English crown was not likely to improve his lot. The same observer regarded Richmond as without money, without power, without reputation, and without right; and he describes the three thousand Normans that were furnished to the earl by the king of France as "the loosest and most profligate persons in all that country."

But Richmond had better support than his outward power of three thousand vagabond Normans. There was a systematic organisation of the Lancastrian party in England, which Richard, with all his penetration and caution, and with his reputation for striking hard when he did strike, very insufficiently guarded against. He had no great military force at his command. Fourteen years had passed since the battle of Tewkesbury, when the people of the south had rallied round the banner of the White Rose. The Welsh had followed Buckingham, and were now ready to follow Richmond, who came with a genealogy from Cadwallon and King Arthur up to the Trojan Brutus. Stanley, who could command many followers in Cheshire and Lancashire, and Northumberland, the great lord of the border country, were nominally for the king, and employed their authority as his accredited officers. The day of battle showed how dexterously they had been won over to betray him. The confidence of Richard in the fidelity of these nobles seems a judicial blindness, very different from the supposed temper of the man who, according to Polydore Vergil,<sup>3</sup> "while he was thinking of any matter, did continually bite his nether lip, as though that cruel nature of his did so rage against itself in that little carcase." He indeed took some security in detaining the son of Lord Stanley at his court while the father went amongst his tenantry; but, beyond this, he seems to have had no suspicion of treachery.<sup>d</sup>

At length the king was informed by his emissaries that the earl of Richmond, with the permission of Charles, had raised an army of three thousand adventurers, most of them Normans, and that a fleet was lying in the mouth of the Seine to transport them to England. He affected to receive the intelligence with joy, and immediately, to prepare the public for the event, published a long and artful proclamation, which stated that "the king's rebels and traitors, disabled and attainted by authority of the high court of parliament, of whom many were known for open murderers, adulterers, and

[<sup>1</sup> Lingard <sup>c</sup> holds this opinion. He says that Richard's necessities compelled him "to adopt the thing which he refused in the name," and that by extorting money from wealthy citizens he lost what small share he still retained in their affection. According to the author of the continuation of the history of Croylund Abbey (*Hist. Croyl. contin.<sup>m</sup>*) these forced loans were called by the people, "malevolences."]

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extortioners, had forsaken their natural country and put themselves at first under the obedience of the duke of Brittany, to whom they had made promises so unnatural and abominable that they had been refused by that prince; that they had next betaken themselves to the king's ancient enemy, Charles, calling himself king of France, and chosen for their captain one Henry Tudor, descended of bastard blood both by the father's and the mother's side, and who therefore could never have any claim to the crown of England but by conquest; that the said Henry Tudor, in order that he might achieve his false intent by the aid of the king's ancient enemy of France, had covenanted with him to give up in perpetuity all the right which the king of England had to the crown of France, to Normandy, Anjou, Maine, Guienne, Calais, and the marches, and to dismember the arms of France from the arms of England forever; that, in more proof of his said purpose of conquest, the said Henry Tudor had given away archbishoprics, bishoprics, and other dignities spiritual, and the duchies, earldoms, baronies, and other inheritances of knights, esquires, and gentlemen, within the realm; that he intended to change and subvert the laws of the same, and to do the most cruel murders, slaughters, robberies, and disherisons, that were ever seen in any Christian realm; wherefore, the king willed that all his subjects, like good and true Englishmen, should endower themselves with all their power for the defence of them, their wives, children, goods, and hereditaments, and as he, like a diligent and courageous prince, would put his most royal person to all labour and pain necessary in that behalf, to the comfort and surety of his faithful subjects, so he commanded all his said subjects to be ready in their most defensible array to do his highness service of war, when they by open proclamation or otherwise should be commanded so to do, for the resistance of the king's said rebels, traitors, and enemies."

## THE BATTLE OF BOSWORTH FIELD (1485 A.D.)

Having issued instructions to his friends in the maritime counties, and established posts of cavalry on the high roads for the more speedy transmission of intelligence, Richard sent for the great seal, and fixed his headquarters at Nottingham. There he was nearer to his partisans in the north, on whose fidelity he chiefly relied; and thence, as from the centre, he could watch the extremities of the kingdom. On the 1st of August his competitor sailed from Harfleur; on the 7th he landed at Milford Haven, and directed his march through the northern districts of Wales, a tract of country in the interests of the Stanleys. He met with little to oppose or to encourage him; if the Welsh chieftains did not impede his progress, few joined his standard; and when he took possession of Shrewsbury his army did not exceed four thousand men. A week elapsed before Richard heard of his landing; but orders were instantly despatched for all his subjects to meet him at Leicester, with the most alarming menaces against the defaulters. The duke of Norfolk obeyed with the men of the eastern counties, the earl of Northumberland with the northern levies, the lord Lovet from Hampshire, and Brackenbury from London; but the man whom he most feared, the lord Stanley, replied that he was confined to his bed by the sweating sickness.

At Leicester the king found himself at the head of a numerous and well-appointed army, which, had it been attached to its leader, might have trampled under foot the contemptible force that followed the banner of his competitor. But Henry, assured by the promises of his secret adherents, continued to press forward, as if he were determined to rush into the very jaws



of destruction. He crossed the Severn at Shrewsbury; at Newport he was joined by the tenantry of the Talbots; at Stafford he had a private conference with Sir William Stanley, and consented, in order to save, if it were possible, the life of Lord Strange [Lord Stanley's son and a prisoner in Richard's hands], that the Stanleys should continue to wear the appearance of hostility, and constantly retire before him as he advanced.

On the 21st of August Richard rode from Leicester with the crown on his head, and encamped about two miles from the town of Bosworth. The same night Henry proceeded from Tamworth to Atherstone, where he joined the Stanleys, and was encouraged by the repeated arrivals of deserters from the enemy. In the morning both armies (that of Richard was double in number) advanced to Redmore; and the vanguards, commanded by the duke of Norfolk and the earl of Oxford, engaged. Richard was dismayed to see the Stanleys opposed to him, the earl of Northumberland remaining inactive



RICHARD'S HEADQUARTERS  
(Before the Battle of Bosworth)

at his post, and his men wavering and on the point of flying or going over to his competitor. Chancing to espy Henry, he determined to win the day or perish in the attempt. Spurring his horse and exclaiming, "Treason, treason, treason!" he slew with his own hand Sir William Brandon, the bearer of the hostile standard, struck to the ground Sir John Cheney, and made a desperate blow at his rival, when he was overpowered by numbers, thrown from his horse, and immediately slain.

Lord Stanley, taking up the crown, placed it on the head of Henry, and the conqueror was instantly greeted with the shouts of "Long live King Henry!" In the battle and pursuit the duke of Norfolk, the lord Ferrers, some knights,

and about three thousand others were killed. The victors lost but few; and, to add to their joy, Lord Strange, whom Richard had ordered to be beheaded at the beginning of the battle, escaped in the confusion and rejoined his father. The body of the late king was stripped, laid across a horse behind a pursuivant-at-arms, and conducted to Leicester, where, after it had been exposed for two days, it was buried with little ceremony in the church of the Grey Friars. Henry entered the town with the same royal state with which Richard had marched out on the preceding day. He was careful, however, not to stain his triumph with blood. Of all his prisoners three only suffered death.

The battle of the 22d of August was fought with so few men on either side that it would appear marvellous that it should have decided the fate of a kingdom, if we did not bear in mind that it was not fought by one section of an aroused population against another section similarly excited; but that the king himself, with a few faithful friends, was fighting with scarcely more power than that of a feudal partisan, and that when he, the first crowned sovereign since Harold that died in battle upon English ground, was struck

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down, the contest was at an end. The feudal chain which bound the lord to the king and the vassal to the lord had been impaired in many of its links. The sentiment of loyalty to the sovereign, founded upon the spirit of patriotism, and not upon the obligations of feudal service, was scarcely yet created. That had to be born when the dominant power of the aristocracy was broken down, not so much by the force of arms or of law as by the decay of the principle which was incompatible with the civilisation that more readily assimilated with the rule of one than the rule of many. With Richard, the last of the Plantagenets, expired the political system under which England had been governed by that house for more than three centuries.<sup>d</sup>

Thus [says Ramsay] the Red Rose of Henry VII had avenged the White Rose of Edward IV and his sons. Ultimate victory had fallen to the house of Lancaster, and the long war of succession was at an end. For the accession of Henry VII was essentially a Lancastrian triumph, and the war from first to last had been a war of succession. To some extent the result must be attributed to the seeming accident of Richard's usurpation. Had he been content to play the loyal part of a Regent Bedford or a Cardinal Beaufort, the house of Tudor need never have been heard of in history. It must be admitted that the Lancastrian dynasty showed remarkable vitality. It was hard to down in the first instance; it rose again mysteriously in 1470; and in 1485 it finally carried the day, when only two years before it had seemed extinct. These facts prove that its roots went deep into the soil. The accepted explanation is that the one party was constitutional and parliamentary, the other legitimist and arbitrary. The Lancastrian government had indulged at times in very strong acts, but they were not habitually sanguinary, while the personal lives and characters of their kings had been in harmony with English feeling. Yorkist rule was sanguinary from the beginning. To bring our point of view into harmony with that of the fifteenth century we ought perhaps to say that the house of York fell as much from the repugnance excited by the lives and conduct of its sons as for any definite offences against the nation.<sup>e</sup>

#### MORE'S CHARACTERIZATION OF RICHARD

Richard, duke of Gloucester, the third sonne of Richard Plantagenet, duke of York, was in wit and courage equal with the other [Edward IV], but in beauty and lineaments of nature farre underneath both [Edward IV and George duke of Clarence]. As he was small and little of stature so was he of body greatly deformed, the one shoulder higher then the other, his face small, but his countenance was cruell, and such that a man at the first aspect would judge it to savour and smell of malice, fraude, and deceit: when hee stood musing he would bite and chew beasly his nether lippe, as who said that his fierce nature in his cruell body alwaies chafed, stirred, and was ever unquiet: besides that, the dagger that hee wore, hee would when hee studied with his hand plucke up and downe in the sheath to the midst, never drawing it fully out; his wit was pregnant, quicke and ready, wilie to fiegne and apt to dissemble; hee had a proud minde, and an arrogant stomacke, the which accompanied him to his death. He was malicious, wrathfull and envious; and, as it is reported, his Mother the Dutches had much adoe in her travell, that shee could not be delivered of him uncut, and that hee came into the world the feet forward, as men be borne outward, and, as the fame ran, not intoothed: whether that men of hatred reported above the truth, or that

Nature changed his course in his beginning, which in his life committed many things unnaturally, this I leave to God's Judgment.

Hee was no evill Captaine in warre, as to the which his disposition was more inclined then to peace. Sundry Victories he had, and some Overthrowes, but never for default of his owne person, either for lacke of hardinesse or politicke order. Free hee was of his expences and somewhat above his power liberrall; with large gifts he gat him unstedfast friendship; for which cause he was faine to borrow, pill, and extort in other places, which gat him stedfast hatred. Hee was close and secret; a deep dissembler, lowly of countenance, arrogant of heart, outwardly familiar where he inwardly hated, not letting to kisse whom he thought to kill, spiteful and cruell, not alway for ill will, but oftner for ambition and to serve his purpose; friend and foe were all indifferent: where his advantage grew, hee spared no man's death whose life withstood his purpose. He slew in the Tower King Henry the Sixth; saying, Now is there no Heire male of King Edward the third, but we of the House of Yorke: which murder was done without King Edward his assent, which would have appointed that butcherly office to some other, rather then to his owne Brother.

Some Wise men also thinke, that his drift lacked not in helping forth his owne Brother of Clarence to his death, which thing in all appearance he resisted, although hee inwardly minded it. And the cause thereof was—as men noting his doings and proceedings did marke—because that he long in King Edward's time thought to obtaine the Crown, in case that the King his Brother, whose life he looked that ill dyet would soone shorten, should happen to decease, as he did indeed, his children being young. And then if the Duke of Clarence had lived, his pretensed purpose had been farre hindered: For if the Duke of Clarence had kept him selfe true to his Nephew the young King, every one of these casts had bin a Trumpe in the Duke of Gloucesters way: but when he was sure that his Brother of Clarence was dead, then hee knew that hee might worke without that danger. But of these points there is no certainty, and whosoever divineth or conjectureth may as well shoot too farre as too short: but this conjecture afterward tooke place (as few doe) as you shall perceive hereafter.<sup>b</sup>





# THE HISTORY OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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## CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND

### FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE YEAR 1485

B.C.

- 55 Julius Cæsar invades Britain with a force of 10,000, but returns to Gaul without attempting to conquer the country.
- 54 Cæsar invades Britain a second time with a larger force, compels several tribes to give hostages and promise tribute, and returns to Gaul. For almost a century after his departure Britain is left to itself.

A.D.

- 43 The emperor Claudius sends Aulus Plautius into Britain. After much fighting he reduces the country south of the Severn and Avon.
- 50 Defeat of Caractacus, chief of the Catuvellauni.
- 58 Suetonius Paullinus becomes governor and proceeds to a conquest of the West.
- 61 Boadicea, wife of a chief of the Iceni, leads a revolt against Roman oppression, and seventy thousand Roman colonists are said to have been put to the sword.
- 78 Agricola becomes governor and completes the Roman conquest as far north as the Firths of Clyde and Forth, between which he erects a line of forts to stop the raids of Picts and Scots.
- 119 The emperor Hadrian visits Britain.
- 121 Hadrian builds a wall across the island from the Solway to the Tyne.
- 211 The emperor Severus dies in York after an expedition against the Picts and Scots.
- 306 Constantine is proclaimed emperor in Britain.
- 383 Maximus is proclaimed emperor by the soldiers in Britain.

### FIFTH CENTURY

- 401-410 The Roman legions are gradually withdrawn from Britain, and in the latter year the emperor Honorius finally renounces his sovereignty over the island.
- 449 A band of Jutes lands at Ebbsfleet in the Isle of Thanet on the invitation of Vortigern, a powerful British chief, who wished to use them in his wars with the Picts. Subsequently his allies turn upon him, wrest the surrounding country and coast from British control, and lay the foundation of the kingdom of Kent.
- 477 Saxons, under their chief, Ella, begin the conquest of the British shore west of Kent.
- 491 Ella captures the British stronghold of Anderida and lays the foundation of the kingdom of Sussex (the South Saxons).
- 495 Cerdic, chief of a band of Saxons known as Gewissas, lands on the southern coast of Southampton Water, and establishes the kingdom of the West Saxons, or Wessex.

### SIXTH CENTURY

- 520 The West Saxon advance is temporarily checked by the Britons in a battle fought at Mount Badon in Dorsetshire.
- 547 The kingdom of Bernicia is founded by Ida, a chief of the Angles.
- 552 Cynric, king of the West Saxons, captures the British stronghold of Sorbiodunum.
- 571 The West Saxons turn northward and occupy the upper valley of the Ouse and the valley of the Severn.

- 577 The West Saxons win the battle of Deorham, and divide the West Welsh from the North Welsh.
- 584 Æthelberht, king of Kent, marries Bertha, daughter of Charibert, king of the Franks.
- 588 Bernicia and Deira, two kingdoms of the North Angles, are united under Æthelric, king of Bernicia, to form the kingdom of Northumbria.
- 590 Æthelberht of Kent becomes overlord of Essex, East Anglia, and most of the other Saxon communities south of the Humber.
- 593 Æthelrith becomes king of Northumbria.
- 597 Pope Gregory the Great sends Augustine to England as leader of a band of Christian missionaries. Æthelberht and thousands of his followers are converted, and Augustine is made the first English archbishop, with his see established at Canterbury.

## SEVENTH CENTURY

- 603 Æthelrith of Northumbria defeats the Scots at Degsastan.
- 607 Æthelberht defeats the Welsh at Chester and extends his realm to the sea.
- 616 Æthelberht of Kent dies and the overlordship of Kent ends with him.
- 617 Eadwine of Deira becomes king of Northumbria, and gradually extends his supremacy over all the English states except Kent, with which he is allied through a marriage with Æthelbergh, sister of the Kentish king.
- 627 Eadwine and his principal thanes are converted to Christianity by Paulinus, who becomes first bishop of the see of York.
- 628 Penda, king of Mercia, forms a confederacy of central English states which he leads in revolt against Eadwine.
- 633 Eadwine is defeated and slain in battle by Penda and his allies at Hatfield.
- 635 Oswald partially re-establishes Northumbrian supremacy.
- 642 Oswald is overthrown and slain in battle with Penda at Maserfield and his possessions divided.
- 651 Oswin reunites Deira and Bernicia.
- 655 Oswin and the Northumbrians defeat and slay Penda of Mercia in battle at Winwaedfield.
- 668 Theodore of Tarsus is made archbishop of Canterbury, and begins the organisation of an English national church.
- 673 The first national council of the English Church assembles at Hertford.
- 683 Ine becomes king of the West Saxons.

## EIGHTH CENTURY

- 735 Death of Bede, the first English historian.
- 757 Offa becomes king of Mercia.
- 775 Offa subdues Kent.
- 777 Offa defeats the West Saxons at Bensington.
- 787 The Danes first land in England on the coast of Devonshire.

## NINTH CENTURY

- 802 Egbert becomes king of Wessex.
- 825 Egbert defeats the Mercians at Ellandun.
- 826 Kent, Essex, Sussex, and East Anglia submit to Egbert.
- 827 Northumbria acknowledges the supremacy of Egbert, who is now king of all England south of the Thames, and overlord of all the English as far north as the Forth.
- 834 The Northmen ravage the coast of Sussex and Dorset.
- 835 The Northmen in conjunction with the Britons of Cornwall advance eastward into Wessex, but are met and decisively defeated by Egbert at Hengests' Down.
- 839 Egbert dies, and is succeeded by his son Æthelwulf.
- 851 The Northmen remain over winter in England for the first time. They sack London and Canterbury, and are finally defeated by Æthelwulf at Ockley, in Surrey.
- 858 Æthelwulf dies, and is succeeded by his sons, Æthelbald, who rules two years (858-860), and Æthelberht, who rules six years (860-866).
- 866 Æthelred, third son of Æthelwulf, becomes king, and undertakes active campaigns against the Northmen, who had made successful inroads into East Anglia, Mercia, and Northumbria, and had begun to fortify and settle on the lands they had conquered.
- 870 East Anglia is completely subjugated by the Northmen, and its king, Eadmund, is put to death by them. The king of Mercia is compelled to pay tribute to the Northmen.
- 871 Alfred, the fourth son of Æthelwulf, succeeds Æthelred as king. The conquests of the Northmen have limited his sovereignty to Wessex and to Kent and Sussex, which by



this time have been completely annexed to it. The Northmen continue their conquests, and in the next six years subjugate the Northumbrians and Mercians, whose lands they apportion amongst their warriors.

- 878 Alfred retires to Athelney, in Somerset, where he gathers an army together with which he administers a severe defeat to Guthrum, the Danish king of East Anglia. The treaty of Chippenham, or Wedmore, is arranged between Alfred and Guthrum, by which Alfred's sovereignty is limited to Wessex, Sussex, Kent, and western Mercia.
- 886 Guthrum surrenders London and the surrounding district to Alfred.
- 893 Northmen, whose advance into France had been checked, begin a series of raids on the southern coast of England.
- 897 Alfred builds a new fleet of swift sailing vessels and defeats the invaders in a decisive sea-fight, which puts an end to their depredations.

## TENTH CENTURY

- 901 Alfred dies, and is succeeded by his son Edward the Elder, who renews the struggle with the Northmen and reconquers England as far north as the Humber, aided by his sister Æthelflæd, the "Lady of the Mercians."
- 918 On the death of Æthelflæd, Mercia is annexed to Wessex.
- 922 The "Five Boroughs" of the Danes submit to Edward. The North Welsh acknowledge Edward's sovereignty.
- 924 The Northumbrians, Scotch, and Strathclyde Welsh acknowledge the overlordship of Edward.
- 926 Æthelstan succeeds Edward and rules fifteen years, during which he brings Danish Northumbria under his direct rule and makes his supremacy most complete in western England.
- 937 Æthelstan defeats a coalition of Irish, Scotch, and Welsh at Brunanburh.
- 940 Eadmund succeeds Æthelstan.
- 945 Eadmund conquers Cumberland and gives it to Malcolm on military tenure.
- 946 Eadmund is succeeded by his brother Eadred, who rules nine years, and leaves England united from the Forth to the Channel. The distinctions between the English and the Danes are almost wiped out.
- 955 Eadred is succeeded by Eadwig, who makes his younger brother Eadgar under-king in Northumbria.
- 957 All England north of the Thames revolts, and Eadgar is chosen king.
- 959 Eadwig dies, and Eadgar becomes king of all England.
- 960 Dunstan becomes archbishop of Canterbury, retaining his position as Eadgar's principal adviser.
- 975 Eadward succeeds his father and rules during four years of internal strife. He is finally murdered near Corfe, it is supposed by direction of his stepmother, the mother of Æthelred the Unready, who then becomes king.
- 984 The Danish invasions are begun again.
- 988 Death of Dunstan. Æthelred quarrels with his Ealdormen.
- 991 The East Saxons are defeated by the Danes at Maldon, and Æthelred is compelled to levy the "Danegeld" to buy them off.
- 994 Danish attack on London is repulsed.

## ELEVENTH CENTURY

- 1002 Æthelred, hoping to secure the help of the Normans in repelling the Danes, marries Emma, daughter of Richard I, duke of Normandy. A general massacre of the Danes occurs on St. Brice's Day.
- 1003 Sweyn, king of the Danes, invades England to revenge the massacre of his countrymen.
- 1012 Ælfheah (Saint Alphege), archbishop of Canterbury, is murdered by the Danes.
- 1013 Sweyn overruns all England, and Æthelred flees to Normandy, but the following year Sweyn dies suddenly and Æthelred returns.
- 1016 Eadmund Ironside succeeds Æthelred and fights six battles with the Danes. Finally, through the treachery of some of his followers, he is overpowered at Assandun. Eadmund divides England with Canute, son of Svend, Eadmund retaining Wessex, Essex, and East Anglia, and Canute Northumbria and Mercia. Eadmund dies, and Canute becomes king of all England.
- 1017 Canute marries Emma, widow of Æthelred, and rules England as an English king, sending most of his warriors back to Denmark.
- 1020 Godwin becomes earl of Wessex.
- 1027 Canute visits Rome.
- 1031 Malcolm of Scotland acknowledges the overlordship of Canute.

- 1035 Canute dies, and the succession is disputed by his two sons, Harold and Harthacnut. Godwin and the West Saxons hold the south of England for Harthacnut, who remains in Denmark. Harold rules in the north.
- 1040 Harold dies, and Harthacnut comes to England and rules for two years.
- 1042 Edward the Confessor, son of Ethelred, is chosen king, largely through the influence of Earl Godwin, who for several years is the virtual ruler of England.
- 1045 Edward marries Eadgyth, daughter of Godwin.
- 1051 Robert of Jumièges, a Norman, is made archbishop of Canterbury. Godwin quarrels with Edward and is banished. William of Normandy visits England, and Edward promises to make him his successor.
- 1052 Godwin and his sons return to England; the Norman archbishop is deposed and replaced by Stigand, an Englishman.
- 1053 Godwin dies. His son Harold becomes earl of Wessex and practically rules England in Edward's name.
- 1063 Harold reduces Wales to submission.
- 1066 Edward dies, and Harold is chosen king by the witan and crowned at Westminster. William of Normandy claims the throne and prepares at once to invade England. Harold marches to the north of England and at Stamford Bridge defeats Tostig, his rebel brother, and Harold Hardrada, king of Norway, who had formed an alliance and were overrunning Yorkshire. Harold returns to the south to oppose William, who has landed at Pevensey. The battle of Hastings (or Senlac) is fought. Harold is defeated and killed. Eadgar Ætheling, grandson of Eadmund Ironside, is chosen king by the witan, but submits, together with the principal English nobles and the city of London.
- 1068 William subdues the west of England.
- 1069 William puts down a great uprising in the north led by Eadgar Ætheling and aided by Svend, king of Denmark.
- 1070 The conquest of England is practically completed. Lanfranc becomes archbishop of Canterbury.
- 1071 Hereward makes the last struggle for English independence.
- 1072 Malcolm, king of the Scots, invades England, but is pursued as far as the Tay by William, who secures from him an acknowledgment of his overlordship.
- 1075 William puts down the first rising of the Norman barons.
- 1077 The revolt of Robert.
- 1080 The uprising at Durham.
- 1082 Odo is arrested.
- 1085 The *Domesday Book* is begun.
- 1086 William assembles a great court (gemot) at Salisbury, where all the landholders in England swear allegiance to him.
- 1087 William dies, and is succeeded as king by his second son, William Rufus.
- 1088 The Norman barons, led by Odo of Bayeux, rise in revolt and declare for Robert, duke of Normandy, the Conqueror's eldest son. William Rufus rallies the English about him, besieges and captures Odo at Rochester, and the uprising is quelled.
- 1089 Lanfranc dies. Ranulf Flambard becomes the chief minister and counsellor of the king, and systematises the feudal dues.
- 1091 Malcolm of Scotland invades England, but is compelled by William Rufus to do homage.
- 1093 Anselm becomes archbishop of Canterbury.
- 1095 William Rufus puts down a revolt of the barons in the north led by Robert Mowbray, earl of Northumberland.
- 1096 Robert of Normandy goes on the First Crusade, and pledges Normandy to William Rufus to raise money for his expedition.
- 1097 Anselm after a quarrel with William Rufus retires to Rome, and the king seizes his estates.

## TWELFTH CENTURY

- 1100 William Rufus is killed while hunting in the New Forest. He is succeeded by his younger brother, Henry I. Flambard is imprisoned and Anselm recalled. Henry marries Matilda, daughter of Malcolm of Scotland.
- 1101 Robert of Normandy, urged by Flambard, lays claim to the crown and invades England, but abandons his claim by treaty, without fighting, on discovering Henry's strength.
- 1102 Revolt of Norman barons, led by Robert of Bellême, is suppressed.
- 1106 Henry invades Normandy and defeats Robert at Tinchebrai. Robert is imprisoned for the rest of his life (28 years) in Cardiff castle. Henry becomes duke of the Normans.
- 1107 Henry and Anselm disagree over the question of investiture, but a compromise is effected. Roger of Salisbury becomes justiciar, and organises the Curia Regis and court of exchequer.

- 1114 Henry's daughter Matilda marries the emperor Henry V.
- 1117 William Clito, son of Robert, organises a revolt in Normandy, and is supported by Louis VI of France and the counts of Flanders and Anjou.
- 1119 Henry defeats William Clito and his allies at the battle of Brenville.
- 1120 Henry's only son, William, is drowned at sea.
- 1126 The barons agree to accept as their sovereign Henry's daughter, the empress Matilda, whose husband, Henry V, had died the previous year.
- 1128 Matilda marries Geoffrey Plantagenet, count of Anjou. William, earl of Flanders, dies.
- 1133 A son, afterwards Henry II, born to Matilda. The barons again swear allegiance to her.
- 1135 Henry I dies. Stephen of Blois, nephew of Henry I, is received as king by the city of London, chosen by the barons, and crowned at Winchester.
- 1137 David of Scotland, uncle of Matilda, invades England.
- 1138 David is defeated near Northallerton in the "battle of the Standard."
- 1138 Robert, earl of Gloucester, an illegitimate son of Henry I, revolts and declares for Matilda. Civil war becomes general, and for several years a state of anarchy exists.
- 1141 Matilda defeats Stephen in battle at Lincoln and takes him prisoner. Matilda is generally acknowledged as queen, but estranges her supporters by her harsh and arrogant rule.
- 1142 Robert of Gloucester taken prisoner by the Londoners, and exchanged for Stephen, who besieges Matilda at Oxford. She escapes, and leaves England.
- 1149 Henry, son of Matilda, becomes duke of Normandy, and on his father's death, in the next year, count of Anjou.
- 1152 Henry marries Eleanor of Aquitaine, divorced wife of Louis VII of France.
- 1152 Henry invades England and renews the war. On the death of Eustace, Stephen's heir, a treaty is arranged at Wallingford between Henry and Stephen by which the succession is settled on Henry.
- 1154 Stephen dies, and is succeeded by Henry II. Henry completes the destruction of the "adulterine castles," and establishes peace and order throughout England. Thomas à Becket is made chancellor.
- 1162 Thomas à Becket becomes archbishop of Canterbury.
- 1164 The Great Council adopts the Constitutions of Clarendon. Thomas quarrels with the king and flees to France.
- 1166 The king and council issue the Assize of Clarendon, reforming the judicial system of England.
- 1170 Thomas à Becket returns to England and is murdered.
- 1171 Henry goes to Ireland, where his supremacy is acknowledged by the native chiefs.
- 1172 Henry submits to the legates of the pope. Prince Henry is crowned.
- 1173 Prince Henry flees to the court of his father-in-law, Louis of France. Henry's sons league against him, and are supported by the kings of France and Scotland and the count of Flanders. Henry defeats the allies in Normandy.
- 1174 William the Lion, king of Scotland, invades England, but is captured at Alnwick. William acknowledges the sovereignty of Henry over Scotland.
- 1181 Henry issues the Assize of Arms reorganising the old fyrd, or national militia.
- 1183 Prince Henry, eldest son of Henry, dies.
- 1186 Geoffrey, Henry's second son, dies, and Richard becomes heir to the throne.
- 1188 The Saladin tithe to raise funds for the third crusade is levied.
- 1189 Henry dies, and is succeeded by Richard. Richard persecutes the Jews to raise money for his crusade, and leaves England.
- 1190 William Longchamp becomes justiciar.
- 1191 Richard marries Berengaria of Navarre. He proceeds to the Holy Land and takes Acre. Geoffrey, archbishop of York, and John, Richard's brother, combine and expel Longchamps from England.
- 1192 Richard, returning from the Holy Land, is seized by Leopold of Austria and given into the hands of the emperor Henry VI, by whom he is imprisoned.
- 1194 Richard is set at liberty upon payment of a heavy ransom. He visits England, gathers funds by extortionate taxation, and crosses to Normandy, where he engages in war with Philip of France. He never returns to England.
- 1199 Richard is mortally wounded in an attack on Chalus, in Limousin, and dies. John succeeds him as king of England.

## THIRTEENTH CENTURY

- 1200 John makes peace with Philip. He divorces his English wife, Hadwisa of Gloucester, and marries Isabella of Angoulême. The barons of Poitou, led by Isabella's betrothed husband, Hugh de Lusignan, rise in revolt.
- 1202 Philip summons John to answer the charges of the Poitevins. John refuses. Philip and Prince Arthur, John's nephew, attack his French possessions.



- 1203 Arthur is captured by John and disappears.
- 1204 Philip overruns Normandy, Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, which submit with little show of resistance.
- 1208 England is placed under an interdict by Pope Innocent III, for John's refusal to accept Stephen Langton as archbishop of Canterbury.
- 1209 John is excommunicated by the pope.
- 1211 Innocent threatens to depose John and give his kingdom to Philip.
- 1213 John submits to the pope, accepts Langton, and does homage for his kingdom. A representative assembly summoned by John, consisting of four men from each county, meets at St. Albans.
- 1214 Battle of Bouvines. Philip defeats the allied forces of the earl of Salisbury and Emperor Otto of Germany in Flanders. John makes peace with Philip.
- 1215 The barons collect an army and force John to sign the Great Charter at Runnymede (June 15).
- 1216 War between John and the barons. John's mercenaries overrun England. The barons invite Louis, eldest son of Philip, to be king. Louis lands at Thanet with an army and enters London. John dies. John's son Henry III is crowned, and the barons rally about him. The earl of Pembroke becomes regent.
- 1217 Louis is defeated at Lincoln. Hubert de Burgh defeats the French fleet off Dover. The treaty of Lambeth is arranged, by which Louis submits, and leaves England.
- 1219 Hubert de Burgh, the justiciar, is for thirteen years the real ruler of England. The baronial opposition is overcome, and John's foreign favourites driven from power.
- 1227 Henry declares himself of age.
- 1232 Henry dismisses Hubert de Burgh, and replaces him with Peter des Roches, under whose rule foreigners, particularly Poitevins, obtain great influence and power in England.
- 1234 Edmund Rich, archbishop of Canterbury, insists upon and secures Peter's dismissal from office.
- 1236 Henry marries Eleanor of Provence. High offices are distributed to Provençals.
- 1238 Simon de Montfort, earl of Leicester, marries the king's sister Eleanor.
- 1242 The barons refuse to furnish Henry funds for the prosecution of war in Poitou.
- 1243 Henry surrenders all claims to Poitou.
- 1244 The Great Council, now beginning to be known as parliament, asks for control over the appointment of ministers.
- 1254 Representative knights of the shire are for the first time summoned to the parliament.
- 1257 Simon de Montfort becomes leader of the baronial opposition.
- 1258 By the Provisions of Oxford which parliament (the Mad Parliament) adopts, and which the king is forced to accept, the government is placed in the hands of baronial committees. Foreigners are forced to give up lands and offices. Peace with France.
- 1263 Civil war between the baronial and royal parties.
- 1264 By the Mise of Amiens, Louis IX of France attempts in vain to settle the dispute in England which had been laid before him as arbitrator. Both Londoners and barons refuse to accept Louis' decision. Earl Simon defeats the king at Lewes. Henry and Prince Edward are captured. The Mise of Lewes agreed to.
- 1265 Earl Simon's parliament meets. Towns and boroughs are represented for the first time. The earl of Gloucester deserts Simon and joins Edward, who has escaped from his captors. Edward and Gloucester defeat Earl Simon at Evesham. Simon is killed.
- 1267 Parliament at Marlborough, with Edward's approval, enacts reforms for which Simon contended. Edward becomes the real head of the government.
- 1270 Edward joins the seventh crusade.
- 1272 Henry dies, and Edward is proclaimed king during his absence in the Holy Land.
- 1274 Edward returns to England and is crowned. Robert Burnell becomes chancellor.
- 1277 Edward suppresses an uprising of Llewelyn and the Welsh.
- 1279 Statute of mortmain is passed, to check the transfer of property to the church.
- 1282 Llewelyn and his brother David lead the Welsh in revolt. Edward marches against the Welsh and defeats them. Llewelyn is slain.
- 1283 David is captured and executed. The statute of Wales is passed.
- 1286 Edward goes to Gascony and remains three years. He mediates in the quarrel between France and Aragon.
- 1289 Edward returns to England and dismisses and punishes corrupt judges.
- 1290 All Jews are compelled to leave England. The statute "*Quia Emptores*" forbids subinfeudation. Death of Queen Eleanor.
- 1291 Scottish nobles and clergy meet Edward at Norham, and acknowledge his right to decide the disputed succession.
- 1292 Edward decides the Scottish succession in favour of John Baliol, who does homage to Edward for his kingdom.
- 1294 A quarrel begins between Philip IV of France and Edward.

- 1295 A league between France and Scotland is formed, which lasts for over three hundred years. The "Model Parliament" meets—all three estates being fully represented for the first time. Edward invades Scotland.
- 1296 Battle of Dunbar. Baliol surrenders and is dispossessed.
- 1297 Edward prepares for war with France, but experiences difficulties in securing funds. Edward goes to Flanders. The rising of William Wallace in Scotland. The English are defeated at Cambuskenneth, near Stirling. Wallace invades the north of England. Edward signs the "*Confirmatio Cartarum*" at Ghent. Truce with France is arranged.
- 1298 Edward invades Scotland, and defeats Wallace at Falkirk. Wallace flees to France.
- 1299 Treaty of Chartres between France and England. Guienne restored to the English. Edward marries Margaret, sister of Philip.

## FOURTEENTH CENTURY

- 1303 The Scots under the regent, Comyn, defeat the English. Edward invades and subdues Scotland.
- 1305 Wallace is betrayed to the English and executed.
- 1306 Robert Bruce slays Comyn, and is crowned king of the Scots at Scone. The English invade Scotland. Bruce is defeated and his force scattered.
- 1307 Edward, on his way to Scotland, dies near Carlisle. Edward II succeeds to the throne, and allows himself to be ruled by Piers Gaveston, a Gascon adventurer, whom he creates earl of Cornwall. Bruce wins victories in Scotland.
- 1308 The barons demand Gaveston's dismissal. Edward evades it by appointing him lord deputy of Ireland. Imprisonment of knights Templars.
- 1310 The lords ordainers are appointed to carry out administrative reforms.
- 1311 Gaveston is banished by parliament, but returns.
- 1312 The barons, under Thomas of Lancaster, take up arms and seize Gaveston, who is executed without trial. The king is forced to pardon the barons.
- 1314 Edward takes an army into Scotland to relieve Stirling, but is defeated at Bannockburn. All Scotland is lost to Edward. Lancaster becomes chief minister.
- 1315 Edward Bruce invades Ireland. The Scots ravage Northumberland.
- 1318 Robert Bruce takes Berwick and ravages Yorkshire. Edward Bruce is defeated and killed at Dundalk.
- 1320 Hugh Despenser and his son obtain great influence with Edward.
- 1321 Parliament banishes the Despensers. Lancaster, Hereford, and Roger Mortimer rouse the Welsh marchers to revolt and seek the alliance of Robert Bruce. Mortimer submits to Edward.
- 1322 Hereford is killed and Lancaster is captured at Boroughbridge. Lancaster executed. Hugh Despenser made earl of Winchester.
- 1323 Edward acknowledges Bruce's title as king of the Scots and agrees to a thirteen years' truce.
- 1325 Difficulties with France. Queen Isabella and Prince Edward go to Paris to arrange a settlement, where they fall under the influence of the exiled Roger Mortimer. A conspiracy against Edward is formed.
- 1326 The queen, Prince Edward, and Mortimer land with an army in Suffolk. London declares for the queen. Edward and the Despensers are captured. The Despensers are executed.
- 1327 Parliament at Westminster forces the resignation of Edward. Prince Edward proclaimed king as Edward III. Edward II murdered in Berkeley castle. Isabella and Mortimer rule England for the young king. The government nominally in the hands of a council of regency. Bruce continues to harry northern England.
- 1328 Mortimer acknowledges the complete independence of Scotland. Edward marries Philippa of Hainault. Mortimer's unpopularity grows.
- 1330 Mortimer secures the execution of the earl of Kent, the king's uncle. Edward conspires with Henry of Lancaster against Mortimer. Mortimer is seized and executed.
- 1332 Death of Robert Bruce. Edward Baliol, supported by the English, attempts to seize the throne. He is crowned, but is subsequently driven back to England.
- 1333 The Scots invade England, but are defeated at Halidon Hill by the English, who reinstate Baliol.
- 1335 Edward invades Scotland with Baliol, who has been a second time expelled by the Scots.
- 1336 Philip VI of France, in alliance with the Scots, invades the English possessions in Gascony.
- 1337 Edward asserts his claim to the French throne. The Hundred Years' War is begun.
- 1338 Edward forms an alliance with the Flemish towns and the emperor Lewis of Bavaria. Edward lands in Antwerp.
- 1339 Edward unsuccessfully invades France.

- 1340 French fleet burns Southampton and controls the Channel. The English fleet defeats and almost destroys the French fleet at the battle of Sluys.
- 1341 Edward supports the claims of John de Montfort to the duchy of Brittany. David Bruce returns to Scotland. Edward's continental allies desert him.
- 1346 Edward and his son, the Black Prince, lead an army into Normandy. Edward ravages Normandy and advances almost to Paris. He retreats toward Calais, but is overtaken at Crécy by Philip with an army twice the size of his own. The French are decisively defeated, and Edward retreats to Calais. David II of Scotland invades England, but is defeated and captured at Neville's Cross.
- 1347 Calais surrenders to Edward, and a temporary truce is arranged with Philip.
- 1348 The Black Death begins its ravages in England.
- 1355 The war is renewed. The Black Prince plunders the south of France.
- 1356 The Black Prince advances into central France. With a force of eight thousand men he is overtaken at Poitiers by King John II of France and an army of fifty thousand. John is defeated and taken prisoner.
- 1357 Edward changes his Scotch policy and reinstates David II.
- 1360 Edward invades France. The treaty of Bretigny. Edward renounces his claim to the French crown. John is released.
- 1363 The Black Prince becomes governor of Aquitaine. He takes the part of Pedro of Castile against the usurping Henry of Trastamara.
- 1369 War between England and France is renewed, and Edward again assumes the title of King of France. Bertrand du Guesclin successfully opposes the English in the south of France.
- 1371 The Black Prince returns to England. The English in Aquitaine are driven to the coast towns.
- 1373 John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster, leads a disastrous expedition from Calais to Bordeaux.
- 1375 Truce with France leaves only Calais, Bordeaux, and Bayonne in English hands.
- 1376 The duke of Lancaster becomes the virtual head of the government. The Good Parliament meets. Death of the Black Prince.
- 1377 Edward III dies. Richard II, son of the Black Prince, becomes king. The French renew their attacks on the English coast. A council of regency is formed, from which the royal princes are excluded.
- 1379 A poll tax is imposed.
- 1381 Wycliffe declares his disbelief in the doctrine of transubstantiation. The Peasants' Revolt breaks out. Wat Tyler and Jack Straw lead a host of one hundred thousand peasants to London. Richard meets the peasants at Smithfield. Wat Tyler is killed, and the revolt is suppressed with great severity.
- 1382 Richard marries Anne of Bohemia.
- 1384 Death of Wycliffe.
- 1385 Richard invades Scotland and burns Edinburgh.
- 1386 John of Gaunt goes to Spain, and Thomas, duke of Gloucester, the king's youngest uncle, assumes control. Suffolk, the chancellor, is impeached, and commissioners of regency are appointed for one year to regulate the realm.
- 1387 Richard prepares to oppose the commission. The lords appellant take up arms.
- 1388 The king's principal supporters are charged with treason, before the "Merciless" Parliament. The Scots win the battle of Otterburn, but Douglas is slain.
- 1389 Richard dismisses the council, assumes personal charge of the government, and rules for seven years as a constitutional monarch. Truce with France.
- 1396 Richard marries Isabella of France, and a truce of twenty-eight years is arranged.
- 1397 Richard, fearing a plot, arrests Gloucester, Arundel, and Warwick. Arundel is beheaded. Gloucester dies in prison.
- 1398 The parliament of Shrewsbury, at Richard's bidding, delegates parliamentary power to a committee of eighteen, thus freeing the king from constitutional restraints. Hereford, son of John of Gaunt, and Norfolk are banished.
- 1399 Death of John of Gaunt. Hereford, now duke of Lancaster, lands at Ravenspur, and is joined by the duke of York and the Percys. Richard is imprisoned in the Tower, and compelled to resign his crown. Parliament formally deposes the king. Henry of Lancaster becomes king as Henry IV.

## FIFTEENTH CENTURY

- 1400 Richard II disappears. The Welsh rise in revolt under Owen Glendower.
- 1401 A statute for the burning of heretics (*De heretico comburendo*) is passed.
- 1402 The Scots invade England, and are defeated by the Percys at Homildon Hill.
- 1403 The revolt of the Percys. Henry defeats the Percys at Shrewsbury. Harry Hotspur is killed.
- 1404 France forms an alliance with Glendower.



- 1405 The Scotch prince James falls into Henry's hands on his way to France. Mowbray, the earl marshal, and Scrope, archbishop of York, conspire against Henry and are executed. The French land in Wales.
- 1408 The earl of Northumberland again revolts, and is defeated and killed.
- 1411 Henry quarrels with his son Prince Henry.
- 1413 Henry IV dies, and is succeeded by his son Henry V. Henry actively persecutes the Lollards.
- 1414 Henry reasserts the English claim to the French crown. He forms an alliance with the duke of Burgundy.
- 1415 Henry discovers a plot to place Edmund Mortimer, earl of March, on the throne, and executes the conspirators, including the earl of Cambridge. Henry leads an army into France, and captures Harfleur. Henry defeats the French at Agincourt and captures Charles, duke of Orleans. Henry returns to London in triumph.
- 1417 Henry invades Normandy. Sir John Oldcastle, the Lollard leader, is executed.
- 1418 Henry captures Caen, and continues his conquest of Normandy.
- 1419 Rouen, the last of the Norman strongholds, surrenders to Henry.
- 1420 Treaty of Troyes. Henry marries Catherine of France, and rules France as regent.
- 1421 The duke of Clarence, brother of the king, killed in battle with the French and Scotch at Baugé. Henry drives the French across the Loire.
- 1422 Henry dies, and is succeeded by his infant son Henry VI. John, duke of Bedford, uncle of the king, becomes protector and proceeds to France, where he acts as regent. Humphrey, duke of Gloucester, is regent in England.
- 1424 Peace is made with Scotland, and the captive James restored to his throne. Bedford defeats the French at Verneuil.
- 1425 Gloucester quarrels with his uncle, the chancellor, Henry Beaufort. Beaufort is made a cardinal.
- 1428 Bedford lays siege to Orleans.
- 1429 Joan of Arc raises the siege of Orleans. Joan leads Charles VII to Rheims, where he is crowned. Henry VI is crowned at Westminster, and the protectorate comes to an end.
- 1430 Joan of Arc is captured by the Burgundians and sold to the English.
- 1431 Joan of Arc is burned at Rouen. Henry VI is crowned king of France at Paris by Cardinal Beaufort.
- 1435 The congress of Arras meets. The attempt to arrange a peace is unsuccessful. Bedford dies, and Richard, duke of York, becomes regent of France. The duke of Burgundy renounces his English alliance, and enters into a league with Charles VII.
- 1436 Paris is taken by the French. The French gradually extend their control in Normandy and Guienne.
- 1444 The earl of Suffolk arranges a truce with France.
- 1445 Henry marries Margaret of Anjou.
- 1447 The duke of Gloucester is charged with high treason, and dies in prison. Richard, duke of York, becomes heir-apparent.
- 1449 The French break the truce.
- 1450 The French capture Rouen. Normandy is lost to the English. Suffolk is impeached and murdered. The rebellion of Jack Cade is suppressed.
- 1451 The French capture Bordeaux and Bayonne. Calais is the only French possession remaining in English hands.
- 1452 The duke of York makes an ineffectual attempt to displace Somerset by force.
- 1453 Talbot, earl of Shrewsbury, leads an expedition to Gascony, but is defeated and slain at Castillon—the last battle of the Hundred Years' War. Somerset is imprisoned. Henry's mind gives way, and the duke of York is appointed protector.
- 1455 Henry recovers. York is dismissed and Somerset returns to power. The Wars of the Roses begin. York, Salisbury, and Warwick take up arms against Somerset, who is defeated and slain at St. Albans. Henry falls into the hands of the Yorkists.
- 1458 Henry brings about a brief reconciliation between the Yorkists and the Lancastrians.
- 1459 Civil war is renewed. The Yorkists are victorious at Blore Heath.
- 1460 The Yorkists under Warwick, Salisbury, and March defeat the Lancastrians at Northampton, and capture the king. The duke of York claims the throne, and is declared heir by parliament. Queen Margaret rouses the Lancastrians, who win the battle of Wakefield. The duke of York is killed. Salisbury is captured and executed.
- 1461 Edward, earl of March, York's son, defeats the Lancastrians at Mortimer's Cross. The queen defeats Warwick at the second battle of St. Albans and sets the king free. The earl of March is taken to London by Warwick, where he is proclaimed king as Edward IV. He pursues and defeats the Lancastrians at Towton, and is crowned at Westminster. Margaret flees to Scotland. Edward creates his brothers, George and Richard, dukes of Clarence and Gloucester.
- 1464 Queen Margaret appears in the north and civil war is renewed. She is defeated at Hedgeley Moor and Hexham. Edward marries Elizabeth Woodville.

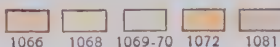
- 1465 Henry, the late king, is captured and thrown into the Tower.
- 1469 Warwick, "the King-maker," becomes estranged from Edward because of favouritism shown the Woodvilles. Clarence marries Warwick's daughter. Uprisings fomented by Warwick occur in the northern counties under Robin of Redesdale. The queen's father and brother are captured and beheaded. Edward is held prisoner for a short time by Warwick.
- 1470 Clarence and Warwick, finding that Edward has proof of their treachery, flee to France. They are reconciled to Queen Margaret and plan the restoration of Henry VI. Warwick crosses to England, Edward flees to Flanders, and Henry is restored.
- 1471 Edward and Gloucester land in England. They are joined by Clarence and enter London. Edward defeats Warwick at Barnet. Warwick is killed. Edward defeats Margaret at Tewkesbury. The prince of Wales is slain. Death of Henry VI in the Tower.
- 1474 Edward leagues with Burgundy against France. Edward invades France, but is bought off by Louis XI.
- 1478 Clarence is charged with treason, and murdered in the Tower.
- 1483 Edward dies, and is succeeded by his son, Edward V, a boy of twelve. Richard, duke of Gloucester, becomes guardian. Gloucester overthrows the queen's relatives, and is acknowledged as protector. Gloucester orders the execution of Hastings, Rivers, and Grey. Edward V is deposed, and Gloucester is declared king by parliament. He is crowned as Richard III. Buckingham revolts, but is taken and executed. Edward V and his younger brother, Richard of York, are murdered in the Tower.
- 1484 Death of Richard's son, Edward, prince of Wales.

# MAP OF ENGLAND

at the time of  
THE NORMAN CONQUEST  
Showing the Progress of  
William's Arms

SCALE OF MILES

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80



4° Longitude East 2° from Greenwich 0°

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